

TUITION BENEFITS GUIDE

For CSEA-Represented NYS Employees

Receive Vouchers and Reimbursements for Tuition Payments, Certification, and Licensure Exam Fees!













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Save Money on Tuition & Exam Fees

Balancing work and education can be difficult, especially with time and financial constraints. For over two decades, the NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training has been a trusted partner in supporting thousands of CSEA-represented NYS employees toward advancing their careers.

Our tuition benefits program helps reduce college tuition and exam costs, making it easier to gain essential skills, certifications, or a degree to reach your career goals.

Discover Your Benefits

• Standard Tuition Benefits

Save money on course tuition. Use vouchers at one of our participating schools or opt for reimbursement.

Tuition Vouchers

Choose from over 140 <u>educational</u> <u>providers</u> that accept tuition vouchers to pay for your course(s) upfront.

Tuition Reimbursements

You can get reimbursed for eligible exams and course tuition from approved providers.

- Adult Education Basics & Skills Support
 We provide financial support to improve
 your basic knowledge, whether you want
 to improve your English skills, get your
 high school diploma, or prepare for other
 courses.
- Statewide Targeted Tuition Benefits
 If you qualify for one of our statewide targeted tuition programs, you can save even more on tuition while training for a highdemand career field in NYS service.
- Credit-by-Exam Fee Reimbursements You can earn college credits by passing exams.
 We'll reimburse you for all eligible exams, so you can start college with more credits.

Certification & Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursements

We understand the importance of keeping up with certifications and licenses in today's job market. Our program covers eligible exam fees, ensuring you have the necessary credentials to succeed in your field.

Take advantage of these opportunites - your success starts with you!





Eligibility

Eligible bargaining units are the:

- ► Administrative Services Unit (ASU/02),
- Operational Services Unit (OSU/03),
- ▶ Institutional Services Unit (ISU/04), or
- the Division of Military Naval Affairs (DMNA/47).

If you are a CSEA-represented NYS employee in one of the above eligible bargaining units, here are the criteria to qualify for tuition benefits:

 You must be receiving a NYS paycheck when you apply. Your application must be received after your first paycheck and before your last paycheck.

- If you were laid off in the past year and are on a Civil Service Preferred List, you are eligible.
- If you are on approved non-disciplinary leave without pay or workers' compensation leave, you may still qualify with proper documentation. The documentation must specify the type of leave and the start date, and it must be signed by a human resources officer and attached to your tuition benefits application.

Dates & Deadlines

Eligible employees may apply for tuition benefits each program year from April 1 to March 31. To ensure that you don't miss out, please keep the following dates in mind:

- The current program year is from April

 2025, to March 31, 2026. Courses and exams must be in session or taken during this timeframe to be eligible for tuition benefits.
- You must apply for your tuition benefits by March 31, 2026. Please note that you do not have to complete your course/exam before applying. However, you will not receive reimbursement until after completing your course/exam. Please note that applications sent via postal mail must be received (not postmarked) by March 31, 2026.

 After you apply, you must submit all necessary follow-up documentation for reimbursement by June 30, 2026.



If you cannot provide the required documentation by the deadline please contact us at:

(800) 253-4332 Option 2 or reimbursement@nyscseapartnership.org

If you miss these deadlines, you will not be eligible to receive your tuition benefits. **Tuition** benefits cannot be carried over from one program year to the next or transferred to another individual.

Tax Implications



In general, job-related educational assistance benefits are not taxable, with the following clarifications:

 Currently, no tax withholding is required on educational assistance benefits provided to employees up to a \$5,250 limit during the calendar year, except for Certification and Licensing Exam reimbursements, which are always taxable. Educational assistance benefits that exceed \$5,250 will be taxable unless they can be excluded as a "working condition fringe benefit."



If employer-sponsored benefits from the Partnership alone, or in combination with educational/tuition assistance from other NYS employer-sponsored benefits add up to more than \$5,250, you will have taxes taken out of your State paycheck(s) in December.

These exemptions, however, can change from one tax year to another.

We encourage you to contact your tax advisor/accountant for guidance.



How Benefits Work

STEP 1

- Review this guide.
- Watch the "Using the Tuition Benefits Program" webinar recording at https:// nyscseapartnership.org/tuition-benefits
- Connect with our advisors to ensure you get the most out of your tuition benefits:



STEP 2

- Find the course(s) or exam(s) you want to take during our application period.
- Search our Provider Directory at https://nyscseapartnership.org/tuition-bene-fits-participating-voucher-schools.
- Many providers have specific requirements you must meet before you can register. We suggest you contact the provider directly for information before you apply for your tuition benefits.

STEP 3

• Apply for and receive your tuition benefits.

STEP 4

Register for your course or exam with the provider.

STEP 5

- Manage your benefits.
- If you receive a tuition voucher, give it to the provider so they can bill the Partnership directly for your course tuition.
- If you are approved for tuition or exam reimbursement, pay for the course/exam, complete it, and follow the directions on the approval form to submit the required reimbursement documentation to us by the deadline.



Tuition

Standard Tuition Benefits

Get up to \$5,000 per program year to help cover your course tuition. You have the flexibility to choose between using tuition vouchers at a participating provider or opting for tuition reimbursements. You can also choose one of each!

Tuition Vouchers

Apply for a voucher if the educational institution you want to attend is one of <u>our participating</u> <u>providers</u>. A voucher is a piece of paper that acts as payment for tuition at participating providers. Over 140 providers accept vouchers, covering the cost of your course directly. This is an ideal solution for avoiding out-of-pocket expenses at participating institutions. The provider will bill us directly for the cost of your course tuition.

Tuition Reimbursements

Apply for reimbursement if any of the following are true:

- ► The provider you want to use is not a participating provider.
- A participating provider does not offer a convenient location or the type of course you are interested in taking.
- ➤ You have already paid for the course and prefer to be reimbursed directly.



Reimbursement will not be provided for coursework taken at a provider that is not accredited. Before you register with a provider, please contact us to ensure they are an approved reimbursement provider. If it's not approved, you won't be reimbursed.

We will only approve requests for providers who are accredited educational institutions.

Tuition Coverage Limits

You may request up to \$5,000 per program year. If applying for a voucher or reimbursement, you must submit one application per school/educational provider. If you have a remaining balance after your benefit is issued, you may submit a new application for the same school or different educational provider until your \$5,000 is depleted.

If you are in one of our Targeted Tuition programs for high-demand careers in NYS, you may be eligible to receive an additional \$2,500 towards your tuition, per program year (see page 8 for more information).

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Remaining balances will not carry over to the next program year. Any tuition costs above the maximum provided will be your responsibility. All other expenses are also your responsibility, such as fees, books, and materials.



Ineligible Tuition Courses

Certain types of non-credit courses are **NOT** eligible for tuition benefits.

Examples include:

- **X** Bartending
- **X** Gaming (for example, billiards and poker)
- **X** Modeling and appearance enhancement
- X Physical education (for example, kickboxing, karate, martial arts, dance, and Pilates)
- X Life coach, Reiki, yoga, meditation, and hypnosis
- **X** Starting your own business
- X One-on-one courses or tutoring
- X Non-instructor-led courses

Eligible Tuition Courses

Our tuition benefits program offers a wide range of courses, programs, and providers to choose from, including undergraduate credit courses, non-credit courses, and graduate courses. These courses must take place within the current program year and can be unrelated to your current role.

Please note that while most courses can be considered job or career-related, it is always best to verify with a Partnership advisor to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria.



Credit Courses (Undergraduate and Graduate)

Undergraduate credit courses are usually available at colleges and universities. Upon completion of the course, college credit is awarded.

These courses are mainly taken by students who have a high school diploma or equivalent and working towards an associate's or bachelor's degree.

It's important to note that most educational institutions do not allow you to register for graduate courses unless you already have a bachelor's degree.

Non-Credit Courses

Non-credit courses are typically offered at BOCES or college continuing education departments. These courses do not award college credits, but may award Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

Courses must meet the following criteria:

- ► Relate to vocational, trade, technical, or business-related skills.
- ► Be taught by an instructor.
- ► Be relevant to an occupation or workforce need in NYS.



Adult Education Basics & Skills Support

In addition, we also cover the cost of basic skills courses such as English, reading, writing, math, adult basic education, high school equivalency, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). While most of these courses are available for free in your community, we will cover the cost of such courses in accordance with our guidelines.

Learn more about our Adult Education Basics program at www.nyscseapartnership.org.

Statewide Targeted Tuition Benefits

Now is the perfect time to start training for a promising career in NYS. There is a high demand for skilled professionals in four career fields: Commercial Driver's License (CDL); Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC); Nursing; and Welding. Additionally, there are other agency-sponsored programs you may be able to explore.

Enroll in one of these eligible, high-demand training programs, and you may receive up to \$2,500 in additional tuition benefits - on top of your standard benefits - for a total of up to \$7,500 per program year. This is a great opportunity to enhance your skills while saving money.

Don't miss out - contact us today to check your eligibility!

A member of our advisement team will need to verify your eligibility before granting your additional benefits.



For your convenience, specific details about each program and the requirements that need to be fulfilled to qualify for the targeted tuition benefits are listed below.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

If you are pursuing a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), you may be eligible for targeted tuition benefits. You may also apply for reimbursement of the knowledge and skills certification and licensure exam fee (road test). Please note that we can only cover the exam fee, not the license itself.



Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC)

You may be eligible for targeted tuition benefits if you are enrolled in any of the following programs:

- A bachelor's degree program in Facilities Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, or Marine Engineering.
- ► An associate's degree in HVAC.
- An approved HVAC certificate program from BOCES or an accredited technical/ vocational training school or technology college.*
 - * Certification program must be accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology or recognized by the NYSED Bureau of Proprietary Schools.

Nursing

To be eligible for targeted tuition benefits in nursing, you must have already enrolled in a full LPN or RN program. Any pre-requisite courses taken before enrolling in a declared nursing major will not be covered under this targeted benefit. It is important to note that this additional benefit does not apply to other medical programs or nursing assistant programs. We encourage you to make use of the certification and exam fee reimbursements for the NCLEX and other nursing exams.

Welding

Employees who wish to take welding courses are eligible, and there are no minimum or maximum credit hours required.

You can also apply for reimbursement of relevant certification and licensure exam fees. You will be reimbursed, whether or not you pass the exam, after submitting the required documentation. There is no limit on the number of certification and licensure exam benefits you receive each program year.

Learn about our new CDL/LPN License Renewal Benefit by visiting:

https://nyscseapartnership.org/ license-fee-reimbursement-pilot-program.

Search our Provider Directory by scanning the QR code with your phone or by visiting:

https://nyscseapartnership.org/tuition-benefits-participating-voucher-schools.





Exams

In addition to your other tuition benefits, you can get reimbursed for **credit-by-exam and certification and licensure exam fees up to a maximum of \$350 per exam.** There is no limit on the number of exams you can take.

Credit-by-Exam Fee Reimbursement

Passing college-level exams can help you earn credits and save time and money. It can shorten the time required to finish a degree program and help build your confidence to do college-level work

Eligible Credit-By-Exam Providers

Explore the major exam programs we cover below. Be sure to check with your provider first to confirm their participation. These programs offer college credit for the knowledge you have already acquired.

- College-Level Examination Program
 (CLEP) This is a nationwide credit-byexam program that allows you to earn
 credit for what you already know. The
 exams cover topics that most students take
 in the first two years of college.
- DANTES Subject Standardized Test
 (DSST) This credit-by-exam program
 allows you to earn college credit for knowledge gained in the workplace, classroom,
 or through independent study. The exams
 cover various subjects, including physical
 sciences, social sciences, business, applied
 technology, humanities, and more.
- Thomas Edison College Examination
 Program (TECEP) This program offers a
 wide range of exams for earning college
 credit. The exams are designed to allow you
 to demonstrate the college-level knowledge you have gained through work, independent reading, or other activities.

Certification & Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement

You can get reimbursed up to \$350 per exam for **unlimited** certification or licensure exam fees in addition to your other tuition benefits.

This program is not intended to replace existing agency exam reimbursement programs.



Exam Criteria

To be eligible, a certification/licensure exam must meet the following criteria:

- Be job- or career-related.
- Lead to certification or licensure for an occupation in New York State service.
- Be administered by an accredited organization.

Examples include:

- ► Boiler Inspector
- ► Certified Public Accountant
- Commercial Pesticide Applicator/ Technician
- Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor

- ▶ Dental Hygienist
- ► Physical Therapy Assistant
- ► Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator
- ► NCLEX
- ► Certain Nursing School Entrance Exams
- Exams for certification in specific software or hardware programs by Microsoft, Novell, Oracle, and others may also be covered.



Costs and fees NOT reimbursed by this program include, but are not limited to:

- Civil Service examination fees.
- Fees for exams leading to certification in a career not existing in NYS service.
- Academic and application fees.
- Study materials (books, CDs, DVDs, etc.) and supplies.
- Exam fees that are reimbursable by the employee's agency.



Apply & Manage Your Benefits

Applications can be sent by email, fax, or standard mail. Alternatively apply by using our Tuition Portal. Contact a Partnership Advisor if you need assistance with your application - please have your course information ready. Additional verification, such as a billing statement or transcript, may be required to process benefits.

You do not have to complete your course/ exam before you apply. However, If you are seeking reimbursement, you will not receive it until after you complete your course/exam. Exceptions may apply if courses are more than one year long.

Ways to Apply

To make the application process as seamless as possible, you may apply using the best method for you.

1. Use our Application Form

Complete the application form (pdf) on page16 or download it at: https://nyscseapartnership.org/ tuition-benefits.

Type or print legibly and complete all

required form fields. Submit your application via email, fax, or mail:

- Email: Send the completed application to <u>tuitionapplications@</u> <u>nyscseapartnership.org</u>.
- ► Fax: (518) 486-1989
- ▶ Mail: NYS & CSEA Partnership, Corporate Plaza East - Suite 502, 240 Washington Ave. Ext., Albany, NY 12203. Applications sent via mail must be received (not postmarked) by March 31.

2. Use our Tuition Portal

Sign in to the Tuition Portal using your NYS. gov ID and password at:
https://tuitionportal.nyscseapartnership.org/



You can expect a response within **ten business days**. If you do not hear from us by this time, please call us at:

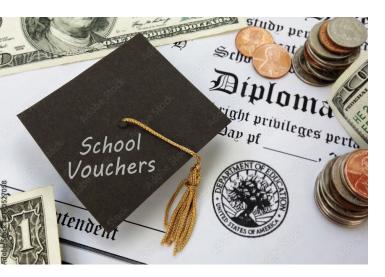
(800) 253-4332 Option 1 or email: advisors@nyscseapartnership.org.

Manage Your Benefits

Get Vouchers

If you receive a voucher for a participating provider, you must:

- Follow the provider's registration instructions and schedule. If you do not register with the provider, you may not be allowed to attend the course.
- You will receive one voucher per course requested. Submit the voucher to the provider when you register or pay for your course. By doing so, you permit the school to bill the Partnership. If you do not submit the voucher to the school, you may be billed by the school.



Get Reimbursed

If you receive reimbursement approval, you must follow the instructions on the front of the approval form. You will receive one benefit approval form per course requested. These instructions include the following steps:

- After completing and paying for the course, return the completed approval form to the Partnership. Be sure to include a copy of the following materials:
 - ► Your account statement from the

- school detailing tuition charges (separate from fees)
- Proof of tuition payment
- ► Sources of payments
- ➤ Your transcript or grade report indicating course completion
- Once we receive all required supporting documents, we will mail your tuition or exam reimbursement to you within 60 days.

You must complete your course or exam to receive reimbursements.

It is possible to change your tuition benefits after you apply based on your situation. However, please be sure to follow the next steps.

Changing/Canceling Provider, Benefit Type, or Courses

We can only approve changes/cancellations if no charges were incurred against the original benefit, voucher, or reimbursement approval.



To change/cancel a voucher or reimbursement, contact a Partnership advisor at:

(800) 253-4332 Option 1 or email: advisors@nyscseapartnership.org

Changing/Canceling a Voucher

If you want to change your tuition benefit or you were unable to use it during the eligible time frame and want to cancel it, you must contact our advisors for a Change of Benefit Form. You must submit the Change of Benefit Form to the contact at the school listed on your voucher. You and the educational provider/school must sign the form indicating that no

charges were incurred towards the benefit(s). Once this form is returned, and signed by both you and the educational provider, we can then process the request.

Changing/Canceling a Reimbursement

To change or cancel a reimbursement approval, please contact our advisors for more information.

Changing Courses

We do not need to approve course changes if the new course(s) meet our course criteria.

Dropping Courses

Please contact the provider directly to learn about their drop procedures and refund policy.

- If you register for a course but withdraw within the school's 100% refund period (if one is available), the Partnership will not be required to pay for your participation in the course and your tuition benefit may still be valid for you to use.
- If you drop your course outside the school's 100% refund period, the Partnership will pay the school as required, and the payment amount will be deducted from your annual tuition benefit balance.

Tuition benefits cannot be transferred to another individual or carried over to the next program year.





Tuition Benefits Instructions & Application

Program Year: April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026

ELIGIBILITY

You must be a CSEA-represented New York State employee on the state payroll (after receiving your first paycheck and before your last) in one of the following bargaining units:

- Administrative Services Unit (ASU/02)
- Operational Services Unit (OSU/03)
- ► Institutional Services Unit (ISU/04)
- ▶ Division of Military Naval Affairs (DMNA/47)

Apply during the Program Year: April 1 to the following March 31.

Applications must be submitted during the program year and used for courses or exams that take place during that time period.

HOW IT WORKS

Eligible employees can **receive up to \$5,000** in tuition benefits per program year. To qualify for these benefits, the school you're attending must be accredited. You may apply for:

- **Tuition Vouchers**: Use tuition vouchers to pay for courses upfront at any of our 140+ accredited participating schools.
- Tuition Reimbursements: Opt for reimbursements if you choose an accredited school that does not accept tuition vouchers, or if you've already paid for a course.

If a balance remains, you may submit another application for the same or a different school until your \$5,000 is used. Benefits cannot be carried over to the next program year or transferred to others. For full details, see the Tuition Benefits Guide on the NYS & CSEA Partnership website.

HOW TO APPLY

Submit one application per school by email, fax, mail, or online through the Tuition Portal. Have your course information ready. Additional documents (billing statement, transcript, etc.) may be required.

- ► **Use our Application Form:** Submit your application via email, fax, or mail.
 - Email: Send the completed application to: tuitionapplications@nyscseapartnership.org.
 - Fax: (518) 486-1989
 - Mail: NYS & CSEA Partnership, Corporate Plaza East - Suite 502, 240 Washington Ave. Ext., Albany, NY 12203. Applications sent via mail must be received (not postmarked) by March 31.
- Or Use the Tuition Portal: Sign in to the Tuition Portal using your NYS.gov ID and password at: https://tuitionportal.nyscseapartnership.org/

You can expect a response within ten business days. If you do not hear from us by this time, please contact a Partnership Advisor.

If you have questions about the Tuition Benefits Program, school accreditation, or need assistance with your application, please contact a Partnership Advisor at (800) 253-4332 Option 1 or advisors@nyscseapartnership.org.



Tuition Benefits Application

Program Year: April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026

Employe	r (NYS Agency Name):			
	oloyee ID Number (find on your N	YS paystub):		
Or CSEA ID I	Number (find on your member ca	ard):		
	dress:		time Phone:	
	ddress (include city, state, zip):			
	_			
How do y	 ou want your benefits sent? (sele	ect one): Email	Mail	
-	ve a disability that requires a reasont: ht: https://nyscseapartnership.org,			
		BENEFIT REQU	EST	
Tuition B	Benefit Type - Are you applying fo	or Voucher or Reimbur	sement benefits? (selec	t one).
Vouc	hers: Use tuition vouchers to pay	for courses upfront at	any of our 140+ accredit	ted <u>participating schools</u> .
	nbursements: Opt for reimbursen hers, or if you've already paid for a	-	accredited school that (does not accept tuition
School In	nformation - Please contact a Par	tnership Advisor for q	uestions on your school's	s accreditation.
Name of	School:	Subje	ct Area:	
		COURSE INFORM	ATION	
		TOOKSE INFORM	ATION	
Check if graduate course	Course Name	Start & End Date	Credit or Non-Credit	t Course (select one)
			Credit, # of Credits:_	Non-Credit
			Credit, # of Credits:_	Non-Credit
			Credit, # of Credits:_	Non-Credit
			Credit, # of Credits:_	Non-Credit
Total num	nber of courses listed in application	on here: Estin	nated total \$ amount red	quested:
	le Targeted Tuition Benefits			
	d in one of these high-demand tra al tuition benefits for a total of u			/e up to \$2,500 in
	elect the program you're enrolled		_	
Comm	nercial Driver's License (CDL)	Heating, Ventilation, Ai	r Conditioning (HVAC)	Nursing Welding
	AUTHO	ORIZATION AND	AGREEMENT	
in combi	ng this document, I acknowledge nation with educational/tuition an \$5,250, I will have taxes taken	assistance from other	r NYS employer-sponso	
	g this document, I agree that all t	he information contai	ned in this application is	
best of m the Partn	ny knowledge and belief. I hereby nership.	authorize the school r	named above to release	final billing information to
the Partn	-			final billing information to

STUDENT INFORMATION



Resources and Support

Don't let education costs hold you back from your dreams. Join the thousands of CSEA-represented NYS employees who have achieved success with the help of tuition and exam savings. Take the first step towards your future today.



Webinar: Using Your Tuition Benefits

Watch a recording on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/ watch?v=xX7WdRtEhhw



Webinar: Financing Your Education

Watch a recording on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/ watch?v=fZOj3ocSlvA



Connect with a Partnership advisor.

Get help using and applying for your tuition benefits.

(800) 253-4332 Option 1 or advisors@nyscseapartner-ship.org.



Take the first step. Connect with us today!



Tuition Benefits Program Corporate Plaza East - Suite 502 240 Washington Ave. Ext. Albany, NY 12203

(800) 253-4332 Option 1 advisors@nyscseapartnership.org