

CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION INCENTIVES

I. INTRODUCTION

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) is committed to recognizing employees whose efforts positively affect the delivery of quality services.

The following awards are available to our CHFS employees whose work performance serves as a model of excellence and is of a consistently exceptional quality.

1. Adjustment for Continuing Excellence (ACE)
2. Employee Recognition Award (ERA)
3. Educational Achievement Award (EAA)

Although Kentucky regulation defines the minimum criteria for these awards, the Cabinet has developed additional criteria in order to: 1) make the process more selective and thus preserve the original intent of these programs – to reward truly exceptional performance; 2) ensure that candidates are selected based upon objective data; and 3) provide awards within current budgetary limitations.

The Cabinet also supports the ongoing professional development and educational goals of its employees by offering Educational Assistance (i.e. tuition assistance) to those wishing to pursue higher education and additional studies relevant to the Cabinet's mission.

II. ACE, ERA, EAA AWARDS

A. Adjustment for Continuing Excellence (ACE)

Award Overview

The Adjustment for Continuing Excellence (ACE) is a monetary award established by state regulation to recognize exceptional employees by allowing for up to ten percent of the assigned pay grade midpoint to be added to the employee's base salary.

Qualifications and Regulatory Compliance

ACE awards may be granted to employees who meet the following criteria:

General Qualifications

1. The employee has an established annual increment date;
2. The employee has worked at least twenty-four (24) consecutive months with the state, twelve (12) consecutive months of which have been served in the department granting the award; and
3. The employee has not received an ACE award or a distinguished service award in the preceding twenty-four (24) months or an employee recognition award (ERA) in the preceding twelve (12) months.

Performance-based Qualifications

1. The employee demonstrated a sustained level of exceptional job performance; OR
2. Assumed a significant level of additional job responsibilities or duties consistent with the assigned classification and has performed them in an exceptional manner; OR
3. Acquired professional and technical skills or knowledge through department directed or authorized attainment of job-related licensure, certification, or formal training that will substantially improve job performance. An employee shall NOT be eligible for an ACE award under this qualification if an Educational Achievement Award has been granted for the same training.

Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) – Employee Recognition Incentives

In addition to these criteria, the Cabinet requires the following:

1. The employee must have received a ‘Highly Effective’ or ‘Outstanding’ rating on his/her performance evaluations from the previous two years, except if an employee was exempt from formal performance review during that time and the supervisor provides justification.
2. If the performance-based qualification is in reference to the acquisition of additional professional and technical skills or knowledge, the employee must have completed at least two years of a university degree program that has been deemed crucial to the work of the department in which he/she currently works. The list of degrees/courses critical to the mission of the Cabinet is the same list referenced for tuition assistance.

Nomination Process

Nominations must be made by an employee’s direct-line supervisor using the Adjustment for Continuing Excellence (ACE) Nomination Form.

B. Employee Recognition Award (ERA)

Award Overview

The Employee Recognition Award (ERA) is a monetary award established by state regulation to recognize employees’ direct contributions to increased process efficiencies and productivity by allowing for a lump sum payment of up to five percent of the assigned pay grade midpoint.

Qualifications and Regulatory Compliance

ERA awards may be granted to employees who meet the following criteria:

General Qualifications:

1. The employee has established an annual increment date;
2. The employee has worked at least twenty-four (24) consecutive months in state service, twelve (12) consecutive months of which is in the department granting the award;
3. The employee has not received an ERA or a distinguished service award in the preceding twenty-four (24) months, nor an ACE award in the preceding twelve (12) months; and
4. The employee shall not be eligible for an ERA for an act or idea that has been approved or submitted for consideration as an Employee Suggestion System Award. An employee who has received an ERA shall not be eligible to be considered for an Employee Suggestion System Award for those acts or ideas upon which the ERA is based.

Performance-based Qualifications

1. The employee’s acts or ideas have resulted in significant financial savings or improvements in services to the Commonwealth and its citizens; OR
2. The employee has exhibited distinguished performance during participation in special projects that have had a significant beneficial impact on the department or governmental operations.

In addition to these criteria, the Cabinet requires the following:

1. The employee must have received a ‘Highly Effective’ or ‘Outstanding’ rating on the performance evaluations from the previous two years, except if an employee was exempt from formal performance review during that time and the supervisor provides justification.
2. The employee’s ideas must have resulted in financial savings of at least \$25,000 or have increased productivity by at least 10%.

Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) – Employee Recognition Incentives

Nomination Process

Nominations must be made by an employee's direct-line supervisor using the Employee Recognition Award (ERA) Nomination Form.

C. Educational Achievement Award (EAA)

Award Overview

The Educational Achievement Award (EAA) is a monetary award established by state regulation to recognize employees' educational achievements by allowing for an increase of five percent to the employee's base salary.

The Cabinet restricts the EAA to employees whose coursework and/or educational achievements are directly related to their daily operations or departments.

Qualifications and Regulatory Compliance

EAA awards may be granted to employees who meet the following criteria:

General Qualifications

1. An employee shall not receive more than one EAA in a fiscal year; and
2. An employee shall not receive an EAA and an Adjustment for Continuing Excellence (ACE) based on the same training; and
3. The coursework or completion of the Kentucky Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program has not been previously applied toward an EAA.

*Note: Coursework for which Educational Assistance (Tuition Assistance) has been provided by the Cabinet is not eligible for consideration of an EAA.

Performance-based Qualifications

1. Obtained a high school diploma, equivalency certificate, or passing score on the GED test outside of work hours, while in state service, and on or after January 1, 1984;
2. Has not previously obtained the above-mentioned education; and
3. Has not completed college coursework on the undergraduate or graduate level prior to obtaining the above-mentioned education; OR
4. The employee has completed 260 classroom hours or the equivalent (26 CEU's or 17 semester hours) of job related instruction; and
5. The employee began the course work after becoming a state employee and completed the course work after establishing an increment date; and
6. The employee completed the course work within five (5) years of the date on which it was begun; OR
7. The employee has successfully completed the Kentucky CPM Program offered by the Office of Employee and Organizational Development (formerly known as the Office of Government Training) at Kentucky State University.

In addition to these criteria, the Cabinet requires the following:

1. The employee must have received a 'Highly Effective' or 'Outstanding' rating on his/her performance evaluations from the previous two years, except if an employee was exempt from formal performance review during that time and the supervisor provides justification.
2. The course work must be crucial to the work of the department in which he/she currently works. The list of degrees/courses critical to the mission of the Cabinet is the same list references for tuition assistance.

Nomination Process

Nominations must be made by an employee's direct-line supervisor using the Educational Achievement Award (EAA) Nomination Form.

III. NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCESS FOR ACE, ERA, AND EAA

A. Nomination and Selection Process

Task	DEADLINES			
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Nominations sent to Department/ Office Head	December 1 st *	March 1 st *	June 1 st *	September 1 st *
Nominations sent to OHRM	December 15 th *	March 15 th *	June 15 th *	September 15 th *
Department/ Office Head reviews nominations with appropriate Undersecretary	December 1-31	March 1-31	June 1-30	September 1-30
Undersecretary forwards nominations to Selection Committee	December 31 st *	March 31 st *	June 30 th *	September 30 th *
Committee reviews all nominations and selects award recipients	January 16 th * (tentative)	April 16 th * (tentative)	July 16 th * (tentative)	October 16 th * (tentative)
Awards granted	February 16 th	May 16 th	August 16 th	November 16 th

** or next working day*

B. Disbursement Process

1. Committee to forward all nominations (approved and denied) and requests for salary adjustments and lump sum payments to the Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM).
2. Cabinet Appointing Authority shall submit the required documentation to the Personnel Cabinet to request approval to grant the awards.
3. Adjustments and lump sum payments will be granted on the 16th day of the following month.

IV. EMPLOYEE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (i.e. TUITION ASSISTANCE)

Overview

The Employee Educational Assistance Program allows employees to increase skills needed in their jobs by assisting with tuition costs.

Qualifications and Procedural Compliance

Tuition Assistance may be granted to employees if the guidelines outlined in the ‘Employee Educational Assistance’ policy are fully met:

General Qualifications:

1. The employee must be a permanent, full-time state employee who is in active work status and has satisfactorily completed the initial probationary period, or must be a full-time employee in the unclassified service who has completed six months of continuous service;
2. The employee must demonstrate responsible time and attendance, meet job responsibilities, and have no pending or record of a written reprimand or an appealable disciplinary action for the past six months; and
3. The employee must not have any outstanding reimbursement obligation for tuition assistance provided by the state.

Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) – Employee Recognition Incentives

Degree/Course Guidelines:

1. The degree or courses to be covered by educational assistance must have a clear and direct relationship to the work of the Cabinet and to the improvement of the employee's job effectiveness in his/her present position or a position in the Cabinet to which he/she can reasonably aspire. The Office of Human Resource Management will maintain a list of approved degrees and courses.

In addition to these criteria, the Cabinet requires the following:

1. The employee must have received a 'Highly Effective' or 'Outstanding' rating on his/her performance evaluations from the previous two years, except if an employee was exempt from formal performance review during that time and the supervisor provides justification.
2. The employee must complete a one month service obligation for every credit hour completed under Educational Assistance (minimum six months to maximum two years) within the Cabinet.
3. Service obligations will begin upon completion of the degree and/or coursework and must be served consecutively.
4. Service obligations cannot be repaid at the same time an employee is currently enrolled in a degree program and/or coursework for which the Cabinet is paying tuition assistance.
5. All associate degree programs will be completed within four years. All undergraduate degree programs will be completed within nine years. All graduate degree programs will be completed within eight years.

*Note: Coursework for which Educational Assistance (Tuition Assistance) has been provided by the Cabinet is not eligible for consideration of an EAA. In addition, employees may NOT receive Educational Assistance in combination with Educational Leave.

Nomination Process

Phase I - To Initiate Tuition Assistance

Applications must be forwarded by an employee's direct-line supervisor on behalf of the employee using the Employee Educational Assistance Authorization and Justification Form (P-33) to the Budget Authorization, Department Head, and then Department Training Liaison.

Phase II – To Maintain Tuition Assistance

1. Once tuition assistance is approved for an employee (Phase I), he/she must submit a P-33 form each semester to the Department Training Liaison. The courses listed will be cross-referenced with those indicated on the degree plan. Any deviations from the degree plan on file must be authorized by completion of a degree plan update.
2. The employee is required to submit a degree plan update to the Department Training Liaison if any changes are made to the degree plan. Such modifications require the signature of the employee's educational counselor.

Each department head or his/her designee is granted appointing authority approval for tuition assistance requests.

OHRM will conduct periodic audits of approved requests to ensure procedural compliance.