Central Texas College District Human Resource Management Operating Policies and Procedures Manual
Policy No. 555: Educational Benefits Program Full-Time Employees

I. PURPOSE

To provide a clear understanding of the Employee Educational Benefits Program.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to full-time employees, their spouses and dependent children.

III. PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. To establish a benefits program to encourage all employees to pursue educational goals as a means to enhance their lives as individuals and citizens as well as their job performance.

B. To encourage and assist Department Chairs and Supervisors in urging employees to develop their abilities and enhance their potential.

C. To encourage the spouses and dependent children of full-time employees to enroll in college courses at CTCD and to earn credit needed for high school completion through API.

D. To provide a twenty-five percent (25%) discount, as of January 1, 2007, to employees only for text books needed for all courses taken under educational benefits when purchased through the CTCD Bookstore.

IV. PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Recognizing that opportunities must be available to all personnel and in all activities and locations of CTCD, the following programs are designed to extend educational benefits to all operating units, divisions and sponsored activities. Each of these four (4) programs is described below:

A. CTCD – Degree Objective/Non-Degree Objective: This benefit is available to all full-time employees. The purpose is to encourage employees to attain an Associate Degree from CTCD and/or to assist employees in taking credit courses of special interest. This benefit pays up to 100 percent (100%) of the tuition and fees, excluding special fees. Participants are limited to a maximum of six (6) courses per academic year.

B. CTCD – Special Courses: This benefit is available for those full-time employees who must take a CTCD credit course as a job-related necessity determined by the employee's supervisor. Participants are limited to a maximum of six (6) courses per academic year. This benefit will be at no cost to the employee. Textbooks will be purchased through the department's supply account and returned to the department at the end of the course. Special courses offered through Continuing Education are eligible for this benefit provided the benefit is approved by management. The supervisor must submit a justification memorandum explaining the job related necessity through his/her chain of command to include the Dean or Division Director and the Director of Human Resources Management.

C. Other Educational Institutions – Degree Objective/Non-Degree Objective: This benefit is available for full-time employees with one (1) year of full-time employment who seek to attend courses from other institutions of higher learning. This benefit amounts to:

- After more than one (1) year but less than five (5) years of full-time employment: Fifty percent (50%) of the tuition and fees, not to exceed $250 per term or semester. Participants are limited to a maximum of three (3) courses per academic year.

- After five (5) or more years of full-time employment: Fifty percent (50%) of the tuition and fees, not to exceed $500 per term or semester. Participants are limited to a maximum of six (6) courses per academic year.

Faculty members who wish to participate in this program may, when they are not teaching, exceed the term or semester limitations up to the appropriate maximum amounts specified.

D. Tuition Assistance for Spouses and Dependent Children: This benefit is available for the spouses and dependent children of full-time employees who wish to enroll in CTCD credit courses or wish to earn credit needed for high school completion through the American Preparatory Institute (API). This benefit pays fifty percent (50%) of the tuition only. Participants are limited to six (6) credit courses per academic year and a one (1) time enrollment with API.

NOTE: Participants are allowed to take a total of six (6) credit courses per academic year.

E. Employees and/or dependents whose tuition and fees are paid through a third party billing are not eligible for this educational benefit.

V. PROGRAM PROVISIONS

Employees who wish to participate in this program must comply with the following:

A. Participants receiving benefits under this program must provide a grade report to the Employee Benefits department within thirty (30) days of the end of the course in order to comply with the requirement for making a minimum grade of "C" in the course.

B. Participants do not need to be enrolled continually in order to take advantage of these benefits. However, participants must file an application every time they request educational benefits.

C. Participants must not take courses under this program which conflict with the participant's job duties and responsibilities. Supervisors may allow employees to take courses during regularly scheduled working hours, provided the employee documents how he/she will make up the time and/or use accrued vacation leave. The employee must obtain approval through the employee's chain-of-command to include the Division Director/Dean, and the Director, Human Resource Management.

D. Participants must have completed the initial training period of employment unless otherwise specified in this document.

E. Participants are not guaranteed continued employment, reclassification or promotion by CTCD.

F. Special use fees, such as those for the Aviation Science program and courses offered through Continuing Education, are not included in this benefit program. For Texas employees/dependents who enroll into a course for the third time, only the normal tuition and fees are covered under educational benefits. The additional charge to bring tuition up to Nonresident & International cost is excluded from this benefits program.

G. For Texas employees, as of December 1, 2006, the Employee Educational Benefits Program will require an application for financial aid since Texas employees may be eligible for an educational grant through the State of Texas. This grant would be in addition to the educational benefits available to employees. Employees will need to complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before a Texas employee's educational benefits form will be processed. Texas employees will need to print a confirmation of FAFSA completion and attach it to the Employee Educational Benefits Application.

H. Recipients of educational benefits to include spouses and dependent children who are found to violate the Student Code of Conduct policy may be required to refund benefits received, may no longer be eligible for future educational benefits or may be subject to employment disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment with CTCD.

VI. CONDITIONS

Repayment of Benefits

A. If participants fail to complete the course, fail to provide a grade report to Employee Benefits within thirty (30) days of the end of the semester or term and make at least a "C" in each course, they must repay the amount of the benefit received.

B. Participants who must withdraw from a CTCD course due to extenuating circumstances may request an exception to policy to avoid repaying the benefits received. Exceptions to policy must be approved by the Director, Human Resource Management. Future benefits will not be paid for the participant to repeat the course.

C. Participants who leave employment with CTCD prior to six months after the course ends must repay past benefits received for courses taken at CTCD, either by the participants or their eligible dependents.

D. Participants who leave employment with CTCD while they or their eligible dependents are actively attending course(s) at CTCD under this program are allowed to complete the course(s) but must repay the amount of the benefit received.

E. Participants taking courses at educational institutions other than CTCD must be employed by CTCD for at least one (1) year following the completion of the course(s) or repay the amount of any benefit received during the 12-month period immediately preceding the date of separation of employment.

F. Employees who terminate due to site closure, reduction-in-force or experience a change of status from full-time to part-time employment as requested by CTCD due to lack of work, will not be required to repay benefits received if requirements listed in Paragraph VI. A have been met for these courses.

G. Repayment of benefits must be made before additional benefit applications are approved.

H. If a participant is terminating employment with CTCD, any repayment due must be made before the employee will be permitted to clear the campus.

I. If participants and/or their dependents do not comply with the requirements, they will be placed on financial hold until the repayment of benefit(s) received has been received by CTCD.

VII. PROCEDURES

A. Application

1. Eligible employees, regardless of location, who wish to apply for benefits under this program, must complete an Employee Educational Benefits Application. The application must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor and the Employee Benefits department. An Employee Educational Benefits Program Dependent Certification form must be attached for the approval of dependent benefits. Texas employees must attach confirmation of FAFSA completion.

2. Employees must submit applications to the Employee Benefits Department two (2) days prior to registration to avoid being dropped from course(s) for non-payment.

3. Employees who wish to substitute a course once an application is approved must notify the Coordinator, Employee Benefits explaining the change and/or submit a drop/add slip. If the change results in an increase in tuition, a new application must be submitted.

4. The Director, Human Resource Management will review and approve or deny all applications involving requests for exception to policy.

B. Receipt of Benefit

1. Once the application is approved, the Coordinator, Employee Benefits will forward the application to the participant, who will in turn take it to the Business Office to register for classes. Participants taking CTCD courses at Europe, Pacific Far East, Navy or Continental Campuses will forward the educational benefits application to the Employee Benefits department on Central Campus and register for classes at their location. The Employee Benefits department will forward the approved application to the Business Office. Qualifying dependents will pay fifty percent (50%) of the tuition and all fees at registration.

2. Participants wishing to be reimbursed for courses taken at CTCD must complete a request for reimbursement with Accounts Receivable once the approved Educational Benefits Application has been forwarded to the Business Office by the Employee Benefits department.

3. Participants wishing to be reimbursed for courses taken at other educational institutions must submit a course schedule and an itemized listing of paid tuition and fees to the Employee Benefits department for verification. When verified, the Employee Benefits department will process the request.

4. As of January 1, 2007, employees taking courses covered by educational benefits are eligible for a twenty-five percent (25%) discount at the CTCD Bookstore for required text book(s) for those courses**.** A voucher from the Employee Benefits department must be presented to the bookstore prior to purchase of the required text book(s). For on-line and in-person text book purchases for courses taken under educational benefits, employees who paid for the required text book(s) out of pocket are eligible for reimbursement of the twenty-five (25%) percent discount by submitting their receipt and a copy of the course syllabus to the Employee Benefits department for verification. Text book(s) ordered online must be purchased through "Bookstore Texas" to be eligible for the reimbursement. Text book(s) purchased through "Bookstore Worldwide/Online**"** are not eligible for the reimbursement**.** When verified, the Employee Benefits department will process the request.

   If participants fail to complete the course or to make at least a "C" in each course, they must repay the amount of the benefit received.