

Article 21 - Professional Development

21.1 Employees desiring to complete class work or training to upgrade their capabilities or certification for their current jobs may be reimbursed for certain tuition expenses upon prior approval by the ESD.

21.2 Employees required by the ESD to attend seminars or educational programs will have their expenses paid by the ESD in accordance with ESD reimbursement procedures.

21.3 Maintenance of license, certificates, or special endorsements that are part of the job or job description are the financial obligation of the employee. Should the ESD require any employee to acquire an additional license, certificate, or special endorsement not otherwise a part of the job or job description, the ESD will pay for the cost of any necessary training and the cost of renewal of the license, certificate, or special endorsement.

21.4 Tuition/ Conference Funds

Members may attend conferences, workshops, or take a class for credit when approved in advance by their Supervisor and Human Resources. Approval will be granted provided that funds are available and the professional development program meets at least one (1) of the following criteria: (1) program aligns with the employee's professional goal; (2) relationship to employee's immediate job performance or future planned responsibilities; (3) ESD needs; or (4) individual growth adding to the employee's abilities, skills, job-related interests, and professional growth.

A. Professional leave ~~may~~ shall be granted to an employee for attendance at professional meetings during work time, workshops, seminars, and visitations to exemplary programs. When such leave is granted, it will be at the employee's regular rate of pay. Any additional hours beyond the employee's regular work hours must be pre-approved.

B. All requests for tuition/conference funds must be submitted and approved in advance of the start of the course or conference on forms provided by the ESD to the employee's direct supervisor.

C. For the duration of this agreement, the ESD will budget \$45,000 each year for conference expenses. Members who work 30 or more hours/week are entitled to up to \$500 annually in approved conference funds until the fund is exhausted. The amount shall be available on a prorated basis for employees who work at least 20 hours per week but less than 30 hours per week. Conference registration may be reimbursed prior to the conference upon

request according to procedural timelines outlined for conference registration and reimbursement by the ESD human resources department.

D. For the duration of this agreement, the ESD will budget \$45,000 each year for tuition reimbursement for approved tuition costs for employees taking classes to achieve career advancement opportunities with NWRESA. Members who work 30 or more hours/week may request up to the equivalent of four (4) credit hours at the PSU graduate rate. Required textbooks may be included in the reimbursement amount. The amount shall be available on a prorated basis for employees who work at least 20 hours per week but less than 30 hours per week. Tuition expenses may be reimbursed prior to the course upon request according to procedural timelines outlined for tuition reimbursement by the human resources department.

E. Carryover from one fiscal year to another of tuition dollars shall occur in the event that there are unexpended funds in the pool at the close of the fiscal year. Growth in carryover shall not exceed \$50,000. **The maximum total size of the pool is \$50,000.** If there are unexpended funds at the end of the fiscal year, employees may request reimbursement for up to an additional four (4) credits at the PSU graduate rate for courses toward career advancement with the ESD.