



CUYAHOGA COUNTY

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

EAP POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish the guidelines for the Cuyahoga County Educational Assistance Program (EAP) administered by OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County (OMJ/C-CC). The OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County is responsible for ensuring that EAP criteria and procedures are objective and non-discriminatory. Future changes to this policy will be submitted to the County Council for approval. The local parameters for authorizing EAP's are listed below.

A. Customer's Eligibility Criteria:

1. The recipient of the EAP fund must be a resident of Cuyahoga County, who is at least eighteen (18) years of age, and will be selected based on objective criteria, regardless of race, ethnic origin and sexual orientation.
2. Pursuant to County Council Ordinance Number O2012-0007, OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County may give priority to awarding EAP's based on an individual's financial need.
3. Employees of Cuyahoga County and OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County are not eligible to participate in the program. Additionally immediate family members that are dependents of employees of Cuyahoga County and OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County are not eligible to participate in the program. Immediate family members include an employee's spouse, child, child's spouse, stepchild, stepchild's spouse, grandchild, grandchild's spouse, parent, stepparent, parent-in-law or sibling.

B. Types of Training to be Funded:

4. A customer who has been determined eligible for occupational training services may select a training/educational provider from the OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County list of approved training providers. These providers must be accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (The Higher Learning Commission), registered with the Ohio State Board of Career Colleges or be listed as one of the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland Partners.
5. Training must be in occupations identified as 'growth' or demand occupations identified as 'emerging, with the potential for growth,' as defined within the OMJ/C-CC demand occupation policy.
6. Funding may be considered for college level programs under the following conditions:
 - a. Satisfaction of a certificate or degree is required upon completion.
 - b. Customers must demonstrate that they have the financial resources to support themselves while in training.
 - c. Customers must agree to and sign the EAP agreement.
 - d. Customer must agree to job placement assistance upon the completion of training.
 - e. An EAP may be issued based upon the following criteria:

- i. Customers that completed the majority of their coursework, defined as within twelve credit hours of completion of an associate's, bachelor's or master's degree, with a GPA of 2.0 or better for an associate's or bachelor's level program and a 3.0 or better for graduate level programs.
- ii. Customers must complete the training within 18 months including the summer sessions.

C. Expected Outcomes:

7. An EAP will be issued per the Employment Connection's demand occupation policy or a degreed program with a college; or in a case where OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County can certify that a job offer exists. Continuing Education and other similar courses may be allowed.
8. Training should be directly related to achieving an employment placement outcome. The employment outcome must be occupation specific. For example, if the employment goal is "To become a Truck Driver" obtaining a Truck Driver training Certification and a CDL license is appropriate.
9. In order to be approved for an EAP grant, an individual must be suitable for the training referral, be job ready by the completion of training, suitable for employment by the end of the training, and able to achieve the reading and math levels required by the targeted employment occupation. After the completion of occupational training, if the customer is not employed, he/she is required to continue job search activities through OMJ/C-CC. If the customer fails to actively engage in job search activities, the OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County reserves the right to seek restitution (see Restitution clause below).
10. All applicants shall apply for the Pell Grant and/or the Ohio Institutional Grant if the training desired qualifies for these types of grants. Depending on need and the availability of EAP funding, Pell funds may be combined with other funding (i.e., WIA, TAA, veterans, TANF, HUD E&T, incumbent worker, including, but not limited to workers effected by potential layoff prior to official notice) to cover total expenses. An applicant must apply for Pell funds prior to the beginning of training and submit confirmation of the application. These funds can be applied for electronically using the Internet or the Workshop facilitated by EC staff or partners.
11. The customer must present evidence as to how the proposed training will result in steady employment, earning a wage that leads to self-sufficiency.

D. Grant Amount and Allowable Expenses:

12. Every eligible customer can avail of the EAP fund up to a maximum of \$5,000. The trainee is responsible for securing additional costs above the \$5,000 EAP fund limit. Additional funding from other sources (i.e., WIA, TAA, VSTP, TANF, HUD E & T) may be available and will be approved based on each source's established provisions.
13. Customers are eligible for EAP training in one occupation/degree. Multiple EAP's may be approved if training is related to one occupation, not to exceed \$5,000 in total for a customer (Example: A resident is attending a school and a class needed is not offered that semester/quarter, the resident can go to another school for that class).
14. EAP's may be utilized for expenses related to training, including but not limited to the

following: books, tuition and fees, certification, licensing, testing fees. All amounts for these expenses are included in determining the total amount of the EAP and cannot exceed the EAP established maximum defined in #12.

15. If the cost of training exceeds funding limitation guidelines, OMJ/C-CC should ensure that adequate documentation is obtained from the customer regarding how the remaining balance will be paid. In some circumstances, customer may be required to apply for or access student loans or incur personal debt as a condition of participation. In the event a financial plan cannot be determined, funding may be denied.

The EAP must be in compliance with the other parameters of this policy. Exceptions can only be made to this policy with the approval of the Executive Director, or his/her designee.

E. Funding Limitations:

16. The following limitations will be applied related to the number of EAP's written to training institutions and for the number written for specific occupations:
 - No more than 10% of the total EAP's will be issued for a particular occupation;
 - No more than 10% of the total EAP's will be issued to a single training institution, with the exception of a public college or university for credit coursework leading to a degree.
17. The training institutions participating in the EAP must accept the performance payment points identified in the Policy for Agreements and Payments to Eligible Training Providers policy, unless they are a public institution.
18. EAP's should not exceed eighteen (18) months. An EAP may be withdrawn if a customer fails to maintain at least a "C" average or does not meet the training institution's good standing status.
19. An EAP will not be used for payment of late fees caused by customer error or delay. The customer will be responsible for these items, as they are responsible for other fines or penalties or any other outstanding charges. Health insurance is not an allowable expense.

F. Restitution:

20. OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County reserves the right to seek restitution and damages in cases of misrepresentation, fraud, non compliance or abuse of funds.

CUYAHOGA COUNTY COUNCIL EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) PROCEDURES

The following outlines the program procedures for participating in the Cuyahoga County Educational Assistance Program:

1. Orientation – County residents interested in EAP funding would register to attend an OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County (OMJ/C-CC) orientation workshop. At the Orientation workshop, the individuals would be introduced to the services OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County offers. At Orientation, individuals would meet with an Employment Specialist to assess their needs, including a review of their resume and an initial assessment of their job readiness.
2. Eligibility – Residents would need to provide documentation that they reside in Cuyahoga County. Evidence could consist of providing a copy of their Drivers License or other identification that identifies their residence (i.e. tax returns, utility bills, etc.).
3. Suitability – Resident’s interested in EAP may be required to satisfy the following criteria for consideration:
 - a) Is in need of training based on an individual interview, evaluation or assessment with an Employment Specialist. The results of testing and/or results of career exploration exercises indicate that the applicant has the skills, qualifications and interest needed to be successful in the field for which he/she desires training; and
 - b) Has at least the minimum skills and qualifications required to successfully participate in the selected training program and scores at an eighth grade level or above for both reading comprehension and math. (NOTE: Eighth grade proficiency is minimum required for all programs, but many of the technical programs require higher levels or additional basic skills that must be met by the member); and
 - c) Selects a training program that has been approved by the City of Cleveland/Cuyahoga County WIB and for which the applicant meets all applicable admission criteria and general employment screening requirements in desired occupation; and
 - d) Requests training that prepares graduates for an occupation for which a significant demand exists in the area or an employer has committed to provide the applicant a job upon successful completion of the training (as outlined in the Demand Occupation Policy).

Note: Requirements A, B, and D may be waived if an individual is within 12 credit hours of completing a college level program and is maintaining satisfactory training progress (defined in item 8).

4. Requesting Training – After the initial application and orientation process the individual may be required to provide a request letter addressed to the Employment Specialist. The letter should be provided at least four weeks prior to the start of the training. This letter should include:
 - a) Type of training being requested.
 - b) Rationale for the training. Explain how this training will support your career direction.
 - c) An explanation of how Labor Market Information supports employment opportunities in the area you are seeking training.
 - d) The name and address of the training provider (must be from County-accepted list of training providers). In addition the provider must be accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (The Higher Learning Commission) or registered with the Ohio State Board of Career Colleges or Schools.
 - e) A complete list of classes, including name and course number(s), or attach curriculum outline.
 - f) The anticipated start and end date for the classes/program.
 - g) Estimated total cost of training, including tuition, fees, examination costs (if applicable), and books.
- h) An explanation of how you are currently supporting yourself, and while involved in training. In addition explain how you plan to pay the remaining balance exceeding the amount of funding awarded.

5. Financial Aid – Residents must apply for Federal and/or State financial aid, if applicable. Federal/State grants awarded (i.e. Pell) will be used as the first source of funding and will be applied to tuition, books and fee expenses. Students must provide a copy of their Student Aid Report (SAR) their employment specialist. Failure to apply for grants may jeopardize the possibility of receiving funding.
6. College Level Programs – Residents applying for funding must have a current Grade Point Average of 2.0 or higher, and be within 12 credit hours of receiving their degree. Resident’s must provide a copy of their most recent transcripts prior to funding approval.
7. Scheduling/Registration for Courses – It is recommended that resident’s will provide course schedule four weeks prior to the first day of classes, and returning students submit most recent grade report or proof of satisfactory progress in order for them to meet school registration time frames. OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County will not provide funding for classes taken more than two times.

The decision to add and or drop a class must be discussed with the Employment Specialist, and completed by the date as selected by the college/university. Notice must be provided to customer’s Employment Specialist within the week that the add/drop course of action has taken place.

The decision to withdraw from a class must be discussed with Employment Specialist, and as early as possible during the semester in order to minimize tuition costs. Refunds for tuition will be given in accordance with the college/university’s drop/add period and refund policy. All refunded amounts will be given to the original funding source. No refunds will be given directly to a member that has withdrawn from a class.

Members will be held financially liable if they schedule and attend any classes without prior authorization from their Employment Specialist

8. Training Program Progress - Upon funding approval, Resident’s must maintain a minimum, overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 or greater. If the GPA falls below 2.0 for any semester, Resident’s will be placed on “Academic Probation”. Resident’s with a GPA of less than 2.0 for two semesters will have their funding discontinued.

A grade of “withdrawal passing”, “withdrawal failure”, or “incomplete” may result in the termination of funding unless prior approval was obtained from Employment Specialist.

Students need to provide their Employment Specialist with their grades within one week of receipt.

9. Employment - Upon completion of training, Resident’s are expected to seek and accept full-time employment, and to notify their Employment Specialist. For members currently employed, it is expected that there will be an increase in their wages prior to or upon completion of training.

Resident’s will provide information pertaining to training and employment (i.e. wage rate/salary, hours per week, company name, address, phone number, etc.) when requested .

In accepting funds for payment of tuition and fees from OMJ/C-CC, Resident’s will maintain contact with OhioMeansJobs|Cleveland-Cuyahoga County for purposes of follow-up regarding job search and job retention 3, 6, 9, and 12 months after completion of training. Failure to cooperate may result in repayment of EAP funds awarded.

10. Failure to comply with any of the above stipulations may result in denial or cancellation of funding.