

PRACTICE

approved by

no. 2-31

subject

1 July 1990
effective date

TRAINING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

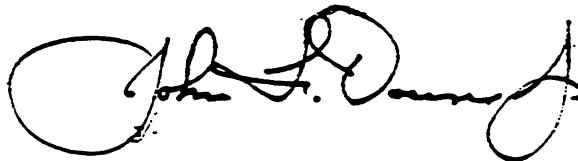
AUTHORITY

The Executive Committee acted October 3, 1983, to change the title of the Practice to "TRAINING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM;" to include employee participants under "RESPONSIBILITIES" on page 3; to include "Employee Liability" in "PROCEDURES" on page 6; and to revise the Contract Agreement section relevant to noncompliance with eligibility requirements.

The revised Practice increases TAP funding to full-time and part-time career employees, and limits the number of TAP fundings to three per year per employee. These revisions were approved by the Executive Committee, November 30, 1987.

Provisions for employer-provided educational assistance for (a) advanced academic or professional degrees, and (b) subjects considered sports, games, or hobbies are changed for tax years beginning in 1988. Practice revisions comply with the Technical and Miscellaneous Revenue Act of 1988, amending Sections 117(d) and 127(c) and (d), Title 26, Internal Revenue Code. The prohibition of the exclusion for advanced academic degrees is effective for tax years beginning in 1988. The rule pertaining to sports, games, and hobbies is retroactive also. Other revisions relate to the decentralization of this program to operating departments, which is effective July 1, 1990.

This revised Practice was approved by the Commission, June 13, 1990.



John F. Downs, Jr.
Executive Director

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POLICY

1. The Commission will assist employees with educational expenses within the priorities established for funding under the Training Assistance Program, based on the following criteria:
 - (a) "A" priority, assigned to courses taken that enable employees to perform more effectively in their present jobs, will be funded first.
 - (b) "B" priority, assigned to courses taken that prepare employees for career development or different responsibilities in the Commission, will be funded second.
2. The Training Assistance Program will be made available to all career employees on a nondiscriminatory basis, to include but is not limited to employees in the skilled crafts, service-maintenance and technical categories, women, and minority groups.
3. Commission funds will be controlled to sustain the Training Assistance Program throughout the fiscal year.
4. The Commission will reimburse tuition costs, not to exceed \$300 per semester/session to full-time career employees and Merit System Department Heads and \$150 to part-time career employees. Reimbursement of tuition costs is limited to three TAP fundings per year per employee.

Reimbursement shall be for vocational or college/university undergraduate courses or graduate* level courses, related laboratory fees, and other mandatory fees.

Expenses of books and optional fees (parking, student activities, etc.) are not reimbursable.
5. Training Assistance Program funds are not intended to pay the cost of attending conferences, symposia, seminars or similar short duration training required or approved by management. Such costs are charged to appropriate Departmental budgets.

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POLICY

(Continued)

6. The Commission is required and will consider as taxable income monies expended for employees: a) taking graduate level courses leading to a law, business, medical, or similar advanced academic or professional degree; and/or b) taking courses pertaining to sports, games, or hobbies unless courses are a degree requirement, or have a reasonable relationship to Commission operations.

**RESPONSI-
BILITIES**

1. Department Heads or designees are responsible for approving training assistance applications; designating priority; noting the priority on the form; assuring that training assistance requests are approved consistent with this Practice; funding of the individual applications for the training assistance; preparation of check requests for approved applications for training assistance; monitoring the Training Assistance Program on a month to month basis; and reporting to the Executive Director participation in this program at the end of each funding period.
2. Employee participants in the TRAINING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM are responsible for:
 - (a) reporting course grades to Department Head or designee by submitting official transcripts within 60 days of the end of the semester or session; and
 - (b) repayment of tuition for courses as stated in the executed (SIGNED) CONTRACT AGREEMENT.

**ELIGIBILITY
REQUIREMENTS**

Approval of eligible employees to participate in the program is based on:

1. The compatibility of the employee's educational objectives with the purposes of the program;
2. The availability of funds;
3. If applicable, successful completion (with proof of acceptable grade) of any previously department-funded TAP Courses, or refund of funds expended on incomplete or failed courses, unless the refund is waived by the Department Head.

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**ELIGIBILITY
REQUIREMENTS
(Continued)**

Courses must be taken during off-duty hours to prevent interruption to the Commission's work program. In certain instances, the Department Head or designee may grant administrative leave to permit employee attendance at a course during work hours.

Employees receiving Veterans Administration or other governmental educational benefits for a given course of study are ineligible to receive duplicate benefits under the Training Assistance Program. Employees eligible for governmental educational benefits are urged to use those resources. The Commission will pay the difference between the amount of benefits due from such government educational assistance programs and the total amount of authorized expenses, not to exceed \$300 or \$150 per semester, as applicable.

PROCEDURES

1. Application to Participate in the Training Assistance Program

Course selection and admission procedures will be undertaken by the employee. An employee may apply for three TAP fundings per year.

Any commitment made to a training institution by an employee without first having obtained the prior approval of the Department Head becomes the employee's responsibility.

To apply, an employee must complete THREE copies of the application for Training Assistance Form (sample copy attached); indicate a choice of method for training assistance; route copies to Department Head or designee and attach THE SCHEDULE OF COURSE FEES TO THE FORM.

To allow time for assessment of priority and for check preparation for registration, approved applications must be received by the Department as noted below:

PROCEDURES
(Continued)

SESSION

Fall Semester (Fall Quarter)	-	August 1
Spring Semester (Winter/Spring Quarter)	-	December 1
First, Second or subsequent Summer Sessions	-	May 1

Employees will be notified in writing and informed of the reasons if their applications are not funded. Approved applications, will be returned accompanied by a check or a letter of intent from the Commission.

After an application has been processed and funded, the procedures selected by the employee will be carried out, as follows:

- a. A check made payable to the institution, issued to the employee, to present at registration.
- b. A reimbursement check made payable to the employee who has paid the tuition. If this procedure is followed, the applicant must send the Department a copy of the receipt to verify payment.
- c. A letter authorizing the institution to bill the employee's department for the tuition fee up to \$300 or \$150, as appropriate, only if the applicant cannot meet the walk-in registration date.

2. Submission of Grades to Department/Personnel

The TAP participant will submit evidence to his/her Department within sixty days of completion of the course. Grades will be recorded and maintained as part of the Training Assistance

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PROCEDURES
(Continued)

Program. If a grade is unavailable for submission within the sixty-day period, a memo from the employee certifying completion of the course may be submitted until the grade is obtained. Further funds will not be granted for other courses until the student has shown satisfactory completion of the course or repaid the Commission for funds expended. (See #3 below.) After grades have been submitted to the department showing satisfactory completion of a funded course, the training assistance application and grade will be forwarded to the Personnel Office for filing in the employee's official Personnel File.

3. Failing and Incomplete Grades and Withdrawals

An employee who fails a TAP course shall be required to repay the Department for funds expended. If an employee withdraws from a TAP course, the employee will be required to repay the Department for monies the Department expended on the course. In any such case of failure or withdrawal, the

Department Head may waive all or some portion of the repayment only if there are significant, documented extenuating circumstances. An employee who finds that it is impossible to continue in a TAP course should follow the institution's prescribed course withdrawal procedure and immediately notify the Department of this action.

An employee who receives an "incomplete" in a course paid for under the Training Assistance Program will not qualify for subsequent funding until a passing grade is earned in the course or repayment is made to the Commission, unless such action is waived by the Department Head because of extenuating circumstances.*

An employee who leaves the Commission before completion of a TAP course OR WITHIN ONE YEAR AFTER COMPLETION OF A TAP COURSE will be required to repay the Commission for training assistance funds expended in the employee's behalf, unless waived by the Department Head. In the event an employee does not meet all of the requirements and is required to repay the Commission, the Department Head will initiate whatever action deemed appropriate to recover monies.

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PROCEDURES
(Continued)

4. Employee Liability

Failure to comply with any or all of the provisions of this Practice and contract agreement may result in:

1. Action by the Commission to recover all monies expended by the Commission for TAP courses THROUGH PAYROLL DEDUCTION, as appropriate;
2. Legal action by the Commission to recover expended monies by the Commission for employees who have left the Commission under conditions described above; and/or
3. Disciplinary action by the Commission consistent with Merit Rules and Regulations.

Attachment:

Application for Training Assistance Form

*An exception may exist in the case of an individual in graduate school preparing a thesis or dissertation. Under such circumstances, an "I" may merely indicate that preparation of the thesis is ongoing, and the "incomplete" rule described above does not apply.

READ THIS FIRST:

- I. INSTRUCTIONS
 1. Read Practice 2-31
 2. Fill in every blank on this application
 3. Attach copy of course fees & course description
 4. SEND THREE COPIES OF APPLICATION
 5. Send all to Department Head/Designee for approval to be RECEIVED BY DEADLINE
 6. Send grade to Dept. Head/Designee when class is completed

DEADLINE DATES FOR TAP APPLICATION

AUG. 1 ___ FALL
DEC. 1 ___ WINTER/SPRING
MAY 1 ___ SUMMER I
MAY 1 ___ SUMMER II

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR TRAINING ASSISTANCE

Please Print SOCIAL SECURITY NO. _____

I. NAME: _____ DATE: _____

POSITION TITLE: _____

SECTION/DIVISION/COUNTY: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

SEMESTER BEGINS: _____ SEMESTER ENDS: _____

DEGREE SOUGHT (CHECK ONE): _____ JOB RELATED - NO DEGREE

_____ AA; _____ BA/BS; _____ MA/MS;

_____ PhD.; _____ OTHER

(Fill in name of Major/Minor) _____ MAJOR _____ MINOR

Attachment to Interim Practice 2-31
 Application for Training Assistance
 Page 2

II. AMOUNT OF REQUEST:

COURSE NUMBER (S)	TITLE (S)	COST PER CREDIT HOUR	TOTAL COST OF TUITION

MANDATORY FEES	COST	TOTAL COST OF MANDATORY FEES

TOTAL COST OF
 TRAINING ASSISTANCE
 REQUEST _____

III. CONTRACT AGREEMENT

I, _____, understand that financial assistance under this program is limited to payment for tuition which is not being met by government allowance resulting from military service or other scholarship aid. The amount of tuition paid by the Commission is \$_____. I also understand that if I drop the course/training approved under this application or leave the Commission's employ prior to completing the course/training or LEAVE WITHIN ONE (1) YEAR AFTER ITS COMPLETION, I am required to repay the Commission the cost of tuition paid by the Commission under this application. I understand and I consent to the provision that the monies expended for this course/training will be deducted from my payroll check, or, as conditions may warrant, through legal action for my non-compliance with this Contract Agreement and Practice.

Further, I understand that if I fail to comply with all the provisions of this Contract Agreement and Practice, I may be subject to disciplinary action by the Commission. I also agree to report my course/training grade by submitting an official transcript to Department Head/Designee within sixty days of completion of this course/training.

 Signature of Applicant

 Date

IV. PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TO INSURE PROMPT PAYMENT:

- () Check made payable to school (Please specify latest date that check may be issued) _____; or
- () Check made payable to applicant; or
- () Authorization letter to school (Please specify latest date that letter may be issued) _____.

DATE: _____

V. TO: _____
Applicant's Name

Priority Recommended: (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> "A" Priority (More effective performance of present duties.) <input type="checkbox"/> "B" Priority (Preparation for career development or different Commission responsibilities.)
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FROM: _____
Department Head or Designee

Your request for training assistance has been
() Approved; () Not Approved.

State reason(s) for non-approval if appropriate:

ATTACHMENT: Copy of TAP Agreement