



**Governor's Office of
Employee Relations**



Education and Training Program for NYSCOPBA-represented Employees

**Program Guidelines
for
April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021**

**Education and Training Program
for NYSCOPBA-represented Employees**

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Education and Training Program Guidelines for NYSCOPBA-represented Employees

A. Program Overview

The Education and Training Program (ETP) is administered by the Security Services Unit Joint Labor-Management Committee (JLMC) on behalf of the New York State/New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association (NYS/NYSCOPBA) Joint Labor-Management Committee (JLMC).

The ETP enables NYSCOPBA-represented employees to maintain or improve job-related skills in their profession and gain the knowledge and skills necessary for promotional opportunities and career mobility within NYS service. The ETP provides eligible employees with reimbursement up to a State fiscal year (April 1 through March 31) maximum at any accredited college, university, or approved educational organization, once the course has been successfully completed and payment has been made to the educational provider. Qualifying courses must begin, or have begun, during the period of April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021.

B. Program Highlights

The Education and Training Program:

- Provides reimbursement to employees actively employed a minimum of half-time in a NYSCOPBA-represented position for the duration of qualifying training and/or educational courses that began on or after April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021.
- Provides a pre-approval process. It is recommended that applicants seek pre-approval to ensure reimbursement eligibility.
- Is designed to reimburse applicants 100 percent of the covered tuition expenses up to a maximum State fiscal year allowance of \$1,750, including reimbursement for course-related textbooks, lab fees and digital fees.
- Reimbursement is based on the satisfactory completion of the course; one must attain a grade of at least C. If the only option for the grading of a course is Pass/Fail, a grade of Pass will be accepted as evidence of satisfactory completion. ETP will not cover incomplete or failed courses.
- Requires a separate application submission for each course. Applications (courses beginning on or after April 1, 2020) must be submitted no later than ninety (90) calendar days from the end date of the course. The postmark or email date will be used to determine the timeliness of the application.
- Provides reimbursement for actual out-of-pocket expenses including registration, tuition, textbooks, lab fees and digital fees.
- *Will not* cover courses that are available through the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervisions (DOCCS) Training Academy should an applicant decide to use an outside source or Armorer School and any outside weapons training programs.
- *Will only* cover CDL courses for individuals who have been awarded a bid job that requires a CDL.

C. Employee Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the ETP, NYSCOPBA-represented employees must:

- Be actively employed a minimum of half-time in a NYSCOPBA-represented position *for the duration of the qualifying training and/or educational courses*.
- Have had six months continuous State service immediately prior to the beginning date of the coursework.

Employees working less than half-time or on unpaid leave of absence are not eligible.

D. Course Eligibility

ETP is available for credit or non-credit, job-related or career-related, courses at an accredited college, university, or approved educational organization.

Job-Related Coursework

The course directly supports or improves skills required for current job assignments, duties, or responsibilities.

Career-Related Coursework

The course will prepare the employee for advancement within his/her current title series or occupation.

The course develops the operational, administrative or management capacity of the employee.

The coursework is necessary to obtain a degree or certification to qualify for job opportunities within State service.

Approved Educational Organizations

The educational organization offering the course must meet the academic standards of the NYS Education Department or the U.S. Office of Education.

E. Application Time Period

Applications (courses beginning on or after April 2, 2020) must be submitted no later than ninety (90) calendar days from the end date of the course. The postmark or email date will be used to determine the timeliness of the application.

F. Release Time

ETP does not entitle an employee to receive release time.

G. Expenses Covered

Reimbursable expenses are those costs that relate to the pursuit of an educational activity. Expenses must be itemized on the original receipt.

Eligible individuals are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses 100 percent of the total covered tuition expenses, up to a maximum of \$1,750 per State fiscal year.

Reimbursement within a program year is determined by the start date of the course.

Eligible individuals are also reimbursed for course-related textbooks, lab fees, and digital fees which the employee is required, by the syllabus or course outline, to use for the course.

Reimbursement for the following expenses are limited:

- CDL courses are *only* covered for individuals who have been awarded a bid job that requires a CDL. A copy of the bid award is required.
- Recreation, physical education, hobby or personal interest courses *will only* be considered for reimbursement as electives under an approved matriculated degree program.

Reimbursement for the following expenses are not covered:

- Courses designed for interests outside State service, whether credit or non-credit;
- Armorer School and outside weapons training programs;
- Courses that are available through the NYS DOCCS Training Academy;
- Expenses for supplies or materials other than course-related textbooks, lab fees, and digital fees required for the course.

H. Alternative Sources of Financial Assistance

Alternate sources of financial aid from agency/facility tuition support programs, Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), Pell Grants, Aid for Part-time Study (APTS) Program, NYS Vietnam Veterans Tuition Assistance, Veterans Administration Educational Benefits (GI Bill), and college stipends *must* be reported on the application. This amount will be deducted before computing the allowable reimbursement.

I. Taxation of Employee Benefits (Reimbursements)

At the end of each calendar year, the Office of the State Comptroller will withhold estimated taxes from employees whose reimbursements from this program and any additional educational benefits (reimbursements) from their agency exceed \$5,250. This may result in substantial withholding from paychecks at the end of the year and applicants should plan accordingly. Students are encouraged to seek competent tax advice to determine if the "working condition fringe benefit" is applicable when filing their taxes.

J. Application Sources

Pre-Approval Application Form and ETP Application Packet (ETP Form, AC132-S and AC 3259-S) are available at: www.nyscopba.org/members/nys-programs-grants and goer.ny.gov/nys-correctional-officers-and-police-benevolent-association-inc-nyscopba

K. Application Submission Process

The application process involves the following steps:

Step 1: Pre-approval (Applicant)

Prior to registering for coursework, it is recommended that the *applicant*:

- Complete a separate Pre-Approval Application Form for each course for which reimbursement is requested. Attach a course description or brochure from the institution/organization that includes the itemized cost separate from any fees.
- Submit completed form to the Security Services Unit JLMC for review and approval.

Step 2: Pre-approval Review (JLMC)

Upon receipt of the Pre-Approval Application Form, Security Services Unit *JLMC* will:

- Determine if the application meets the criteria for reimbursement under the ETP Guidelines with respect to employee eligibility, qualification of coursework (job-related/career-related), and educational institution/organization.
- Review the application to confirm required and complete information was provided by the applicant; contact applicant, by email, if there are questions or issues that were identified.
- Notify applicant, by email, of the Security Services Unit JLMC determination.

Step 3: Apply for Reimbursement (Applicant)

To obtain reimbursement, the *applicant* must:

- Complete the coursework with a grade of at least C. If the only option for the grading of a course is Pass/Fail, a grade of Pass will be accepted as evidence of satisfactory completion.
- Complete a separate ETP Application Packet (ETP Form, AC 132-S and AC 3259-S) within the timeframes prescribed in Section E, Application Time Period. Submit the ETP Packet and the following supporting documentation to the Security Services Unit JLMC for review and approval:
 - ✓ A course description or brochure from the educational provider
 - ✓ An original grade report, transcript, or letter on letterhead from the educational provider, stating that the applicant satisfactorily completed the coursework
 - ✓ An original, itemized, paid tuition receipt from the educational provider

- ✓ A course syllabus listing required materials and original paid textbook receipt(s)
 - ✓ Documentation showing the start and end dates of the course or event (month, day, year)
 - ✓ If applicable, a copy of the bid award notification for a position requiring a CDL
- Applicants should retain a copy of all documentation for their records.

Step 4: Final Review and Approval Process (JLMC)

Once the application packet is received, Security Services Unit *JLMC* will:

- Determine if the application meets the criteria for reimbursement under the ETP Guidelines with respect to employee eligibility, qualification of coursework (job-related/career-related), and educational provider.
- Review the application to confirm required and complete information was provided by the applicant and contact applicant, by email, if there are questions or issues that were identified.
- Notify applicant, by email, of the decision for approval.

Submit all documents to:

SSUPrograms@lmc.ny.gov or

NYS Security Services Unit JLMC
ETP/S. DeJohn
240 Washington Avenue Ext., Suite 502
Albany, New York 12203

Education and Training Program Contact

Sandy DeJohn, Program Coordinator
NYS Security Services Unit Labor-Management Committee
(518) 485-0086
sandy.dejohn@lmc.ny.gov

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