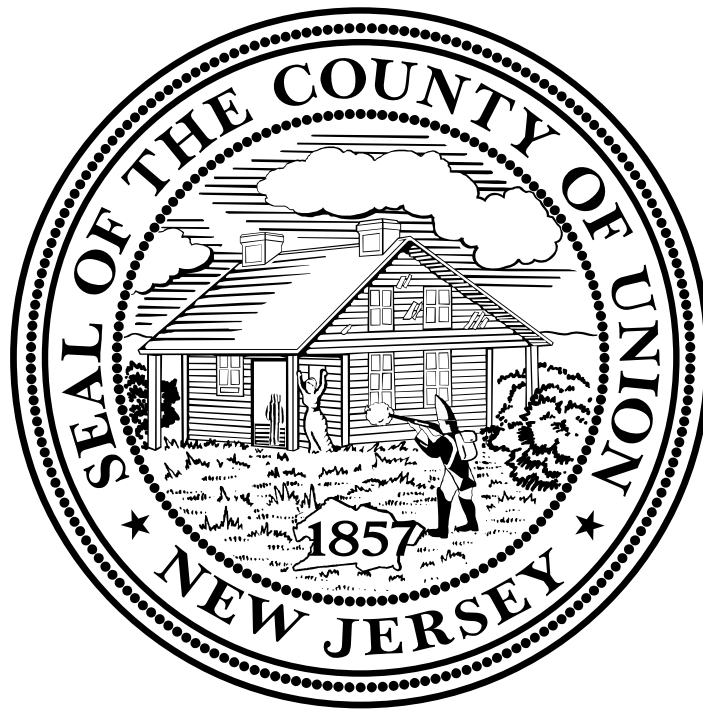


COUNTY OF UNION

Tuition Reimbursement



Union County

We're Connected to You

A service of the

UNION COUNTY BOARD OF
CHOSEN COMMISSIONERS

UNION COUNTY TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Policy Statement

The County of Union, particularly the Board of Chosen Commissioners recognizes the importance of enabling employees to reach their personal goals while also creating a pool of qualified staff in the County which ultimately serves the citizens of the County of Union.

Although employees are encouraged to apply, selection into the Tuition Reimbursement Program of the County will be based on the employee's fulfillment of the eligibility requirements, availability of funds, and the employee's strong desire to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the County of Union.

The County of Union has established partnerships with Kean University and Union County College (UCC) for courses leading to Associates', Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees. The intent of the County's Tuition Reimbursement Program is to provide employees with the opportunity to enhance their education while applying the new knowledge learned to their own work situations within the County.

The County will consider other institutions solely at the discretion of the County. The courses have to provide a path to a degree. Non degree continuing education or training should be addressed through the existing EPEC program with the appropriate Department head using that department's budget if approved by the County Manager.

General Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the Tuition Reimbursement Program, employees:

1. Shall possess a strong desire to pursue a career path in public service within Union County government. Shall be an active, full-time employee scheduled to work at least 35 hours per week at the start of coursework.
2. Shall be in good standing with a satisfactory performance record and receive approval from the County Manager or designee. Potential students should NOT apply for a program anticipating reimbursement without being approved by intended institution as eligible to attend classes. *Approval of tuition reimbursement is NOT AUTOMATIC and is considered on an annual basis. Approvals of the applications will be given on a first come first served basis upon receipt and review of the eligibility criteria. Your reimbursement amount is determined annually pending the availability of funds and the approval of the Board of Chosen Commissioners as to the Program and the amount allocated for reimbursement per accepted employee.*
3. Shall sign the County of Union Tuition Reimbursement Repayment Agreement available at the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations and submit it with your application. Reimbursement is based on grades higher than a "C" or better or a "Pass" grade in both

undergraduate and graduate coursework. PLEASE NOTE: Results lower than a “C” grade, “Fail” grade or an incomplete shall not be eligible for reimbursement.

4. Shall provide within thirty (30) days after completion of the course(s) evidence of satisfactory grade along with the course name and number, an itemized receipt for tuition per academic semester or session, and proof of payment.
5. Employee must meet all criteria for acceptance to the proposed institution.
6. Employees must have served at least twelve months of employment with the County to be considered.

Eligible Programs for Reimbursement

All of the following are subject to plan restrictions:

Associate Degrees at Union County College (UCC): Employees can pursue their Associate degree by attending Union County College.

Bachelor’s Degrees at Kean*: Employees can pursue their Bachelor’s degree by attending Kean University or participating in their online program for a County approved course.

Graduate and/or Certificate Degrees at Kean*: Graduate students must have a Bachelor’s degree as per Kean University.

Doctoral Degrees at Kean*: Graduate students must have a Master’s degree as per Kean University.

***Other Professional Certificates and/or Programs** may be considered if applicable to employee’s job functions.

Other Institutions: Degrees at other institutions, may be proposed by employees and shall be judged on their merit by the appropriate County officials and any decision shall be strictly at the discretion of the County.

Required Grades for Percentage of Reimbursement

Employees, if approved, will be reimbursed per academic semester or session up to 100% as follows:

A (A+/A/A-) or “Pass” grade (pass/fail course) = 100%

B (B+/B/ B-) = 75%

C (C+/C) = 50%

Grades below a C or a “Fail” grade are not eligible for reimbursement.

Restrictions

In addition to any limitations or restrictions noted above, the following will apply:

The County caps the reimbursement at the present cost per credit for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral courses at Kean University.

Participation in the program is voluntary and will in no way guarantee promotion or transfers within the County. No agreement shall be made or inferred regarding job change, transfer or promotion upon completion of any coursework or degree program.

If an employee has educational opportunities available contractually, they would be precluded from utilizing the County plan described in this policy statement.

Registration fees, textbooks, lab fees, late fees, school supplies, cost of parking, travel, meals, lodging or any other costs associated with the course do not qualify for reimbursement. Only tuition is a reimbursable expense.

The tuition reimbursement will be applied *after* all other financial aid that covers tuition only, including state grants, scholarships and other sources of award, have been applied.

When scholarships, discounts or grants have been awarded for tuition, and do not specified a percentage designated to tuition and other mandatory university fees, these funds will always be applied first to the tuition and then to other mandatory university fees.

All courses are to be taken and coursework completed during non-working hours. No wages shall be paid for attendance in any courses.

Union County reserves the right to suspend or amend the program at its will. This restriction does not apply to employees who obtained prior approval and are actively attending class.

All courses must be for credit and grade. Courses must directly improve employee knowledge as it pertains to their job performance. Workshops, seminars, etc. not resulting in same are not reimbursable under this program nor are classes to maintain a previously received certification.

Termination of Eligibility

If there is evidence that an employee's job performance is suffering as a result of the time commitment required for the coursework, or if an employee is found to be studying during work hours, these situations will be dealt with in the same manner as any other performance or misconduct issue.

Eligibility ceases upon notice of termination of employment. No reimbursements will be made to former employees, employees who have given notice of resignation, or who have been notified that they will be involuntarily terminated. This includes situations in which approval of such reimbursement was previously provided and/or the course was satisfactorily completed prior to the date of termination. Involuntarily displaced employees will be eligible for reimbursement for any approved courses that are outstanding at the time of their job elimination if the employee submits proof of satisfactory course completion within 30 days of the completion of the course(s). The employee is ineligible, however, to be reimbursed for courses enrolled in after employee has received notice of job elimination.

Repayment Agreement

As a condition of tuition reimbursement, the Employee agrees to repay the COUNTY the full amount of the tuition reimbursement received by the Employee, should the Employee voluntarily terminate their employment or should Employee be terminated for cause, within two years of completing a course or degree. In such case, the Employee shall repay the COUNTY the full amount of the tuition reimbursement after termination date.

Contact Information

For more information on this policy, including the tuition application and reimbursement process, please contact the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations.

Email inquiries or to receive more information: ucpersonnel@ucnj.org.