



State of Ohio
Employee Development Fund (EDF) Program
Frequency Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What do I need to submit to be reimbursed?

1. A fully completed EDF Application for Reimbursement
2. Proof of cost (Brochure, web page, provider letter that shows what the course/event costs)
3. Proof of payment (Cancelled check, copy of credit card statement, paid receipt on provider letterhead)
4. Proof of completion (Certificate of attendance or completion, grade, letter acknowledging attendance on provider letterhead)

Q: When will I receive my reimbursement?

A: Our average processing time from the day we receive your application to the day we forward the packet to payroll is approximately 5 days. However, our processing time can increase from two to three weeks depending on the volume of requests or fiscal year-end processing. For example, our volume for reimbursements increases dramatically at the end of each semester or quarter. Additional time is added, as the payroll department does a bi-weekly process. So please expect a reimbursement through your paycheck between 30-45 days.

Q: How will I receive my reimbursement?

A. If you applied for direct deposit, the reimbursement amount will appear in your designated account. If you do not have direct deposit, a check will be mailed to your home address.

Q: Does Employee Development Funds (EDF) offer prepay of tuition reimbursement or for events.

A: No, EDF is a reimbursement program. Prepay was tried on an experimental basis several years ago and was discontinued because it did not have good results.

Q: Where does the money come from?

A: The programs are funded out of the DAS Human Resources Division funds.

- Exempt employees: Participating agencies contribute a set amount for each worked or approved leave hour for each full-time and part-time permanent exempt employee.
- Bargaining unit employees: the fund amount and individual limits are determined during collective bargaining and written into each bargaining unit contract.

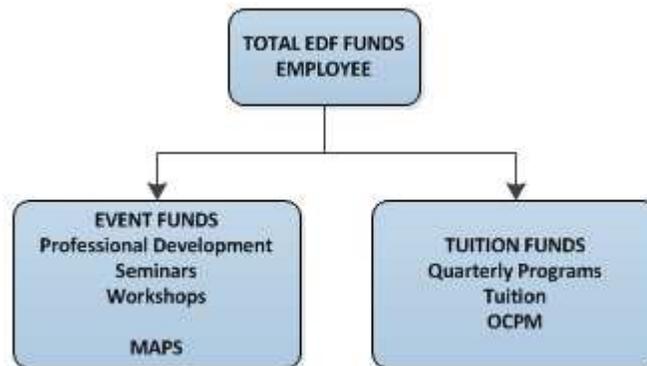


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Q: How much money am I allotted per year? What courses are eligible?

A: It depends on your status. See the policy that matches your status e.g. if you are exempt view the exempt policy, if you are a member of SEIU 1199 view the SEIU 1199 policy to see the eligible courses and individual limits.

B: The EDF Program will automatically calculate your EDF Account. Your Total EDF Fund Account is broken down into two categories. (1) Event Funds – Used for Professional Seminars, Workshops and the MAPS Program (2) Tuition Funds – Used for eligible college tuition courses and the OCPM Program.



COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS ELIGIBILITY

Q: How do I know if the college I'm attending is eligible to attend for reimbursement?

A: The college or university should be an Ohio independent proprietary school recognized by the United States Department of Education; or be accredited by one of the following Regional Institutional Accrediting Agencies:

- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges



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Q: How do I manage my Quarterly Course Applications?

A: Your new application will allow you to insert multiple courses for reimbursement for each Fiscal Year Quarter. (Provided there are sufficient funds in your EDF Account)

Which Quarter to Add a Course

In your EDF Quarterly Application please select the appropriate Fiscal Year Quarter for this Application. Only courses with Start Dates that fall within the Quarter's timeline will be allowed within a Quarterly Application; for example,

- Course 1 with a Start Date of March 31 falls into Quarter 1(Q1) Application.
- Course 2 with a Start Date of April 1 falls into Quarter 2 (Q2) Application.

Adding and Deleting Quarterly Courses

Note 1: If you have not submitted the Quarterly Application for Pre-Approval or Reimbursement, then you can edit your application to add or delete courses.

Note 2: After you submitted your Quarterly Application for Pre-Approval or Reimbursement, you can no longer change your application. If you want to add another course please create a new application.

Canceling a submitted application course: If you want to cancel a course that has not been approved for reimbursement, then email the EDF Manager with the following information.

- EDF Manager email address: edfmanager@das.state.oh.us
- Subject Line: Cancel Course
- Message Information:
 - o First and Last Name:
 - o Your Title
 - o Agency and Department:
 - o Employee ID:
 - o Course EDF Record Number:
 - o Name of course:

A course cancellation will be confirmed in your EDF Application. Please allow five business days for this to occur.

Q: How do I find out if my school or college is accredited?

A: Review their web site or call them. See the Regional and National Institutional Accrediting Agencies - US Department of Education web site.

Q: What grades are eligible to receive tuition reimbursement?

A: Employee must attain a "C" or better, or receive a "pass" if assessed on a pass/fail basis or satisfactory.



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Q: Can I get reimbursed for “credit for life experience” if the university offers it?

A: Yes, if the experience meets the university criteria and the university meets the accreditation criteria and the college allows academic credit for the *“credit for life experience.”*

Q: What is not eligible for reimbursement under the events program?

A: Memberships, subscriptions, fees for licenses, certifications, matriculation, course fees, testing or examinations, computer hardware, software, non-instructional field trips, travel expenses e.g. parking, travel, food or lodging expenses.

Q: Can I be reimbursed if my federal student loan pays for all or part of the cost of the course?

A: Yes, because you have to repay the loan

Q: Can I be reimbursed for scholarships or grants?

A: No, scholarships and grants do not have to be repaid

COURSE ELIGIBILITY

Q.: How do I know if my class qualifies for reimbursement?

A: Courses/events are expected to provide knowledge and/or skills, which relate to the major job classifications as listed in the Classification Specifications manual posted on the DAS HRD Workforce Administration Web page.

POLICY & PROCEDURES

Q: Am I required to have my application pre-approved?

A: No. However, we strongly recommend that you submit your application for pre-approval if you are unsure if the course/event meets eligibility requirements and or if you have sufficient funds. To be pre-approved your application must be received in the EDF office at least 10 days before the start of the course/event. There may be special circumstances when you are must be pre-approved – see questions on lay-off and employee status change.

Q: Am I required to have my application pre-approved for MAPS?

A: YES - Prior approval is required for use of the Exempt Professional Development Program (EPDP) by exempt from the bargaining unit employees for the MAPS program. Exempt employees must first register for a course with MAPS, The John Glenn School, The Ohio State University. When the MAPS registration is approved, forward a completed EDF application and the approved MAPS confirmation/email to EDFunds@das.ohio.gov. You will receive a



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notification that your application is approved. If you do not attend and do not cancel five business days prior to the seminar, you will be responsible for all fees.

Q: Can I be reimbursed for the cost of my Social Worker's (Real Estate, Counselor, Nurse's etc. examination or license?

A: No, licensing fees are not reimbursable. We will pay for the coursework to prepare you for the licensing examination or continuing education courses to maintain your license.

Q: Will I be reimbursed for my membership in SHRM (professional organization)?

A: No, memberships in professional organizations are not reimbursable through EDF.

Q: If a provider doesn't give proof of completion for an event I've attended can I still be reimbursed?

A: No, before you register for the events verify that the provider will provide proof of completion. If the provider does not meet the criteria, do not apply for reimbursement.

Q: How long do I have to submit my documents after my course/event is over?

A: You have forty-five days (45) from the last day of your course or event to submit your documentation that includes proof of cost, proof of payment and proof of attendance. For multiple courses within a Quarterly Application, the oldest date of the End Course date will be used. If you cannot meet the deadline you must call us **before** the 45th day to see if an accommodation can be arranged.

Q: Can I be reimbursed for books?

A: Yes.

Q: Do I have to be signed up for direct deposit in order to receive reimbursement?

A: NO - You will be reimbursed through your payroll check.

Q: Can I mail or fax my documentation?

A: No, your application and support documents must be inputted through our online EDF application.

Q: If my application and/or documentation submission is not correct or incomplete, what will happen?

A: You will be notified of the error or missing information by email and told the packet will be discarded. You will have to resubmit the package with the correct and/or complete information.



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Q: If I apply for a seminar instead of college credit and when I get there, the provider offers “college credit” for it can I get reimbursed for the “college credit”?

A: Yes, however, you can only get reimbursed for one or the other and not both.

Q: If I don't use all of my current fiscal year funding, will it carry over?

A: No

Q: I was in the bargaining unit and now am an exempt employee. How long do I have to wait to use exempt benefits?

A: You can start immediately and your EDF Fund Account will reflect your new status.

Q: Can I use events funds to take courses offered at a college or university?

A: Yes. If the course offers continuing education credits (CEU's) you must use events funds.

A: No - If the course offers academic credits you then use the tuition reimbursement fund.

Q: Are online seminars/workshops eligible for reimbursement under the Professional Development Events Policy?

A: Yes, if the event meets the criteria: completed in the same fiscal year and offers a certificate of completion or continuing education units (CEUs)

Q: If I get laid-off after my class/event starts and have prior approval for the class/event, will I still be reimbursed?

A. Eligible employees who as a result of a layoff or reclassification, are separated or moved to a bargaining unit are still eligible for reimbursement if all other requirements are met and the following conditions are in place:

- 1) Application for reimbursement of a course/event is submitted before the status change date and pre-approved.
- 2) The course/event start date is within 60 days after the employment status change date.

Q: What do I do if my approved course/event is cancelled or rescheduled more than 30 days?

A: The application pre-approval is void. Pre-approved applications cannot be transferred to a different course or event. Please follow these steps:

1. Delete your Pre-Approved Application.
2. You must submit a new application for a rescheduled class.

Q: If I get laid-off from my job after my class/event starts and did not have prior approval for class/event, will I still be reimbursed?

A: Per the 2015 fiscal year policy, pre-approval is no longer an option. You would have to be a state of Ohio employee at the time the documentation is submitted for it to be considered for approval.



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Q: How does the program handle reimbursement for courses/seminars that cross fiscal years?

A: The course/event start date determines the fiscal year in which the funds will be encumbered. Ohio's fiscal year begins July 1.

Q: Will I get release time to attend classes/events during working hours?

A: Authorization of release time for employees to attend class is at the discretion of the employing agency, pursuant to their internal policies. Check with your personnel officer or supervisor.

Q: What happens if my reimbursement application or course is denied?

A: If your reimbursement is denied, a notification will be generated including the reason the application was denied. It will also indicate any applicable next steps, such as submitting additional proof of attendance.