



2026 Interim Tuition Assistance Policy

Effective: February 23, 2026.

The 2025 Tuition Assistance Policy applies from January 1, 2026 through February 22, 2026. This interim policy will remain in effect until it is replaced, which is expected by September 2026.

Introduction

Tuition Assistance is a discretionary benefit designed to support Education at Work (EAW) student employees of a client and student employees of EAW in pursuing their education.

Eligibility for Tuition Assistance Benefit

To be eligible for Tuition Assistance, applicants must meet the following conditions:

- All applicants must be either a Student Employees of an EAW Customer or a Student Employees of EAW.
- All applicants must have at least eight weeks of employment with EAW.
- All applicants must be in good standing, meaning they are not on written corrective action for attendance or performance. Eligibility is restored after:
 - Ninety (90) days of compliance for attendance-related corrective action
 - Ninety (90) days of compliance for performance-related corrective action
- For seasonal employees on corrective action, eligibility will be evaluated based on the prior thirty (30) days.
- Seasonal employees must be either:
 - Actively employed,
 - On an approved leave of absence, or
 - Have worked through the end of the season at the time of application submission.
- Non-seasonal employees must be actively employed or on an approved leave of absence at the time of application submission.

This program will be administered in compliance with Section 127 of the Internal Revenue Code and applicable nondiscrimination requirements.

Qualifying Expenses

Eligible expenses include tuition, course materials, and textbooks.

Tuition Assistance Eligibility Calculation

- Employees become eligible for tuition assistance based on hours worked, calculated at a rate of \$5.05 per hour worked.
- Employees begin accumulating tuition assistance eligibility from their first day of training; however, employees may not apply for or receive payment until completing at least eight (8) weeks of employment.
- The eligibility calculation week runs from Monday through Sunday.
- For salaried student employees, eligibility is calculated on a weekly basis using equivalent criteria.
- The eligibility calculation period covers the first forty-eight (48) weeks of the calendar year, beginning with the first full working week of January.

Important: Tuition assistance is a discretionary benefit and does not constitute earned wages, compensation, or vested benefits.

Tuition Assistance Limits

EAW will pay up to a maximum annual amount of \$5,250 in tuition assistance per calendar year, consistent with the tax-free benefit limit established under applicable IRS regulations. [LINK](#), for qualifying educational expenses.

Application Process

- Applications must be submitted online through the EAW Tuition Assistance portal: <https://assistance.edatwork.com>.
 - After login, applicants can complete the application and upload the required documentation, including:
 - An itemized tuition bill showing the school name, student name, and balance due for the current semester's tuition; and/or
 - Receipts for required textbook purchases

Tuition Assistance applications will be January through December 5 of each calendar year.

- Seasonal employees who worked through the end of a season may apply through December 5 even if not actively working.

- Seasonal employees who did not complete the season may apply only after resuming employment and before the deadline of December 5.

If an eligible applicant submits incomplete or incorrect documentation, the application will not be denied solely for that reason. Instead, the applicant will be given an opportunity to correct and resubmit the application. Once updated, the application will be processed during the processing period in the first week of the following month.

Applications may be denied if:

- The applicant has no available tuition assistance balance;
- The applicant has reached the annual maximum;
- Required documentation is not provided; or
- The applicant does not meet eligibility criteria.

Seasonal employees must return all EAW issued equipment before submitting an application during the off-season.

Payment Process

- Applications are generally processed during the first week of the month following submission. This timing ensures the successful disbursement of funds to the educational institution. It is the applicant's responsibility to plan their application with respect to this timeline.
- Approved payments are:
 - Sent directly to the educational institution for tuition; or
 - Reimbursed to the employee for textbook expenses after proof of payment.
- Only tuition costs can be paid in advance to the educational institution. Textbook costs being covered by Tuition Assistance will be reimbursed after the employee has made the payment.
- All tuition assistance must be requested and paid within the same calendar year. Applications must be submitted by the stated deadline. Any unused eligibility not applied for by the deadline will be forfeited, subject to applicable law.

Employees who resign or are terminated for cause prior to payment processing may forfeit pending tuition assistance, to the extent permitted by applicable law consistent with the terms of this policy.

Additional Provisions

Discretionary Benefit

This program is discretionary and may be modified, suspended, or terminated at any time.

No Guarantee of Employment

Participation in this program does not guarantee continued employment.

Contact Information

We are here to help. If you have questions, please contact us at tuition.assistance@educationatwork.org

Governing Law; Multi-State Compliance

This policy is governed by the laws of the State of Massachusetts, except to the extent preempted by federal law.

For employees working outside of that state, this policy will be administered in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws of the jurisdiction in which the employee performs work. To the extent any provision of this policy conflicts with applicable law, such law will control.

Additional Information

Relevant references include:

- Internal Revenue Code Sections 127 and 132
- IRS Publication 970
- IRS Publication 15-B
- Applicable federal and state regulations
- Time and Attendance Policy.
- Employee Handbook.