



**Office of
Employee Relations**



Education and Training Program for NYSCOPBA-Represented Employees

**Program Guidelines
for
January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024**

Education and Training Program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A.	Program Overview.....	1
B.	Program Highlights.....	1
C.	Employee Eligibility	2
D.	Course Eligibility.....	2
E.	Application Time Period	3
F.	Release Time	3
G.	Expenses Covered.....	3
H.	Alternative Sources of Financial Assistance.....	3
I.	Taxation of Employee Benefits (Reimbursements)	4
J.	Application Submission Process using the Online Portal	4
K.	Application Submission Process by Email or U.S. Mail	6

Education and Training Program Guidelines for NYSCOPBA-Represented Employees

A. Program Overview

The Education and Training Program (ETP) is administered by the Security Services Unit Joint Labor-Management Committee (JLMC) through funding provided by Article 13 of the 2023-2026 agreement between the State of New York and the New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, Inc. (NYSCOPBA).

The ETP enables NYSCOPBA-represented employees to maintain or improve job-related skills in their profession and gain the knowledge and skills necessary for promotional opportunities and career mobility within New York State service.

B. Program Highlights

The Education and Training Program:

- Provides reimbursement to current NYSCOPBA-represented employees for qualifying training or educational courses by approved providers that begin on or after January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. Applications for courses or events that began on or after January 1, 2024, and ended prior to October 15, 2024, must be submitted or postmarked by January 15, 2025.
- Provides an optional pre-approval process. It is recommended that applicants seek pre-approval to ensure reimbursement eligibility.
- Reimbursement is based on the satisfactory completion of the course. Satisfactory completion requires a grade of at least C. If the only option for the grading of a course is Pass/Fail, a grade of Pass will be accepted as evidence of satisfactory completion. ETP will not cover incomplete or failed courses.
- Maximum reimbursement is \$5,000 per calendar year for eligible out-of-pocket expenses including registration, tuition, required fees, and course-related books, which the employee is required, by the syllabus or course outline, to use for the course.
- Requires a separate application submission for each course.
- All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within 90 calendar days after the end date of the course or event.
- Provides a Pilot Program to reimburse the cost of a CDL course and exam fee up to the State fiscal year maximum allowance.
- Will not cover courses that are available through the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervisions (DOCCS) Training Academy should an applicant decide to use an outside source or Armorer School and any outside weapons training programs.

C. Employee Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the ETP, current NYSCOPBA-represented employees must be actively employed a minimum of half-time in a NYSCOPBA-represented position for the duration of the qualifying training and/or educational courses.

Employees working less than half-time or on unpaid leave of absence are not eligible.

D. Course Eligibility

ETP is available for credit or non-credit, job-related or career-related courses at an accredited college, university, or approved educational organization.

1. Job-Related Coursework

The course directly supports or improves skills required for current job assignments, duties, or responsibilities.

2. Career-Related Coursework

The course will prepare the employee for advancement within their current title series or occupation.

The course develops the operational, administrative or management capacity of the employee.

The coursework is necessary to obtain a degree or certification to qualify for job opportunities within State service.

The 2024 CDL Pilot Program reimburses eligible employees for the cost of a CDL course and exam fee up to the State fiscal year maximum allowance.

3. Approved Educational Organizations

The educational organization offering the course must meet the academic standards of the NYS Education Department or the U.S. Department of Education.

Reimbursement for the following will only be considered for reimbursement as electives under an approved matriculated degree program:

- Recreation
- Physical education
- Hobby or personal interest courses

Reimbursement for the following is not covered:

- Courses designed for interests outside State service, whether credit or non-credit
- Armorer School and outside weapons training programs
- Courses that are available through the NYS DOCCS Training Academy

E. Application Time Period

All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within 90 calendar days after the end date of the course. Applications for courses or events that began on or after January 1, 2024, and ended prior to October 15, 2024, must be submitted or postmarked by January 15, 2025.

Please note: If you are unable to obtain the required documentation within the 90-day period, you must submit your application form and contact the NYSCOPBA Reimbursement Unit prior to the deadline.

The start date of the course determines calendar year eligibility. For example, for program year 2024, a course must start on or after January 1, 2024, and no later than December 31, 2024.

F. Release Time

ETP does not entitle an employee to receive release time.

G. Expenses Covered

Reimbursable expenses are those costs that relate to the pursuit of an educational activity. Expenses must be itemized on the original receipt.

Eligible individuals are reimbursed up to a maximum of \$5,000 per calendar year for eligible out-of-pocket expenses. Covered expenses include registration, tuition, required fees, and course-related books, which the employee is required, by the syllabus or course outline, to use for the course.

Expenses and fees other than those noted above are not covered.

H. Alternative Sources of Financial Assistance

Employees receiving tuition support or financial assistance from any alternate source must report it and the amount on the application form. This amount will be deducted before computing the allowable reimbursement.

Alternative sources of financial aid include, but are not limited to:

- Agency/facility tuition support programs
- Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)
- Pell Grants
- Aid for Part-time Study (APTS) Program
- New York State Vietnam Veterans Tuition Assistance
- Veterans Administration Educational Benefits (GI Bill)
- College stipends

I. Taxation of Employee Benefits (Reimbursements)

All reimbursements issued during the calendar year are reported to the Office of the New York State Comptroller (OSC) during the month of October. Once these reimbursements are reported, no further payments will be issued until after January 1 of the following calendar year.

At the end of each calendar year, the OSC will withhold estimated taxes from employees whose reimbursements from this program and any additional educational benefits (reimbursements) from their agency exceed \$5,250. This may result in substantial withholding from paychecks at the end of the year and applicants should plan accordingly. Students are encouraged to seek competent tax advice to determine if the "working condition fringe benefit" is applicable when filing their taxes.

J. Application Submission Process Using the Online Portal

Applicants have the option of obtaining pre-approval of reimbursement for courses or events. Applications can be submitted using the online portal, which eliminates the need to complete a paper application form. It is recommended that applications for pre-approval be submitted prior to enrolling with the educational organization. A separate application must be completed for each course or event. All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within 90 calendar days after the end date of the course. Applications for courses or events that began on or after April 1, 2024, and ended prior to October 15, 2024, must be submitted by January 15, 2025.

Step 1: Log on to the Reimbursement Portal

Visit the online portal website at <https://educationbenefits.oer.ny.gov/>. If you don't have a Username and Password, click on the Registration button in the upper right and follow the instructions to register for a user account.

Step 2: Review and Update Contact Information

Review the Employee Information Section and use the 'Edit Contact Information' button to make any changes needed. Please note: The address in this section will be where all reimbursement checks are mailed. Any address changes needed after the approval of an application should be made in the portal, as well as sent to SSUprograms@lmc.ny.gov. Any legal name change requests must be made through the employee's agency Human Resources Department in order to be updated in the portal.

Step 3: Create a New Application

Select 'Submit a new NYSCOPBA EB Application'. Complete all applicable fields included on the application form. Select the 'Choose Files' button to attach all required supporting documentation listed below to the application form. Please note: All supporting documentation must have the applicant's name printed on it by the issuing entity.

If seeking pre-approval prior to the start date of the course, the following documentation must be submitted:

- A course description or brochure from the educational provider
- Documentation showing the start and end dates of the course or event (month, day,

- and year)
- Unaltered invoice, receipt, or itemized summary from the provider showing the tuition cost separate from any additional fees

If seeking reimbursement, the following documentation must be attached to the application in addition to all information listed above:

- Proof of payment such as a valid receipt of payment from the school, loan agreement, bank statement, credit card statement, or cancelled check
- Documentation showing any financial assistance that has been or will be received toward the cost of the course or event indicating the name of the entity providing the assistance
- An original grade report, transcript, or letter on letterhead from the educational provider, stating that the applicant satisfactorily completed the coursework
- A course syllabus listing required materials and original paid textbook receipt(s), if applicable

Step 4: Submit the Application

Once the application is complete, click the 'Submit' button to submit the application. Once the application is received, a message will appear indicating the application was submitted successfully. It will also appear in the Application History section of the online portal. After receipt of the online application form, the NYSCOPBA Reimbursement Unit will complete the application review process. Applicants will be notified by email if there are questions or issues that were identified. If the application is complete, notification will be sent to the applicant by email.

Step 5: Request Reimbursement after Receiving Preapproval

To obtain reimbursement, the employee must submit the following documentation no later than ninety (90) calendar days after the end date of the course or event:

- Proof of payment such as a valid receipt of payment from the school, loan agreement, bank statement, credit card statement, or cancelled check
- Documentation showing any financial assistance that has been or will be received toward the cost of the course or event indicating the name of the entity providing the assistance
- An original grade report, transcript, or letter on letterhead from the educational provider, stating that the applicant satisfactorily completed the coursework
- A course syllabus listing required materials and original paid textbook receipt(s), if applicable

Please note: Successful completion requires a grade of at least C for all courses. If the only option for the grading of a course is Pass/Fail, a grade of Pass will be accepted as evidence of satisfactory completion.

The above documentation can be submitted online by logging into the Online Portal and locating the application listed under the Application History section. Select the drop-down box on the right side of the page and choose Add Attachment. Select the Choose Files option at the bottom of the application form to attach all required files.

The supporting documentation can also be submitted in one of the following ways:

- Email: Email the application and supporting documentation by application deadline to SSUPrograms@lmc.ny.gov. All emailed documentation must be in PDF format. All other formats (JPGs or other photo formats, Word Documents, links to documentation or websites, etc. will not be accepted.)
- U.S. Mail: Mail application and supporting documentation, postmarked by application deadline to:

NYS Office of Employee Relations
NYSCOPBA Reimbursement Unit
2 Empire State Plaza, 7th Floor
Albany, NY 12223

Please note: If you are unable to obtain the required documentation within the 90-day period, you must submit your application form and contact the NYSCOPBA Reimbursement Unit prior to the deadline.

K. Application Process Using Email or U.S. Mail

Applicants have the option of obtaining pre-approval of reimbursement for courses or events. It is recommended that applications for pre-approval be submitted prior to enrolling with the educational organization. A separate application must be completed for each course or event. All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within 90 calendar days after the end date of the course. Applications for courses or events that began on or after April 1, 2024, and ended prior to October 15, 2024, must be submitted by January 15, 2025.

Step 1: Complete the NYSCOPBA ETP Application Form

The employee must complete a separate ETP Application Form for each course or event for which reimbursement is requested. The form is available on the OER website at <https://oer.ny.gov/nys-correctional-officers-and-police-benevolent-association-inc-nyscopba>.

Step 2: Submit the Application

Verify that the application form is completed and signed by the employee.

If seeking pre-approval prior to the start date of the course, the following documentation must be submitted:

- A course description or brochure from the educational provider
- Documentation showing the start and end dates of the course or event (month, day, and year)
- Unaltered invoice, receipt, or itemized summary from the provider showing the tuition cost separate from any additional fees

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- Proof of payment such as a valid receipt of payment from the school, loan agreement, bank statement, credit card statement, or cancelled check
- Documentation showing any financial assistance that has been or will be received toward the cost of the course or event indicating the name of the entity providing the assistance
- An original grade report, transcript, or letter on letterhead from the educational provider, stating that the applicant satisfactorily completed the coursework
- A course syllabus listing required materials and original paid textbook receipt(s)

The employee must forward the original application and all supporting documentation in one of the following ways:

- Email: Email the application and supporting documentation by application deadline to SSUPrograms@lmc.ny.gov. All emailed documentation must be in PDF format. All other formats (JPGs or other photo formats, Word Documents, links to documentation or websites, etc. will not be accepted.)
- U.S. Mail: Mail application and supporting documentation, postmarked by application deadline to:

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After receipt of the Application Form, the NYSCOPBA Reimbursement Unit will complete the application review process. Applicants will be notified by email if there are questions or issues that were identified. If the application is complete, notification will be sent to the applicant by email.

Step 3: Request Reimbursement after Receiving Preapproval

To obtain reimbursement, the employee must submit the following documentation no later than ninety (90) calendar days after the end date of the course or event:

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The supporting documentation can also be submitted in one of the following ways:

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Guidelines Effective Date: October 15, 2024

It is the policy of the State of New York to provide for and promote equal opportunity in employment and equal access to all programs and services without discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, creed, national origin, military status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including pregnancy-related disability or condition), predisposing genetic characteristics, marital/familial status, status as a victim of domestic violence, or prior arrest/criminal conviction record.