

Gracedale County of Northampton	SUBJECT: Gracedale Tuition Assistance Program	POLICY: 10.635.01.03.0020
KEY WORDS: Tuition, Assistance	EFFECTIVE: 5/1/2018	
DEPARTMENT: Human Resources	REVISED BY: L. MCFADDEN DATE: 8/9/2023	
DESIGNATED REVIEWER: Gracedale Human Resources	DATE REVIEWED: 8/9/2023	
EDUCATION/COMMUNICATION METHODS:	REFERENCES:	

Purpose:

To afford Gracedale employees an opportunity to obtain a nursing certificate/degree and subsequently obtain positions at the facility as either a LPN or RN.

Policy:

Gracedale provides a tuition assistance program for approved employees to complete an LPN certificate or RN degree at any accredited college/university in-person or online program.

Procedure:

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

1. Tuition assistance program is offered to Gracedale employees at the discretion of Tuition Assistance Committee. The County shall pay 100% of tuition for required courses and books up to \$5250 per calendar year.
2. The program is open to all Gracedale employees who have at least a **minimum of one (1) year of full or part time employment and work at least thirty-two (32) hours per pay period.**
3. Applicants must have:
 - a. satisfactory evaluations
 - b. no disciplines on attendance within the last twelve (12) months
 - c. no performance disciplines within the last twenty-four (24) months
 - d. no more than five (5) unpaid absences in the past twelve (12) months
 - e. have approval and recommendation of the unit RN charge nurse or immediate supervisor
4. The number of applicants accepted into each of the LPN and RN programs will be **limited based upon Gracedale staffing.**
5. Each employee must sign an agreement with Gracedale, upon acceptance into the program, which contains criteria outlining their responsibilities while enrolled in the

program and responsibilities related to employment at Gracedale upon successful completion of the program.

6. Employees are not eligible to participate in tuition reimbursement through County Policy 3.309 (Tuition Reimbursement) while enrolled in this tuition assistance program.

TUITION INFORMATION:

1. The County shall pay 100% of tuition for required courses and books up to \$5250 per calendar year.
 - a. Equipment, prerequisite, remedial or non-credit courses and supplies and/or books other than required texts are the financial responsibility of the employee.
2. Employee must provide an official transcript to Gracedale Human Resources at the end of each semester in order to continue in the program.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. The employee must be available to work a minimum of thirty-two (32) hours per pay period as assigned by nursing administration, including weekends. Assignments are based upon staffing needs and are made at the discretion of the nursing supervisors.
 - a. Full time status employees may reduce their hours (minimum of 32 hours) per pay period with approval and maintain current employee benefits.
 - b. A request to decrease work hours must be submitted to the shift nursing supervisors at least two weeks prior to the start of classes.**
 - c. Employees are required to work as scheduled by nursing supervisors. Scheduled work days on which the employee requests leave for school matters may be granted as vacation, personal or approved absence if the employee provides written verification from the college or professor of a mandatory school related assignment on the day the employee is to work.
 - d. Routine coursework, such as studying for exams, writing term papers, care plans or other projects, does not qualify for this exception.
 - e. ALL school work must be completed on the employees own time. NOT during working hours**
2. The employee must complete the LPN certificate program within two (2) years and the RN degree program within three (3) years.
3. An employee who does not pursue coursework in a timely manner or who withdraws from a course (s) during the semester must notify the Deputy Director of Human Resources at Gracedale of this matter. Eligibility for continued enrollment in the program is re-evaluated by Human Resources at that time.
4. A copy of each employee's course list shall be provided to the Deputy Director of Human Resources for each semester.
5. The employee is responsible for reporting all changes in their circumstances to the Deputy Director of Human Resources when they affect the participation in the program.

6. **Following professional licensure, each student who receives tuition assistance shall work full-time for Gracedale for at least thirty-six (36) months as an LPN or RN unless the employee is terminated by the County.**
7. Exceptions to this policy will be considered on a case by case basis.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The employee must:

- Complete and submit the Application for Tuition Assistance
- Obtain approval of the employee's immediate supervisor/manager.
- Attach a copy of a course description from the school's website or directory for each course on the application.

Application and Course Descriptions must be submitted prior to the start of the course to the Deputy Director of Human Resources at Gracedale.

Reimbursable Costs

Costs eligible for reimbursement will include:

- Tuition/book costs not to exceed \$5250 per calendar year. Maximum of (2 for LPN/3 for RN) years to complete the course work.

Examination fees, certification fees, graduation fees, parking, and other fees that are not directly related to taking courses will not be covered under the Tuition Assistance Policy for reimbursement.

To receive the Tuition Assistance Reimbursement for approved courses, the employee is required to submit all the following documentation to the Deputy Director of Human Resources at Gracedale:

- **An original signed/approved Application for Tuition Assistance form.**
- **Copy of course grade(s).**
- **An itemized receipt as proof of payment for tuition/required books or detailed receipt if student has been approved by the school for deferment.**

Reimbursement Amounts

The amount reimbursed to the employee is determined by the final grade achieved by the employee and the yearly maximum reimbursement amount under the policy.

Any amounts reimbursed will be applied towards the maximum reimbursement amount for the calendar year in which the reimbursement is paid to the employee, regardless of the calendar year in which the course was taken. Eligible employees must apply for reimbursement within three (3) months of successfully completing the applicable course.

The following maximum reimbursement amounts are provided by the policy within a calendar year: *\$5250 *(Reimbursements up to \$5,250 are excluded from wages for federal income tax

purposes).

The following stipulations apply to reimbursement:

- Final grade achieved:
 - A, B, C (first instance) or Pass/Fail course – 100% reimbursed for course
 - C (second instance) – 50% reimbursed for course
 - C (third instance), D, F, Incomplete, Withdrawal, Fail – 0% reimbursed for course

Repayment criteria if employee is terminated/voluntarily resigns:

- Within 1 to 6 months – employee is required to repay 100% of reimbursed costs
- Within 7 to 12 months – employee is required to repay 50% of reimbursed costs

Policy Administration

Human Resources will administer this Policy and will give final approval to all requests for Tuition Assistance and reimbursement based upon employee eligibility and verification of successful completion of approved courses. The failure of an employee to provide Human Resources with appropriate documentation to verify completion of a course or curriculum within the guidelines set forth in this Policy will cause the employee to be ineligible for reimbursement under this Policy. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to, grade reports, transcripts, receipt of payment, and/or official course descriptions.

Policy Approved by:



Lamont G. McClure, County Executive

8/9/23
Date