

## 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~~ Employees 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 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 ninety thousand dollars (\$90,000) ~~\$45,000~~ each fiscal year for conference expenses. ~~Members~~ Employees who work thirty (30) or more hours/week are entitled to up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) ~~\$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 twenty (20) hours per week but less than thirty (30) hours per week. For any expense beyond one thousand dollars (\$1,000), the employee's department may provide additional funding. 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 forty five thousand dollars (\$45,000) each year for tuition reimbursement for approved tuition costs for

employees taking classes to achieve career advancement opportunities with NWRES. ~~Members~~ Employees who work thirty (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 twenty (20) hours per week but less than thirty (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 and/or conference expense dollars shall occur in the event that there are unexpended funds in the pool(s) at the close of the fiscal year. ~~Growth in carryover shall not exceed \$50,000.~~ If there are unexpended tuition 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.

### 21.5 Mentorship Program

- (a) As program needs require, the ESD shall post program mentor vacancies so that all employees have the opportunity to apply.
- (i) Each vacancy shall be on a one (1) fiscal year temporary basis.
- (ii) Each vacancy posting shall be sent to all employees who qualify.
- (iii) Employees with at least one (1) year of experience in the ESD are eligible to apply to serve as mentors.
- (iv) ESD program supervisors or administrators, with input from an Association representative, shall select mentors based on experience, role alignment, and program needs.
- (b) Participation as a mentor is voluntary; employees may accept or decline the assignment.
- (c) Mentees are required to engage in mentoring sessions within their designated work hours; any mentoring conducted outside such hours must be recorded on the mentee's timecard.
- (d) Mentors shall receive an annual stipend of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for time spent mentoring new classified staff and participation in ESD-provided mentor training.
- (i) The stipend will be paid in three (3) installments following mentor assignment confirmation. The stipend is non-recurring and applies only for the year in which the mentoring occurs.
- (ii) Mentors who resign their position or are removed with just cause shall receive a prorated stipend amount for the portion of the year served.

(e) Mentors are expected to attend ESD-provided training sessions related to mentorship practices. Training time shall be considered part of the compensated mentoring assignment. The ESD shall provide mentors with clear expectations and support resources.