

Proposed STLS Tuition Reimbursement Policy

The current labor contract between the Southern Tier Library System (STLS) and the Employees Association provides for tuition reimbursement. This policy document delineates the specific actions to be taken by STLS management and STLS employees to implement efficiently and effectively this tuition reimbursement commitment.

Employee Qualifications

All employees, both members of the Employees Association and non-members, qualify for the STLS tuition reimbursement after they have completed one year of continuous employment at STLS. The program is available to both full-time and part-time employees.

Qualifying Education Programs

Tuition reimbursement is available for courses that, in the judgement of the Executive Director of STLS, are job related. Where an employee is enrolled in a degree program that requires courses that are job related and non job related, STLS tuition reimbursement is not available for those courses that are non job related.

Qualifying Institutions

Tuition reimbursement is only available for studies at fully accredited educational institutions offering course work at a level higher than that of high school.

Amount of Reimbursement

Reimbursement policy is based on a conventional college program consisting of two semesters per year.

- (1) Employees who meet the requirements of the tuition program will be partially reimbursed for the tuition costs of courses they successfully complete with a final grade of an A or a B.
- (2) Reimbursement shall be available for up to six (6) credit hours of course work per semester. The total credit hours reimbursed in each calendar year shall not exceed twelve (12).
- (3) STLS grade-related tuition reimbursement shall apply to only that part of the tuition cost paid for directly by the employee after deducting tuition costs paid for by other reimbursement programs such as grants, scholarships, etc.

- (4) Qualifying course tuition costs paid for directly by the employee shall be reimbursed at a rate of seventy-five percent (75%) for a final grade of A and at a rate of fifty-percent (50%) for a final grade of B. Where the educational institution uses a grading system other than a letter grade the STLS Executive Director shall determine reasonable reimbursement percentages corresponding to the possible course outcomes.
- (5) The STLS reimbursement program is limited to tuition costs. Other potential educational costs, such as laboratory fees, the purchase of books and other educational materials, board and lodging, and transportation are not included in the STLS program.
- (6) Where a qualifying educational institution uses a trimester or quarter system reimbursement shall be provided at a rate of six credit hours per trimester or quarter, but shall not exceed twelve (12) credit hours per calendar year.
- (7) Where a school does not use the normal credit hour system of 3 to 4 hours per course, courses may be considered to be equivalent to 3 or 4 credit hours at the discretion of the STLS Executive Director.

Employee Application Procedure

Prior to each semester, trimester, or quarter, the employee shall submit a request for consideration for tuition reimbursement for each course he or she plans to take.

- (1) The request shall include the following items documented, where appropriate, by material copied from the educational institution's course catalog or other documents.
 - (a) The name of the college or educational institution.
 - (b) Dates for the start and finish of the semester, trimester, or quarter.
 - (c) The name of each course, the course description, the number of credits assigned to the course by the institution, the total cost of tuition, and the tuition reimbursement anticipated by the employee from sources other than STLS.
 - (d) A written justification by the employee that the course or courses proposed for study should be considered as job related.
 - (e) The relation of the proposed course or courses to a more general study plan (such as an associate or bachelors degree) if appropriate.
- (2) Upon receipt of the employee's application the Executive Director shall approve or disapprove the employee's application on a course by course basis. Approval of a planned course of study implies that STLS will provide tuition reimbursement in the amount specified in this policy document after the employee successful completes the course with an A or B grade and continues to satisfy the other requirements of this policy.

- (3) After completion of a course approved for tuition reimbursement, the employee shall submit the following.
 - (a) A copy of an official transcript verifying completion of the course and grade awarded.
 - (b) A copy of a detailed statement by the educational institution's registrar of the tuition costs for the course including grants, scholarships, and other reimbursements not originating with STLS.
 - (c) A signed statement by the employee that the documents submitted are to his or her knowledge are complete and accurate.

- (4) Upon receipt of the required documentation and verification of eligibility, STLS will reimburse that portion of the employee's tuition that conforms with the provisions of this policy.