



Tuition Reimbursement Program

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FISCAL YEAR 2018

- Instructions for Tuition Reimbursement
- Effective Dates: **July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018.**
- Applications for **ALL** Semesters must be submitted **no less than 2 weeks** prior to the course start date or test date.

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Table of Contents

Publication Date: July 2017	1
Overview of the Tuition Reimbursement Program	2
Introduction	2
Priority Funding	2
Eligibility Requirements for the Tuition Reimbursement Program	3
Career Development Plan	3
Overview of the Career Development Plan	3
Career Development Plan and Tuition Reimbursement Coverage	3
Approved Degree or Certification Goals	4
Documentation Required in the Career Development Plan (CDP)	4
Monitoring of the Approved Career Development Plan	4
Other Important Facts	5
Tuition Reimbursement	5
Courses That Qualify for Reimbursement	5
Reimbursement Limits	5
Applying for Tuition Reimbursement Funds	6
Deadlines for Applying for Reimbursement	6
Approvals	6
Disapprovals	6
Filing for Reimbursement	7
Deadlines for Filing for Reimbursement	7
Fiscal Year 2018 Tuition Reimbursement Contacts	8

Overview of the Tuition Reimbursement Program

Introduction

Maryland School for the Deaf supports and encourages employees to continue their learning and education throughout their careers at the School. The Tuition Reimbursement Program provides employees the opportunity to obtain the knowledge and skills required of highly demanding jobs at the School. It is also a way to increase the numbers and skill levels of staff necessary for the School to meet essential recruitment and retention needs.

The Tuition Reimbursement Program has four (4) major components:

- 1. Tuition Reimbursement for Teacher Certification/Praxis or Administrator Certification**
This component provides tuition reimbursement for courses/tests required to obtain or maintain Teacher Certification, obtain additional Teacher Certificates or, if required, obtain Administrator Certification.
- 2. Tuition Reimbursement for Job-Related College Credit Courses or CEU's**
This component provides tuition reimbursement for those college credit courses or CEU's that have a direct correlation to job requirements and/or duties.
- 3. Tuition Reimbursement for Courses Leading to a Specific Academic Degree**
This component (which requires an approved Career Development Plan) provides tuition reimbursement for courses leading to a degree that will help qualify the employee for a job classification in which MSD has a significant retention and/or recruitment difficulty.
- 4. ASL Classes**
American Sign Language classes taken through a recognized program will be reimbursed.

Priority Funding

Due to the limited amount of funds available for tuition reimbursement, applications will be approved in the following priority order and then based on submission order until all funds are expended.

1. Classes/praxis for teacher certification - Certification Coordinator approval is required.
2. Administrator's certification – Certification Coordinator approval is required.
3. College Credit Courses or CEU's for current job classification – OLT or Director of Student Life approval is required.
4. Tuition Reimbursement for Courses Leading to a Specific Academic Degree – OLT approval is required.

Eligibility Requirements for the Tuition Reimbursement Program

To be eligible, an employee in any component of the Tuition Reimbursement Program must:

- Be a permanent full-time Faculty or State System employee or part-time Faculty or State System employee who works 50 percent or more or,
- Be a Contractual Teacher or RCYCP working toward certification or license requirements.
- OLT approval is required for contractual employees.
- **Certification Coordinator or OLT approval is required for all employees.**
 - Employees requesting reimbursement for classes required for teacher certification will need to have their application approved and signed by the certification coordinator. The certification coordinator's signature certifies that the request meets your certification requirements and requires priority funding.
 - Employees requesting reimbursement for classes required for RCYCP certification will need to have their application approved and signed by the Director of Student Life. This signature certifies that the course being taken is approved for RCYCP CEU credit.

Career Development Plan

Overview of the Career Development Plan

A **Career Development Plan (CDP)** is an understanding between the Appointing Authority and the employee regarding a degree or certification goal the employee needs to achieve so that the employee can meet a specific career goal. The approved degree or certification goals will help prepare the employee for those classifications with significant recruitment and retention difficulties, as determined by the Orioles Leadership Team (OLT).

An approved CDP is required if a MSD employee is seeking a specific academic degree or certification in order to enter or advance in one of the fields listed below. However, a CDP is not required if the employee is applying for tuition reimbursement for courses that are directly related to current or anticipated job duties and responsibilities, and is not seeking a specific academic degree or certification.

Career Development Plan and Tuition Reimbursement Coverage

Once you have an approved CDP, you still must follow all of the rules for tuition reimbursement, including the forms to be submitted, deadlines for application and payment, and also credit and reimbursement.

Approved Degree or Certification Goals

In the chart below, the left column lists all the classifications currently approved as career goals for Career Development Plans. The right column, lists the corresponding degree or certification goals that are supported through tuition reimbursement.

The classification you wish to enter or advance in is ...	MSD will approve the degree or certification goal(s) of...
Teacher Aide	Associates Degree
Teacher	Masters Degree

Documentation Required in the Career Development Plan (CDP)

The CDP application (available via the Certification Coordinator must include:

- ✓ A completed *Career Development Plan form*, which details:
 - ❑ Employee identifying information
 - ❑ Employee's desired career goal - that is, a specific classification from the list above (e.g., Teacher)
 - ❑ Employee's chosen degree or certification goal that will help qualify the employee for the desired career goal (Using the above example, an appropriate degree goal for a Teacher would be a Master Degree)
 - ❑ The accredited community college, college, or university where the employee will be pursuing the degree or certification goal
 - ❑ The employee's signature and the signature of the appropriate OLT member
- ✓ The *sequence or listing of courses* needed to complete degree requirements. List classes by course number and title (such as Math 101: Introduction to Algebra). The listing of the course requirements can be copied from the college/university catalog or developed with an academic advisor.

Monitoring of the Approved Career Development Plan

The Certification Coordinator will monitor and evaluate the employee's academic progress and status. The Certification Coordinator, in consultation with the respective OLT member, may discontinue a CDP if, after a fair review, the employee is not making satisfactory academic progress (based on GPA and/or the number of credits completed) or the employee's job performance has significantly deteriorated.

The employee must immediately report in writing to the Certification Coordinator any significant changes in the employee's work or educational status. Examples of such changes include decrease in work hours, resignation, termination, extended sick leave, or demotion. Such employment status changes will usually result in immediate discontinuation of your CDP.

Other Important Facts

- All course reimbursement must be **pre-approved** (approved prior to the start date of the class). You must adhere to the deadlines in these Guidelines.
- This program is for *reimbursement* - there is no pre-payment. You must provide proof of payment AND successful course completion before reimbursement is issued. Employees who have received student loans must provide proof of loan payment for reimbursement.
- All participating colleges and universities must be accredited. Courses may be traditional on-site, satellite, distance, correspondence and/or web-based.
- Reimbursement will not be approved for any program sponsored, in full or in part, by the Maryland School for the Deaf or any other Maryland State agency or department.
- Reimbursement is not a supplement to other financial assistance for which employees may be eligible. Employees receiving tuition support or financial assistance from any alternate source must report it and the amount on the application form. This amount will be deducted before computing the allowable reimbursement. Employees who fail to report alternate sources and amounts of financial aid on the application will be liable for return of the reimbursement award, and face possible exclusion from future reimbursement program eligibility.

Tuition Reimbursement

Courses That Qualify for Reimbursement

MSD will also reimburse you for the cost of Praxis I and II or other challenge examinations. The challenge examination must be directly related to your current or anticipated duties. Your application for approval and reimbursement for the exam is made just like all other applications for tuition reimbursement. MSD will reimburse you for the cost of the challenge exam only after we receive written notice that you have passed or you present MSD with passing scores.

American Sign Language classes taken through a recognized program will be reimbursed if funds are available.

Reimbursement Limits

Each employee is eligible to be reimbursed for a **maximum of one course (typically 3 credit hours)** for FY18. Additional courses will be approved pending the availability of funds which means if funds are available at the end of FY18 the employee will be reimbursed.

The maximum reimbursement rate is **\$353 at the undergraduate level** and **\$683 at the graduate level per credit hour, and for tuition costs only**. No books, fees, or other expenses will be reimbursed in this program. The reimbursement rate is set by the Department of Budget and Management. If and when the Department of Budget and Management changes its rates, the Tuition Reimbursement Program will do so as well, pending MSD budget authorization. **In cases where the tuition fee is lower if you apply on-line, you will be only be reimbursed for the on-line tuition fee amount up to the maximum amount allowed**. For employees receiving tuition assistance from other sources (such as Veterans Education Benefits, scholarships, grants, etc.), tuition reimbursement under this program will only be provided for any remaining unsubsidized tuition expenses to the limits established in these guidelines.

Applying for Tuition Reimbursement Funds

The application package **must** include:

- ✓ An Application for Tuition Reimbursement Funds (MSD 4010) completed in full.
- ✓ A photocopy of the official *catalog course description(s)* [via the internet or by traditional course catalog].
- ✓ A copy of the Tuition fees from the course catalog or internet.
- ✓ All required signatures for approval.

Deadlines for Applying for Reimbursement

Applications for all Semesters must be submitted no less than 32 weeks prior to the course start date or test date. Applications will be approved in the established priority order and then based on submission order until all funds are expended.

If for any reason an employee registers for different course(s) than the ones approved on the Application for Tuition Reimbursement Funds, and the employee wants tuition reimbursement for the new course(s), the employee must complete the Tuition Reimbursement Course Change/Cancel Form (MSD 4011) and obtain approval from the Certification Coordinator or OLT member before submitting it to the Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator. This should be done no later than one week after the start of the new course(s). If the new course(s) is directly related to certification or license requirements and the credit total does not exceed the credit total originally approved for the semester, it will generally be approved for reimbursement. Reimbursement will occur only for those courses approved in advance. Also, if the employee drops or withdraws from a course(s) identified on an approved Application for Tuition Reimbursement Funds, the employee must advise the Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator in writing immediately.

Approvals

If the Application for Tuition Reimbursement Funds is approved, a letter of approval along with a copy of your Application for Tuition Reimbursement Funds listing the classes and amount approved will be sent to you. Please check to determine whether you have been approved for Tuition Reimbursement and if the amount approved is correct. The approval letter will include procedures for filing for reimbursement once courses are completed successfully.

Disapprovals

There are times that Applications for Tuition Reimbursement Funds are not approved. The most frequent reasons for disapproval are:

- Request submitted after course start date or test date
- Class has no relation to employee's job duties
- Paperwork lacks proper signatures
- No money left in program

Filing for Reimbursement

After you have completed your courses (those approved for reimbursement) and received your grades, please forward the following items to the Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator within **45 calendar days** of the last day of class as listed on the approved MSD 4010:

1. A **Completed Tuition Reimbursement Request Form** (MSD 4050) in full;
2. A **copy of the approved Application for Tuition Reimbursement Funds** (MSD 4010);
3. Your **grade report or transcript** (either printed from the Internet or original documents) must show that you received a final passing grade for the course(s) approved for reimbursement. (Note: Teacher-prepared grades, notes, or exam results are not acceptable.) A passing grade is a "C" or better for undergraduate courses, and a "B" or better for graduate courses. State regulations require proof of a final passing grade in order for reimbursement to occur; and
4. **Proof of payment**, which includes a copy of a receipt, marked "paid" from the college or university, a canceled check, a credit card receipt/statement, a bank statement or statement from college denoting payment and respective method of payment. Only the amount you show as paid will be reimbursed to you up to the approved amount.

You must be a MSD employee on the date that you submit your paperwork for reimbursement.

Once you have submitted your paperwork for actual reimbursement, the money will be deposited into your bank account in which you receive your paycheck via direct deposit.

Deadlines for Filing for Reimbursement

All required invoice documents must be forwarded to the Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator within **45 calendar days** of the last day of class as listed on the approved Application for Tuition Reimbursement Funds Form (MSD 4010). If you do not file by the deadline, MSD will cancel your request for reimbursement and no payment will be provided.

If you cannot adhere to this deadline due to unforeseen circumstances, please send documentation requesting an extension of the deadline. You must explain the specific reason(s) for the extension request and the specific date when you intend to file your paperwork for reimbursement. You must make this request through the Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator.

FY2018 Tuition Reimbursement Contacts

NAME & TITLE	EMAIL	PHONE/VP
Stacey Bundy, Certification Coordinator	stacey.bundy@msd.edu	301-360-2032 (V) 240-575-2983 (VP)
Dawniela Patterson, Columbia Campus Principal/OLT	dawniela.patterson@msd.edu	410-696-7447 (VP)
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Jennifer Yost Ortiz, Frederick Campus Dean of Student Affairs/OLT	jennifer.ortiz@msd.edu	240-575-2927 (VP)
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