

Tuition Assistance Program Overview

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TAP Overview

Office of Human Resources, Montgomery County Government

Agenda

- Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) Overview
 - What is Tuition Assistance Program?
 - Eligibility Requirements
 - Funding Level for FY17
 - Discuss what cost TAP covers and not covers
 - Discuss Your Obligations
- Step by Step TAP Process
- Demo (on-line application)
- Q & A



Tuition Assistance Program Overview

- Tuition assistance is funding that the county provides to help an employee pay for education or training the employee chooses to take.
- Total funding for the program is proposed by the County Executive and appropriated by County Council.
- Total **APPROVED** funding for FY17 TAP is \$435,000
 - ✓ \$150,000 is set for Municipal & County Government Employees Organization (MCGEO)
 - ✓ \$150,000 is set for International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and UNREP Employees
 - ✓ \$135,000 is set for Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Employees



Tuition Assistance Program Overview (cont.)

- Funding levels for represented employees are determined through collective bargaining with the designated employee representatives. Funding level for unrepresented employees is determined by OHR Director.
- The program and the funds are administered by Office of Human Resources.
- Tuition assistance funds are available to employees with merit system status on a first come, first-served basis until all funding for the fiscal year has been obligated. Once the funds are depleted for the fiscal year, tuition assistance is not available until the next year.



Tuition Assistance Program Overview (cont.)

- The courses/trainings must be directly related to:
 - The employee's current County job functions or career ladder in the same job series or profession;
 - A field of study that will prepare the employee to make a career change within the County.
- An employee receiving tuition assistance must participate in the educational activity:
 - During the employee's off duty hours
 - On a flexible work schedule; or
 - On approved leave, other than administrative leave or PIL



Tuition Assistance Program Overview (cont.)

- Course(s) must be taken at an accredited College, University or Institution as recognized by the United States Department of Education or Higher Education Accreditation Commission.
- Course(s) start date must be on the current fiscal year (FY17).



Who is eligible for tuition assistance?

- All County employees with merit system status; and
- Employees of the state's Attorney's Office (but not the state's Attorney).
- Montgomery County Active Volunteers (Fire Rescue).



Are New Employees Eligible to participate in the Tuition Assistance Program?

- Yes, as a probationary employee (i.e. a permanent full-time or part-time employee who does not yet have merit system status with the County), you may apply for tuition assistance.
- Initially, you'll have to pay the tuition and fees. After your tuition assistance request is approved, the County will reimburse you for those direct training costs when you successfully complete the course and have been granted merit system status.



Funding Level for Fiscal Year 2017

Funding is set on a fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) basis.

Maximum amount for full time/part-time employee may receive during FY17:

- MCGEO/OPT \$1,830.00/\$915.00
- MCGEO/SLT \$1,830.00/\$915.00
- FIRE (MCCFFA) \$1,830.00/\$915.00
- POLICE(FOP) \$1,730.00/\$865.00
- Unrepresented \$1,830.00/\$915.00



What TAP covers and does not cover

➤ For MCGEO and UNREP employees,

- *TAP **only** covers tuition cost*

➤ For IAFF and FOP employees,

- *TAP covers tuition cost and other direct or compulsory cost of the training such as:*
 - *Lab fees,*
 - *Library Services fees*
 - *Registration fees*
 - *Technology fees.*
 - *etc..*



What TAP covers and does not cover

Montgomery College 2014-2015 Tuition and Fees for 2014-2015

<u>Bill Hours</u>	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Consolidated Fee</u>	<u>Facility Fee</u>	<u>Technology Fee</u>	<u>Transportation Fee</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	115.00	50.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	179.00
2	230.00	50.00	10.00	10.00	8.00	308.00
3	345.00	69.00	15.00	15.00	12.00	456.00
4	460.00	92.00	20.00	20.00	16.00	608.00
5	575.00	115.00	25.00	25.00	20.00	760.00
6	690.00	138.00	30.00	30.00	24.00	912.00
7	805.00	161.00	35.00	35.00	28.00	1,064.00
8	920.00	184.00	40.00	40.00	32.00	1,216.00
9	1,035.00	207.00	45.00	45.00	36.00	1,368.00



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What TAP covers and does not cover

(cont.)

- TAP does not cover;
 1. Books, supplies, application fees, late registration fee, parking, travel cost, food, lodging;
 2. Credit by examination courses;
 3. Credit courses taken as an audit (no grade);
 4. Exam fees;
 5. Courses taken outside the USA;
 6. Courses which are primarily recreational or utilize a specific faith-based method as a primary approach to problem solving or treatment.



Your Obligations

- Must remain employed by the County for one to two years (depending on CBA or personnel policy) after completing course funded by TAP.
- All courses must be completed with a passing grade or documented by a course completion of certificate.
- The employee's responsibility to submit the original grade notice or copy of certificate of completion to OHR staff or the employee will have to pay back the County.
- Employee also must submit **degree/enrollment verification letter** from the school



Step by Step TAP Process

- Employee discusses his/her educational goals with supervisor.
- Employee submits application online.
- Application gets forwarded to Supervisor for signature (only MCGEO & Non-Rep).
- When a supervisor approves the application, an approval notification e-mail goes to the employee with instructions to print the application, attach all require documents and submit to department director (DD) for approval and signature.



Step by Step TAP Process

Below is an example of an approval notification e-mail to the employee!

Your tuition assistance application has been approved by your supervisor. In order for your application process to be completed, please follow the steps below and provide all documents requested.

- Print your completed application form and checklist from [online system](#).
- Attach a copy of Course Description for each course from the Educational Institution
- Attach an itemized bill with all the costs broken down to include tuition and all fees
- If applicable, attach a copy of grade report or certificate of completion from previous course(s) paid by Montgomery County Government Tuition Assistance Program
- If you are using annual leave or flexing your work schedule to take course(s), you must attach leave request form signed by your supervisor
- Attach a copy of receipt (if you already paid for the course and asking for reimbursement)

Please submit all the documents listed above to your Department Director's office for signature. Once signed by your Director, forward the form and all required documents at least four weeks before the start date of your course to OHR, 255 Rockville Pike, suite 102, Rockville MD 20850. Attention: Tuition Assistance Program Coordinator



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Step by Step TAP Process (cont.)

- Once reviewed & signed by DD, application gets forwarded to OHR (only MCGEO & Non-REP).
- OHR reviews and makes recommendation (Approved/Disapproved).
- If application is approved, OHR sends out letter to employee. This is a voucher letter to be submitted to educational/institution by the employee.

(The Voucher letter is an authorization letter addressed to the vendor/Institution to bill or invoice the County directly).



Step by Step TAP Process (cont.)

- The employee must submit the Voucher Letter to educational/institution.
- County receives bill/invoice and makes payment to educational/institution.
- If employee requesting reimbursement (already paid for course), payment will be processed directly to the employee.



How and when to apply for it

- Using only on-line application form at:
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/training/TA.html>
or paper application (only for employees without AD account)
- To use the on-line application, you must have a county username and password.
- You must be on the County Network to get access to the system.
- On-line Applications are available July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.



How and when to apply for it (cont.)

- Before signing on to apply, you must:
 1. Identify degree program, course or workshop of interest.
 2. Obtain Course Description including contact hours, cost, dates, # of credits, etc.
 3. Discuss Courses with your immediate supervisor.
 4. Determine how the course is position related and/or will enhance your career development plan.



Demo

- On line TAP application demo



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