

**2024 - 2025**

NYS & CSEA  
**Partnership**



# **TUITION BENEFITS GUIDE**

**For CSEA-Represented NYS Employees**

Applications accepted until March 31, 2025



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# Save Money on Tuition & Exam Fees

As a working adult, pursuing education to advance your career can be difficult due to time and financial constraints. We understand your concerns and want to help you achieve your educational dreams.

We have been a trusted partner to thousands of CSEA-represented NYS employees for over two decades, and we're here to

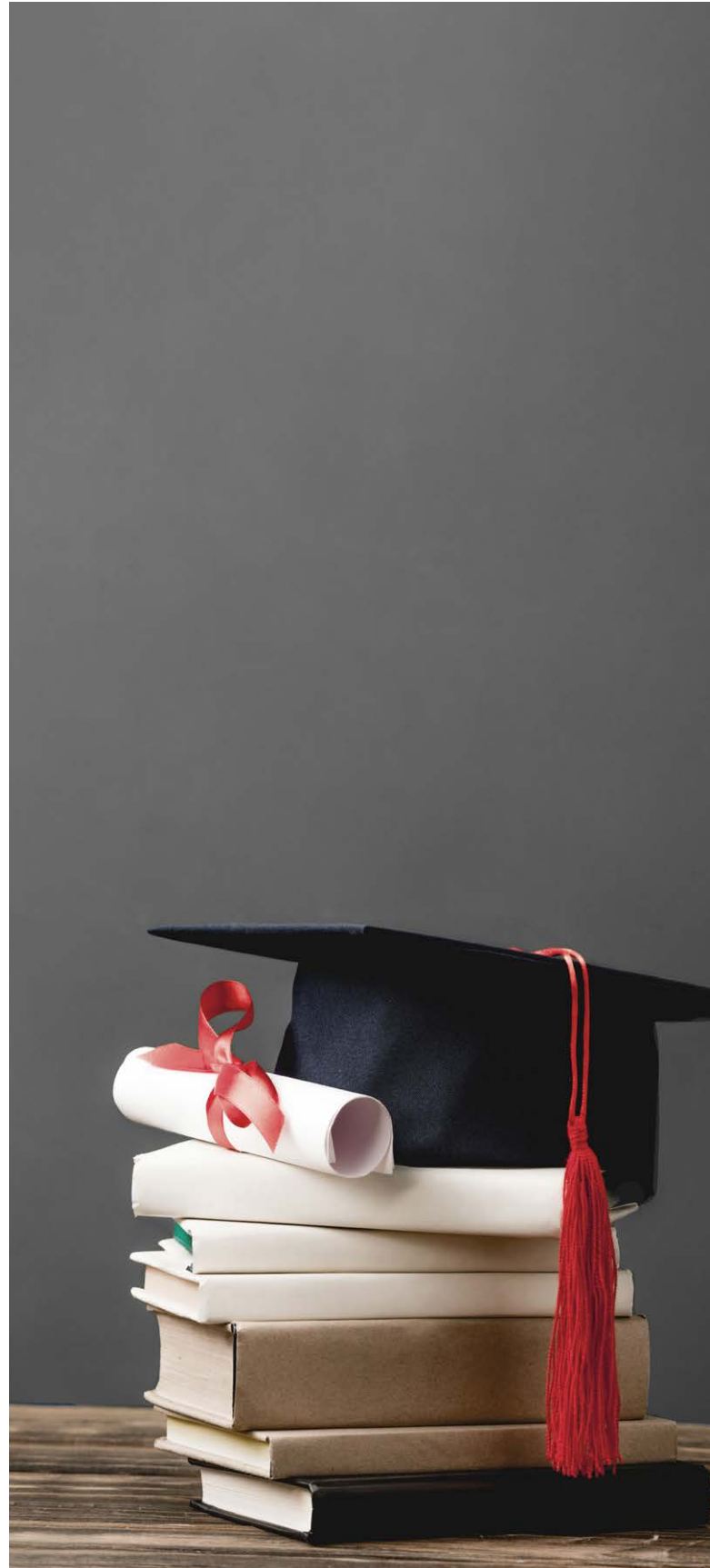
support you in overcoming financial hurdles and enhancing your skills to achieve your career goals.

The purpose of our tuition benefits program is to help reduce the cost of your college tuition and exam fees, enabling you to pursue your desired degree, essential skills, or job-specific certifications.

## Discover your benefits:

- **Tuition Vouchers**  
Choose from over 140 [educational providers](#) 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.
- **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 high-demand career field in NYS service.
- **Basic Education and 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.
- **Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursements**  
We understand the importance of keeping up with certifications and licenses in today's job market. That's why our program covers eligible exam fees, ensuring you have the necessary credentials to succeed in your field.
- **Credit-by-Exam Fee Reimbursements**  
You can earn college credits by passing exams. We'll reimburse you for all eligible exams so that you can start college with more credits.

We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity. Please keep in mind that the responsibility for using these benefits is yours.







# 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 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.** Courses and exams must be in session or taken sometime during this timeframe to be eligible for tuition benefits.
- **You must apply for your tuition benefits by March 31, 2025.** 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 post-marked) by March 31, 2025.

- **After you apply, you must submit all necessary follow-up documentation for reimbursement by June 30, 2025.**

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



**(800) 253-4332 Option 2 or**

[reimbursement@nyscseapartnership.org](mailto: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 may be taxable unless they can be excluded as a “working condition fringe benefit.”

**If educational assistance benefits from the Partnership alone or combined with tuition assistance from other NYS agencies exceed \$5,250, applicable income tax will be withheld from December paychecks.**

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

## 1

### 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:



(800) 253-4332 Option 1  
[advisors@nyscseapartnership.org](mailto:advisors@nyscseapartnership.org)

## 2

### 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-benefits-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.

## 3

### STEP 3

- Apply for and receive your tuition benefits.

## 4

### STEP 4

- Register for your course or exam with the provider.

## 5

### 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.



# About Tuition

## Choose Your Path

You have the flexibility to choose between using tuition vouchers at a participating provider or opting for tuition reimbursement. You could even choose one of each!

- **Tuition Vouchers** - You should apply for this benefit if the provider you want to attend is one of [our participating providers](#). 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** - You should 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

A single tuition benefit (voucher or reimbursement) can cover ONE of the following:

- Tuition for ONE credit-bearing course, up to a maximum of four credits at the resident tuition per credit rate, not to exceed \$305 per credit.\*
- Tuition for ONE non-credit course up to \$1,220.

*\*A voucher at a private school will cover the full tuition for an undergraduate course; however, partial tuition up to \$305 per credit hour is covered for a graduate-level course.*

Two tuition benefits (vouchers or reimbursements) can be combined and used for:

- Tuition for one non-credit course over \$1,220 (each benefit will cover up to a maximum of \$1,220).
- Tuition for one credit-bearing course that is over four credits.

**Any tuition costs above the maximum provided will be your responsibility. All other expenses are also your responsibility, such as fees, books, and materials.**



## 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.

**To be eligible for this program, the courses you choose 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.

▶ *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.*



**(800) 253-4332 Option 1**

[advisors@nyscseapartnership.org](mailto:advisors@nyscseapartnership.org)

## Basic Skills Courses

In addition to the above, 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, 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.](http://www.nyscseapartnership.org)

## Training Programs for High-Demand Careers in NYS Service

Now is the perfect time to start training for a promising career in NYS. There is a high demand for skilled professionals in five career fields, as outlined below. Additionally, there are other agency-sponsored programs you may be able to explore.

With enrollment in an eligible training program, you may be able to receive up to **two targeted tuition benefits**. This is in addition to your two standard tuition benefits. As a result, you may be able to save even more on your tuition coverage. This is an excellent opportunity to develop your skills and expertise while saving money at the same time.

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



(800) 253-4332 Option 1  
[advisors@nyscseapartnership.org](mailto:advisors@nyscseapartnership.org)

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 two 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)** – If you are seeking a Plant Utilities Assistant (PUA) or a Plant Utilities Engineer 1 (PUE 1) position and 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 program.
  - ▶ An HVAC certificate or diploma program from a BOCES, with a minimum of 440 or 900 hours, or \*enrolled in an approved certificate or HVAC, electrical, refrigeration, boiler operations and maintenance, or plumbing from an accredited technical school or technology college.
  - ▶ \*PUA only - You must have nine months of permanent competitive, non-competitive, or labor service AND possess a high school diploma or equivalency to qualify for this option.
- **Information Technology** - For eligible employees seeking Information Technology Specialist 1 or 2 positions in NYS service.
- **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 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.

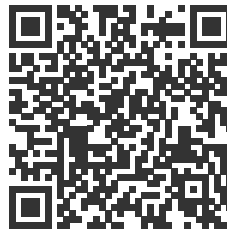
- **Welding** - Employees who wish to take welding courses are eligible, and there are no minimum or maximum credit hours required.

You can also apply for reimbursement of relevant certification and licensure exam fees. Rest assured, 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.

SEARCH OUR PROVIDER DIRECTORY by scanning the QR code with your phone or by visiting:

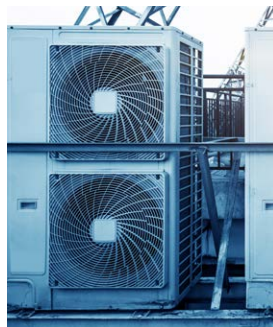
<https://nyscseapartnership.org/tuition-benefits-participating-voucher-schools>.



## High-Demand Careers in NYS Service



**Commercial Driver's License (CDL)**



**Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning**

Plant Utilities Assistant (PUA) or Plant Utilities Engineer 1 (PUE 1) only



**Information Technology**

IT Specialist 1 or 2 only



**Nursing**

RNs and LPNs only



**Welding**

## 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. Additionally, for graduate-level courses, only partial tuition (up to \$305 per credit) is covered by your benefits.

## 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).

## Ineligible Courses

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

Examples include:

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







# A Better Future Starts Here

Achieve Your Educational Goals with the Partnership



# 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-by-exam 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 and 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
- ▶ Licensed Practical Nurse
- ▶ Physical Therapy Assistant
- ▶ Registered Nurse
- ▶ Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator
- ▶ 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.
- Fees for exams leading to college credit for life experience.
- Academic and application fees.
- Study materials ( books, CDs, DVDs, etc.) and supplies.
- License and certification renewals.
- Exam fees that are reimbursable by the employee's agency.



# Apply and Manage Your Benefits

For your convenience, you may apply for your tuition benefits using our application form or by phone.

**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.

## Two Ways to Apply

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

### 1. Call Us

Call (800) 253-4332 Option 1 to complete your application over the phone with our advisement team.

### 2. Apply via Email, Mail, or Fax

Complete the application form (pdf) on [page 17](#) 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 [tuitionapplications@nyscseapartnership.org](mailto: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 postal mail must be received (not postmarked) by March 31.*



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](mailto:advisors@nyscseapartnership.org).



## Manage Your Benefits



### 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.
- 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.

It is possible to change your tuition benefits after you apply based on your situation. However, please be sure to follow the steps below. Instructions are also listed on the back of your voucher/reimbursement approval form.

### Get Reimbursed

If you receive reimbursement approval, you must follow the instructions on the back of the approval form. 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)
  - ▶ 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.**

## Changing Providers or Benefit Type

If you want to change your approved provider or benefit type:

- **Return the original approval form by March 31**, with the "Changing Schools or Benefit Type" section completed on the back. *If you no longer have the original approval form, please contact an advisor.*
- We can only approve changes if no charges were incurred against the original benefit, voucher, or reimbursement approval.

## 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 tuition benefit will be considered used.

## Canceling Benefits

*Cancellations can be approved only if no charges were incurred against the original benefit, voucher, or reimbursement approval.*

If you are unable to use your tuition benefit during the eligible time frame and want to cancel it, you must:

- **Vouchers:**  
Return the original approval form by March 31, with the "Canceling a Tuition Benefit" section completed on the back. *If you no longer have the original approval form, please contact an advisor.*
- **Reimbursements:**  
To cancel a reimbursement approval, please contact our advisors for more information.

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



# Tuition Benefits Application

Program Year: April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025

**Eligibility:** Current CSEA-represented NYS employees in bargaining units ASU/02, OSU/03, ISU/04, and DMNA/47 who received a NYS paycheck at the time of application are eligible to apply.

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

Please provide one of the following:

NYS Employee ID Number (check your NYS paystub): \_\_\_\_\_

CSEA ID Number (check your member card): \_\_\_\_\_

Important updates will be sent using the contact information you provide below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (including city, state, zip): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Home Cell

Employer (NYS Agency Name): \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box if you require a reasonable accommodation due to a disability.

## STANDARD TUITION BENEFITS

Standard Benefits - You may apply for up to two standard benefits during the program year.

### Standard Tuition Benefit 1

Name of Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Program/Area of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method:

Voucher (Pre-pay course tuition to a provider)

Reimbursement (Reclaim tuition payment)

Course Type: Credit Non-Credit

### Standard Tuition Benefit 2

Name of Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Program/Area of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method:

Voucher (Pre-pay course tuition to a provider)

Reimbursement (Reclaim tuition payment)

Course Type: Credit Non-Credit

**Do not send payment/documentation at this time.**

## TARGETED TUITION BENEFITS (Eligible Individuals Only)

In addition to your standard tuition benefits, you may be eligible for up to two targeted tuition benefits. A member of our advisement team will need to verify your eligibility before granting your additional benefits. If you are eligible, select the program(s) for which you are applying:

Adult Education Basics CDL HVAC Information Technology Nursing Welding

### Targeted Tuition Benefit 1

Name of Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Program/Area of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method:

Voucher (Pre-pay course tuition to a provider)

Reimbursement (Reclaim tuition payment)

Course Type: Credit Non-Credit

### Targeted Tuition Benefit 2

Name of Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Program/Area of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method:

Voucher (Pre-pay course tuition to a provider)

Reimbursement (Reclaim tuition payment)

Course Type: Credit Non-Credit

## AUTHORIZATION AND AGREEMENT

By checking this box, I agree that all information provided is accurate and authorize the release of final grades and course information to the Partnership.

## SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

You may complete and return the application via email, fax, mail, or phone using the information below.

NYS & CSEA Partnership,  
Corporate Plaza East – Suite 502,  
240 Washington Ave. Ext.  
Albany, NY 12203

Phone: (800) 253-4332 Option 1  
Email: [tuitionapplications@nyscseapartnership.org](mailto:tuitionapplications@nyscseapartnership.org)  
Fax: (518) 486-1989



# 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=xX7WdRtEhw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xX7WdRtEhw)



### Webinar: Financing Your Education

Watch a recording [on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZOj3ocS1vA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZOj3ocS1vA)



### Connect with a Partnership advisor.

Get help using and applying for your tuition benefits.  
(800) 253-4332 Option 1 or [advisors@nyscseapartnership.org](mailto:advisors@nyscseapartnership.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](mailto:advisors@nyscseapartnership.org)