Ohio Department of Administrative Services
John Kasich, *Governor*
Robert Blair, *Director*

OhioDAS

State of Ohio Administrative Policy

No: Human Resources **HR-36**

Effective: July 1, 2014

Issued By: Robert Blair, Director

Employee Development Funds for the State Council of Professional Educators OEA/NEA

1.0 Purpose

To administer the Employee Development Funds for qualifying State Council of Professional Educators (SCOPE) OEA/NEA employees in Bargaining Unit 10 pursuant to Section 10.03 of the collective bargaining agreement and governed by this policy.

2.0 Policy

The State of Ohio and SCOPE OEA/NEA mutually recognize that benefits accrue both to the agencies and to their employees through participation in coursework that provides academic college credit; continuing education activities, including attendance at professional conferences, seminars, and workshops; enrollment in educational programs; maintaining licensure and certification; and by obtaining continuing education units (CEUs). Financial assistance is on reimbursement basis only.

2.1 **Employee Eligibility**: To be eligible for reimbursement from this fund, the employee must:

- be an employee in Bargaining Unit 10, represented by SCOPE OEA/NEA;
- be paid directly by warrant of the director of budget and management;
- be in an active pay status; and,
    - For purposes of this policy, active pay status is defined as the conditions under which an employee is eligible to receive pay, and includes, but is not limited to, vacation leave, personal leave, bereavement leave, adoption/childbirth leave, and military leave. Active pay status does not include full-time disability leave, workers' compensation leave, administrative leave or other leave of absence except approved education leave or if working to supplement a leave at the time that the Application for Reimbursement is submitted.

- be employed by the State of Ohio when the Application for Reimbursement is submitted.

2.2 **Position Abolishment/Layoff**: Employees who, due to a position abolishment/layoff, separate employment or are moved out of the bargaining unit will be reimbursed if the employee started the course/event prior to the effective date of the position abolishment/layoff and all other requirements for reimbursement are met, including availability of funds.

2.3 **Eligible Course and Events**: Courses and events for which employees may seek reimbursement are expected to provide knowledge and/or skills, which could reasonably be expected to relate to any of the major job classifications currently used in the State of Ohio. These major job classifications are listed on the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), Human Resources Division, Talent Management web page at the link below.

http://das.ohio.gov/Divisions/HumanResources/TalentManagement/ClassificationandCompensation/ClassificationSpecifications.aspx

2.3.1 **Tuition Reimbursement**

To be eligible for tuition reimbursement, all of the following criteria must be met:

- Coursework must provide academic college credit.
- Coursework, including distance education courses or other online courses, must be provided by an accredited college or university named in the U.S. Department of Education's Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs located at http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx.
- If grades are given, the employee must attain a "C" or better, or receive a "pass" if assessed on a pass/fail basis.
- Electives and prerequisites must be part of a degree program.

2.3.2 **Reimbursement for Professional Development Events**

To be eligible for reimbursement, events must be one of the following:

- Seminar, workshop, conference, or professional development training that is job related unless approved by management and indicated by signature;
- Courses preparing for or leading to licensure or certification;

- Courses offering continuing education units required to maintain licensure or certification;
- Work skills or computer/technical skills training; or,
- An online course that offers continuing education units (CEUs) or a certificate of completion.

2.3.3 Participants may not use reimbursement for the exact same event more than once per fiscal year.

2.4 **Reimbursement Eligibility and Limits**:

2.4.1 Subject to the limitations of the SCOPE OEA/NEA Employee Development Fund, each employee has a personal cap of $8,000 for the duration of the contract and a cap of $3,500 in any one fiscal year for tuition reimbursement, seminars, workshops, or conferences.

2.4.2 The employee's status (e.g. SCOPE OEA/NEA employee, exempt, etc.) on the date the Application for Reimbursement is submitted for the course or event determines the fund from which the reimbursement will come.

- The employee's yearly individual funding limit is based on the employee's status (e.g. SCOPE OEA/NEA, exempt, etc.) on the date the Application for Reimbursement is submitted for the course or event.

2.4.3 The funds are encumbered in the fiscal year that the Application for Reimbursement is submitted. For purposes of this policy, the fiscal year will coincide with the State's payroll calendar which can be accessed at:

https://myohio.oaks.ohio.gov/psp/PAPRD/EMPLOYEE/EMPL/h/?tab=OH_HCM_HOME

The last date of the 2015 payroll fiscal year for reimbursement from the OEA Employee Development Fund is June 8, 2015.

2.4.4 Disbursement of funds is contingent upon the availability of funds.

2.4.5 The cost of books associated with an approved course is eligible for reimbursement. Taxes or fees for shipping and handling are not eligible for reimbursement.

2.5 **Ineligible Expenses**:

2.5.1 Expenses that are not eligible for reimbursement, include but are not limited to:

- Any non-instructional fees (e.g. application fees, registration fees, drop or late fees, graduation fees, parking fees, non-instructional field trips, flight instruction airtime fees, and other related expenses)
- Travel expenses (e.g. parking, travel, food or lodging expenses)
- Fees for licenses or certifications
- Hardware or commercial software fees, unless the hardware or commercial software is necessary to access the course
- Equipment
- Memberships
- Subscriptions for periodicals or software
- Taxes or fees for shipping and handling for books associated with an approved course

2.5.2 Fees for exams are generally not eligible for reimbursement. However, such fees are eligible for reimbursement if the exam is a requirement to complete an eligible course and all other requirements for reimbursement are met.

2.5.3 Reimbursement is not available for courses or events that are completely paid for by scholarship, grant, or an agency. For courses or events that are partially paid for by scholarship, grant, or an agency, reimbursement is not available for the portion of the cost that is paid for by the scholarship, grant, or the agency.

2.6 Application for Reimbursement:

2.6.1 Unless otherwise noted, employees shall apply for reimbursement within **ninety (90) calendar days** of the completion of the course or event. As explained above, for purposes of this policy, the fiscal year will coincide with the State's payroll calendar which can be accessed at:

https://myohio.oaks.ohio.gov/psp/PAPRD/EMPLOYEE/EMPL/h/?tab=OH_HCM_HOME

The last date of the 2015 payroll fiscal year for reimbursement from the OEA Employee Development Fund is June 8, 2015.

- *Example:*
  An employee completes a course on May 1, 2015. The employee submits an Application for Reimbursement on May 5, 2015. The funds will be drawn in fiscal year 2015.

However, if the employee did not submit on May 5, but instead waited until July 5, the funds will be drawn from fiscal year 2016.

This applies to individual and overall fund limitations.

2.6.2 Employees shall provide the following documentation:

- A completed online *EDF Application for Reimbursement* form
- Proof of cost of activity
- Proof of payment of activity cost
- Proof of attendance
    - For tuition reimbursement, proof of attendance must be the grade received, including pass/fail. Electronic grade documentation is sufficient if it is from the registrar of the institution.

Please refer to the EDF Reimbursement checklist, http://das.ohio.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=5R6xysTwCpE%3d&tabid=733, for explanations and examples of the required documentation.

2.6.3 The Office of Learning and Professional Development staff may request additional documentation, if needed, such as a brochure or other description of the course or event.

2.6.4 All complete and accurate applications will be approved on a first come, first served basis, provided funds are available.

2.6.5 If an employee submits an application that is incomplete or has errors, the employee will be notified via email and offered an opportunity to correct the problem. The email will explain what information is missing and will indicate that the application will be denied until the missing information is provided or any errors are corrected.

2.6.6 Once a complete and accurate application has been submitted, DAS will make every effort to respond within 72 hours.

2.7 **Reimbursement:**

Reimbursement will be included in the employee's biweekly paycheck.

2.8 **Appeal of Decision:**

2.8.1 If an employee's Application for Reimbursement is denied, that employee may appeal to the manager of the Employee Development Fund. An appeal form is attached and is available on the EDF website. If the appeal is denied by the manager, the employee may appeal to the Chief of Human Resources for the Department of Administrative Services. The decision of the Chief of Human Resources will be final.

2.8.2 Any grievance involving denial of reimbursement for the SCOPE OEA/NEA Employee Development Fund should be sent to DAS/Office of Collective Bargaining for review.

3.0 Authority

ORC § 124.86; Section 10.03 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the State of Ohio and SCOPE OEA/NEA (effective July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015)

This policy supersedes any previously issued directive or policy and will remain effective until canceled or superseded.

4.0 Revision History

Date	Description of Change
07/01/2013	Policy reissued in new format.
07/01/2014	Policy reissued; eliminated preapproval process
07/01/2015	Scheduled policy review.

5.0 Inquiries

Inquiries regarding the SCOPE OEA/NEA Employee Development Fund may be directed to the employee's union steward, Labor Relations Coordinator or the Employee Development Funds staff.

Office of Learning and Professional Development
Ohio Department of Administrative Services
30 East Broad Street, 28th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

1.800.409.1205 | EDFunds@das.ohio.gov

Direct inquiries about this policy to:

Office of HRD/OCB Policy
Human Resources Division
Ohio Department of Administrative Services
1602 West Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43223

614.752.5393 | DASHRD.HRPolicy@das.ohio.gov

State of Ohio Administrative Policies may be found online at:
www.das.ohio.gov/forStateAgencies/Policies.aspx

Appendix A - Resources

Document Name
Online Application Access The online application system may be accessed at http://edf.ohio.gov.
Appeal Form: http://das.ohio.gov/Portals/0/DASDivisions/HumanResources/LPD/pdf/EDFappealform.pdf

Appeal of Decision

Name:	
Department:	
Choose One:	
Phone:	
Email Address:	
Date Submitted:	

Email: EDFunds@das.ohio.gov

In the space below list the reason(s) your reimbursement was denied. Describe why you should be granted an exception from the reimbursement policies. You may attach additional pages if needed. Complete form, print and forward to the email address listed above. You will receive a response within 10 business days from the receipt of your appeal.

EDF use only

Decision: Reviewer: Decision Date: