

# ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## 2016-2017 TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATION

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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#### **Who is eligible for a Tuition Assistance Grant?**

Licensed employees who are eligible for other employee benefits are also eligible for tuition assistance for credit courses from an accredited college or university. For eligible employees working less than full time, tuition assistance will be prorated in accordance with the percentage of employment specified in their contractual arrangements. Substitutes, non-contracted adult education teachers, and employees on leaves of absence are not eligible.

#### **What courses are eligible for a Tuition Assistance Grant?**

Employees may receive tuition assistance only for tuition expenditures that meet the instructional/program goals and priorities of the school system. Courses are to be on the graduate level from an accredited teacher preparation institution.

Courses eligible for tuition assistance will be classified according to the ACPS priority areas listed below:

1. Dual certification in ELL or special education certification holding more than one endorsement
2. Math: content and instruction
3. Reading: content and instruction
4. Honors/Gifted Education
5. Educational Leadership

Ineligible courses are:

1. Courses such as Classroom Management or those related to needing to complete a general teaching certificate
2. Courses that will lead to qualification in a new trade or business
3. Non-credit or audit courses
4. Courses covering the same content as those being offered for free by ACPS
5. Courses taken by video, travel, independent study, directed study, student teaching, practical observations, or field experiences

Also, for courses that are taken multiple times during one's course work, ACPS offers employees a onetime reimbursement option pending the course meets the eligibility criteria listed above. Multiple enrollments in the same course are not eligible for multiple reimbursements.

#### **How much tuition assistance can I receive per course?**

The maximum amount of assistance per graduate credit hour is established each year based on the tuition rate set by local, in-state universities. For example, the tuition reimbursement rate for the 2015-2016 school year is \$546.00 per graduate credit hour. This rate was aligned with the in-state tuition costs set by George Mason University. Only tuition costs are eligible for reimbursement. Approved applicants are not reimbursed for tech fees, late fees, registration, travel, cost of books, or other non-tuition expenses.

## How much tuition assistance can I receive in any one year?

Eligible ACPS employees can receive Tuition Assistance Grants supporting up to six (6) credits per fiscal year (i.e. July 1-June 30).

For classes that take place during the summer, the credits count towards the fiscal year in which the class starts, not ends. For example, if one takes EDUC 1815 *ELL Teaching & Standards* in-which the class runs from June 10, 2016 – July 19, 2016, the three credits earned go towards school year 2015-16 although reimbursement will be issued after July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## How do I apply?

The Tuition Assistance Grant Application Form is available on the Professional Learning website ([acpsk12.org/pl/](http://acpsk12.org/pl/)). Click [here](#) for the application. **Applications must be submitted to Lyn Wingfield, lwingfie@acps.k12.va.us, two full weeks (14 days) before the start of the course(s) for which assistance is sought\***. Applications submitted after this timeframe will not be eligible for reimbursement as monies have not been encumbered in the employee's name. This is a non-negotiable and no exceptions will be made.

The employee's principal or program manager (or designee) must sign the application as verification that the course for which tuition assistance is sought is directly related to the five ACPS tuition assistance priorities. Applicants seeking additional endorsements and those who are on provisional, conditional, or local licenses must submit a copy of the Virginia Department of Education list of courses required for certification. A photocopy of all required information must be attached each time an application is submitted.

It is important to note that an application does not guarantee tuition reimbursement. There are limited funds which are distributed on a first come, first serve basis.

## What is the application deadline?

The tuition Assistance Grant application must be submitted **two full weeks (14 days) before the start of the course(s) for which assistance is sought\***.

\*Applications for courses ending on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> must be received no later than May 31<sup>st</sup> or the prior business day if May 31<sup>st</sup> falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

## How will I know if I have been approved for a Tuition Assistance Grant?

Once the grant application has been processed, the applicant will receive a response via email within five (5) business days from the date that the application was received indicating if the application was approved or not approved. For unapproved applications, the response form will provide the reason(s) the application was not approved.

For approved applications, the response form will indicate:

- The course(s) for which a Tuition Assistance Grant is to be awarded.
- The *pending* amount of assistance; and
- What documents need to be submitted before the approved Tuition Assistance Grant can be awarded.

### **When will I receive reimbursement?**

Payment will be initiated upon receipt of the following two documents from the approved applicant:

1. **A copy of a receipt** *clearly* indicating full payment of course tuition and specifying the exact tuition paid.
2. If tuition was paid by eCheck or a version of an electronic check, **a copy of your bank statement** showing that the money was withdrawn and paid to the university or college. Information related to account numbers and financial totals may be blacked out. The financial office must see your name, the bank's name, the amount withdrawn, and to whom it went to; and
3. **A grade report, transcript, or other official notification** from the university or college showing that the course has been completed and assigned a final grade of "A" or "B" or a passing grade if the course is offered on a pass/fail basis.