

Fredericksburg ISD “Grow Your Own” Paraprofessional to Bilingual Teacher Program

A full-time paraprofessional may apply for tuition assistance for classes taken for academic credit as part of an approved degree plan to become a certified bilingual teacher.

Option A

- Tuition assistance will be available for courses taken in the evening during the academic year or anytime during the summer semesters.
- Funds will be distributed on a first-come first-served basis depending on fiscal year funding availability.
- Tuition assistance is limited to two (2) courses per semester, including summer semesters, not to exceed \$500.00 per course including required fees and books.
- The paraprofessional is responsible for completing and submitting the Tuition Assistance Application with the required documentation. Applications with all documentation will be approved in the order of receipt until funds have been expended.
- Upon completion of each approved course, the paraprofessional will complete and submit a reimbursement request form along with a transcript or official grade report from the college showing the latest grades for the current semester to Human Resources.
- Tuition reimbursement will be approved provided that all guidelines have been met and original receipts have been submitted within 30 days of the completion of each semester. It is the responsibility of the employee to keep all copies of financial receipts and educational records/transcripts.

Option B

- In lieu of tuition assistance for classes during evening hours as outlined in Option A, a full-time paraprofessional may have paid release time to attend one course per semester during normal working hours without reduction in pay. The employee must have approval of the campus principal or direct supervisor for the release time and must make every effort to schedule a course during a time that is least disruptive to instruction. A supervisor failing to approve release time must provide justification.

In consideration of the financial support provided to the paraprofessional to pursue a career in education and teaching, the paraprofessional agrees to return to FISSD after graduation from college and to work as a certified bilingual teacher for the District for a minimum of two years.

Tuition reimbursement is excluded from income per IRS Publication 15 Section 2 Excluded taxable benefits.

Educational Assistance

This exclusion applies to educational assistance you provide to employees under an educational assistance program. The exclusion also applies to graduate level courses.

Educational assistance means amounts you pay or incur for your employees' education expenses. These expenses generally include the cost of books, equipment, fees, supplies, and tuition. However, these expenses do not include the cost of a course or other education involving sports, games, or hobbies, unless the education:

- Has a reasonable relationship to your business, or
- Is required as part of a degree program.

Education expenses do not include the cost of tools or supplies (other than textbooks) your employee is allowed to keep at the end of the course. Nor do they include the cost of lodging, meals, or transportation.

Educational assistance program. An educational assistance program is a separate written plan that provides educational assistance only to your employees. The program qualifies only if all of the following tests are met.

- The program benefits employees who qualify under rules set up by you that do not favor highly compensated employees. To determine whether your program meets this test, do not consider employees excluded from your program who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement if there is evidence that educational assistance was a subject of good-faith bargaining.
- The program does not provide more than 5% of its benefits during the year for shareholders or owners. A shareholder or owner is someone who owns (on any day of the year) more than 5% of the stock or of the capital or profits interest of your business.
- The program does not allow employees to choose to receive cash or other benefits that must be included in gross income instead of educational assistance.
- You give reasonable notice of the program to eligible employees