



Tuition Reimbursement Policy

Adopted 09/09/2020

The Jefferson County Library supports its staff who wish to further their education and experience through formal continuing education opportunities. Applications are competitive based upon funds available in the library's budget and applying does not guarantee an award. Eligibility requirements, application process, and reimbursement requirements are listed below:

Eligibility Criteria for Assistance

In order to be eligible for tuition assistance, an employee must meet the following criteria:

- The employee must have been employed by the library for at least twelve months and must have completed a minimum of 1040 hours of service prior to the application submission.
- The employee must be enrolled and/or provisionally accepted as a degree or certification-seeking student at an institution as approved by the Employer.
- If pursuing a Master's in Library and Information Science degree, the employee must be provisionally accepted and/or enrolled as a degree-seeking student at an American Library Association-accredited graduate program.
- The employee must not have any active disciplinary actions in their personnel file.

Application Process

The Library Director will review applications and make any recommendations to the Board of Trustees as part of the annual budget process. Applications must be received prior to August 15 for consideration in the following year's budget.

Application Package

To apply, interested eligible JCL employees must:

- Submit a letter, including:
 - proposed course of study and how it enhances your library-related skills
 - expected timeframe for course/program completion
 - any special scheduling requirements that might be part of the request
 - total cost of the program, and total amount requested from JCL

- Submit a copy of an acceptance letter for the pursuit of the degree, or proof of meeting the basic requirements of the certificate program, for which you are applying for assistance with documentation of required courses.
- Submit a statement of professional intent including short- and long-term career goals, reasons for selecting the particular program or certification, and the relationship between coursework/certification and career goals at Jefferson County Library.

Processing of Applications

- Applications shall be submitted for review by August 15th for consideration in the following year's budget.
- Responsibility for obtaining all required information and submitting the application on-time is solely that of the applicant.
- Applications that are incomplete, calculated incorrectly and/or are missing supporting documentation will not be considered.

Criteria for Ranking Applicants

The following criteria will be used to rank all candidates after their eligibility has been determined:

- Preference will be given to employees already receiving tuition assistance from the Library.
- Preference will be given to employees who have demonstrated their commitment to the organization and their future potential in the library, either in their current positions or in other library related activities, as determined by the Employer.
- Preference will be given to candidates who have already demonstrated substantial commitment to their educational goals by their academic achievements prior to application into this program.

Double reimbursements

JCL employees applying for tuition/certification assistance must disclose the amount and sources of all other financial assistance (e.g. scholarships, student loans and grants) they are receiving. Applicants may not accept assistance (including funding from other sources) that would create total reimbursement greater than 100% funding of tuition and fees.

Eligible Costs for Assistance

- Accepted applicants for tuition assistance are eligible to receive up to \$2,000 toward tuition and required fees per semester.

- Textbooks and supplemental instructional materials are not eligible costs.
- Completed credits prior to the application for tuition assistance in pursuit of an in-process undergraduate degree or in-process MLIS are not eligible for reimbursement.
- Completed certifications prior to the application for certification assistance are not eligible for reimbursement.

Program Requirements

- Participating employees must remain regular employees to remain eligible to receive tuition/certification assistance.
- Employees must maintain satisfactory performance, illustrated by receiving no disciplinary actions of a written reprimand or greater, during participation in the tuition/certification assistance program.
- Employees shall be ineligible to receive tuition reimbursement for any semesters/quarters where satisfactory performance is not maintained.
- A grade of B or better must be obtained in all courses to qualify for tuition reimbursement. If a required course is only offered as Pass/Fail, a Passing grade must be earned.
- Employees receiving tuition assistance agree to notify the Administrative Services Manager in writing when modifying their proposed educational plans.
- Employees who do not fulfill their submitted educational plans or agreement (such as consistently unacceptable grades, dropping/cancelling courses without informing the Administrative Services Manager, or failure to enroll in courses) shall be ineligible for reimbursements at the discretion of the Library Director and will be required to re-apply in order to receive subsequent funding approval.
- Participants may also be removed from the program in cases where they remain in a non-protected leave without pay or other non-work status for thirty days or more.

Requesting Reimbursement

To request reimbursement for an approved, completed course or courses, the staff member must:

- Submit a letter to the Library Director, stating that the coursework has been satisfactorily completed with a grade of B or better
- Submit a copy of an unofficial transcript confirming the institution, course, and grade received.
- Submit a receipt showing tuition and fees paid.

If the reimbursement request is approved, the Library Director will include it in the next month's vouchers submitted for payment.

Work Schedule

Managers and supervisors are encouraged but not required to accommodate changes in tuition/certification assistance recipients' schedules to allow for course attendance and participation, provided the adjustments are made in a manner that is fair and consistent with accommodations for other staff members and is not disruptive to operations.

Employment Requirements & Repayment

Tuition Assistance

JCL employees receiving tuition assistance shall continue in regular employment with the Jefferson County Library, maintaining satisfactory performance, for a minimum of twelve months after the completion of funded certification, coursework, and/or degree.

Employees who cease JCL employment, either voluntarily or involuntarily, prior to twelve months after completion of their funded certification, coursework and/or degree are required to repay the tuition assistance amount received by the employee to JCL within twenty-four (24) months of ceasing employment. The employee shall meet with the employer and establish a written repayment plan before ceasing employment.

Should a tuition assistance recipient fail to adhere to the employment requirements, JCL has the right to seek repayment through the following means:

- The library will seek repayment in a lump sum.
- If the defaulting tuition assistance recipient cannot pay a lump sum, JCL will meet with the employee prior to ceasing employment to determine a written repayment plan with the employee, not to exceed twenty-four (24) months to repay JCL.
- If the employee defaults on the repayment agreement, JCL has the right to use all legal recourse available, including involuntary garnishment, to recoup the monies owed to JCL.
- Exceptions: The employee will not be required to repay the costs for any tuition/certification assistance received in the event of the employee's death, disability, or involuntary termination resulting from a reduction-in-force or layoff.
 - Disability is defined as any physical or mental disorder, impairment, or condition which prevents the employee from working in a related occupation for a period of six (6) months or longer.