

HR Standard 1.13

AGENCY SUPPORT OF EMPLOYEES WHO ATTEND GRADUATE SCHOOL

PHILOSOPHY

A commitment to higher education among casework staff benefits both the individual receiving the education and the agency. The MSW graduate school program is designed to promote the professional development of our casework staff.

OUTCOME

Children and families of the county benefit from a more fully trained staff, enhancing their ability to perform casework. Additionally, the professional status of the agency and individual caseworker is accelerated when the majority of the agency casework staff has obtained an MSW. This program also assists with staff retention in that the caseworkers make a minimum of a four (4) year commitment to the agency when they begin the program.

APPLICATION - (an example from Lorain County Children Services)

1. Only accredited educational institutions will be approved for this program
2. Employees should notify the Human Resources Manager, or equivalent, as soon as they have an interest in this program. Notification must be made before an employee commits to acceptance in an MSW program.
3. The employee is responsible for the application process for Grad school and TOPS funding.
4. Employees who are eligible for TOPS (Training Opportunities in Public Service) must utilize the TOPS program. It is the employee's responsibility to meet all the requirements for TOPS funding.
5. Employees attending graduate school utilizing agency or TOPS funds must sign an "Academic Advancement Program" contract at the beginning of each school year attended (sample attached).
6. Employees attending Graduate school during regular working hours must use vacation hours for that time but may be reimbursed for those hours up to 36 hours annually. Those hours must be recorded on the employee's time card as "School/vacation" hours and will be deducted from the employees accumulated vacation hours as they are used. Each January

the employee's vacation account will be credited for all "School/vacation" hours recorded, up to 36 hours.

7. Because of a lower cost to the agency for TOPS funded MSW programs, the agency will pay for books and mileage in addition to tuition for these programs. The agency will pay tuition only for non-TOPS funded programs. The agency will not pay for any medical insurance options offered by any of the graduate schools.
8. The agency will pay the application fee for all approved graduate schools and any aptitude tests required by the graduate school.
9. Once the staff member is accepted into graduate school, except for TOPS funded schools, the employee must request a letter of third party billing from the Director of Finance. This will allow the school to directly bill the agency for tuition costs.
10. Once accepted into a TOPS funded program, the employee must make arrangements with the school and the director of finance for the purchase of schoolbooks.
11. If the employee is claiming mileage to attend classes, an expense report listing the mileage must be completed and submitted to the Human Resources Manager.
12. This contract has been reviewed and approved the PCSA Legal Counsel or County Prosecuting Attorney.

Attachments:

1. Academic Advancement Program contract for a non-TOPS school.
2. Academic Advancement Program contract for a TOPS school.

Standard adapted from the Lorain County Children Services Board

ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

NAME OF EMPLOYEE:

DATE:

This agreement, entered into on this _____ day of _____, 200, by and between the _____ (hereinafter called "Agency") and _____ (hereinafter called "Employee").

WHEREAS it is the desire of the Agency to advance the education and training of its employees; take advantage of funding made available through Federal Title IV(E), which allows for partial reimbursement of educational expenses; obtain commitment from its personnel so as to provide stability for the Agency; and assure that the benefits of funding the program will accrue to _____ County; and

WHEREAS Employee desires to improve his/her knowledge and expertise by obtaining a Masters Degree of Social Work (M.S.W. or M.S.S.A.), continue to provide services to _____ County through the Agency, and return to the citizens of _____ County services to justify investment in his/her advancement in education;

THEREFORE the parties hereto in consideration of the mutual covenants herein contained, agree as follows:

AGENCY'S COVENANTS

1. The Agency shall pay Employee's tuition costs (not to include books, lab fees, mileage) for attendance at Case Western Reserve University and participation in a course of study toward completion of a Masters of Science in Social Administration (M.S.S.A.) for the academic year . Said payment shall be made directly to the University. In the event that Title IV(E) funding changes, the Agency shall pay 46% of the tuition to Case Western Reserve University.
2. The Agency shall permit Employee to work for the Agency as part of field service requirements.
3. Employee shall also receive the rights and benefits he/she would receive as an employee of the Agency during the year, including--but not limited to--salary increments, credit towards state retirement benefits, vacation benefits, sick leave, and Workman's Compensation coverage.
4. Agency may renew this agreement with Employee for a period of up to three (3) years until completion of the Masters Degree course of study, provided Title IV(E) and/or Agency funding are available.

EMPLOYEE'S COVENANTS

1. Employee shall attend and participate in a program approved by Agency, towards fulfillment of his/her Masters of Science in Social Administration at Case Western Reserve University during the academic of _____, and successfully complete the course of study thereby required.
2. Employee shall notify Agency of absences from school, or termination, or discontinuance in the program.
3. Employee shall continue his/her present employment with Agency during the course of attendance in this program.
4. Employee further agrees to work for the Agency a period of one (1) year for each academic year of schooling paid for by the Agency and/or through Federal Title IV(E) funding after completion of said schooling.

5. Employee shall disclose any financial aid he/she receives. To the extent that such aid is received by Employee, Agency's contribution to tuition shall be lowered, unless Title IV(E) reimbursement is no longer available. Loans which must be repaid and thus result in an out-of-pocket expense for the employee are not deductible from the Agency's contribution.
6. Employee may renew this agreement for up to three (3) years until completion of the Masters Degree course of study, provided Title IV(E) and/or Agency funds are available. The Agency, for good cause shown, may allow a further renewal of two additional years.
7. In the event the Employee does not successfully maintain the equivalent of a 3.0 grade average (out of a possible 4 points), and/or complete the course of study to the extent possible through Title IV(E) and Agency funding, or does not fulfill the commitment to work for the Agency upon completion, Employee shall repay to Agency the moneys paid by Agency toward Employee's education. Employee shall receive a pro rata credit for any partial increments of time worked for the Agency in fulfillment of these covenants.
8. Employee shall repay said amount to Agency within 30 days of his/her discontinuance of the course of study or departure from the Agency's employment. In the event employee is laid off, becomes disabled, or separates from the Agency due to some other involuntary cause, the parties shall negotiate a tolling of the period of repayment.

If Employee does not repay said amount, he/she shall execute a promissory note payable to Agency in equal monthly installments within two (2) years times at 8% interest per annum. Said note shall become immediately due and payable in full at the Agency's request upon occurrence of any one or more of the following:

- a) The death, insolvency, assignment for the benefit of creditors of, or the filing of a petition in bankruptcy by or against the maker.
- b) The default of the undersigned in the repayment of principal when the same shall become due and payable.
- c) The failure of performance by the undersigned in any agreement or undertaking hereunder or to cure any breach or warranty contained herein.

STIPULATIONS

The Agency and I agree that the laws of the State of Ohio shall govern and prevail in every matter relating to this agreement regardless of wherever signed or payable.

SIGNATURES

By my signature below, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this agreement with all blank spaces filled in prior to the execution of this agreement.

_____ Agency Representative _____ Date

_____ Student-Employee _____ Date

_____ Witness _____ Date

Approved in form by the _____ County Prosecutor's Office

_____ Date

ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM -PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

DATE: This agreement, entered into on this day of , 199, by and between the _____ County Children Services Board (hereinafter called "Agency") and (hereinafter called "Employee").

WHEREAS it is the desire of the Agency to advance the education and training of its employees; obtain commitment from its personnel so as to provide stability for the Agency; and assure that the benefits of funding the program will accrue to _____ County; and

WHEREAS Employee desires to improve his/her knowledge and expertise by obtaining a Masters Degree of Social Work (M.S.W. or M.S.S.A.), continue to provide services to _____ County through the Agency, and return to the citizens of _____ County services to justify investment in his/her advancement in education;

THEREFORE the parties hereto in consideration of the mutual covenants herein contained, agree as follows:

AGENCY'S COVENANTS

1. The Agency shall pay and/or approve TOPS to pay Employee's tuition costs and book expenses for attendance at Cleveland State University and participation in a course of study toward completion of a Masters Degree of Social Work for the academic year . Said payment shall be made directly to the University.
2. The Agency shall permit Employee to work for the Agency as part of field service requirements.
3. Employee shall also receive the rights and benefits he/she would receive as an employee of the Agency during the year, including--but not limited to--salary increments, credit towards state retirement benefits, vacation benefits, sick leave, and Workman's Compensation.
4. Agency may renew this agreement contingent upon the availability of Agency funding.

EMPLOYEE'S COVENANTS

1. Employee shall attend and participate in a program approved by Agency, towards fulfillment of his/her Masters Degree of Social Work at Cleveland State University during the academic of , and successfully complete the course of study thereby required.
2. Employee shall notify Agency of absences from school, or termination, or discontinuance in the program.
3. Employee shall continue his/her present employment with Agency during the course of attendance in this program.
4. Employee further agrees to work for the Agency for a period of one (1) year upon completion of the degree paid for by the Agency and/or through Federal Title IV(E) funding and/or TOPS, by virtue of being an employee of LCCS, within two (2) and one-quarter () years, except that if the Degree is obtained in three (3) years, the commitment shall be two (2) years.
5. Employee shall disclose any financial aid he/she receives. To the extent that such aid is received by Employee, Agency's contribution to tuition shall be lowered, unless Title IV(E) reimbursement is no longer available. Loans which must be repaid and thus result in an out-of-pocket expense for the employee are not deductible from the Agency's contribution.
6. Employee herein further consents to release of all student records from Cleveland State concerning Employee's grades, status, and attendance to said Agency, the Lorain County Children Services Board.
7. Employee may renew this agreement for up to three (3) years, until completion of the Masters Degree course of study, provided Agency funds are available.

8. In the event the Employee does not successfully maintain the equivalent of a 3.0 grade average (out of a possible 4 points), and/or complete the course of study to the extent possible through Title IV and/or Agency funding, or does not fulfill the commitment to work for the Agency upon completion, Employee shall repay to Agency the moneys paid by Agency toward Employee's education. Employee shall receive a pro rata credit for any partial increments of time worked for the Agency in fulfillment of these covenants.
9. Employee shall repay said amount to Agency within 30 days of his/her discontinuance of the course of study or departure from the Agency's employment. In the event employee is laid off, becomes disabled, or separates from the Agency due to some other involuntary cause, the parties shall negotiate a tolling of the period of repayment.

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- a) The death, insolvency, assignment for the benefit of creditors of, or the filing of a petition in bankruptcy by or against the maker.
- b) The default of the undersigned in the repayment of principal when the same shall become due and payable.
- c) The failure of performance by the undersigned in any agreement or undertaking hereunder or to cure any breach or warranty contained herein.

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Student-Employee	Date
Witness	Date

Approved in form by the _____ County Prosecutor's Office

	Date
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