

# ARIZONA'S PUBLIC SERVICE PROMISE



**ACHIEVE60AZ**  
EDUCATION ADVANCES EVERYONE

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arizona has set a lofty goal: By 2030, 60 percent of adults in the state, ages 25 to 64, will hold a postsecondary credential or degree. This statewide goal to achieve a more highly trained and educated population ensures a brighter future for Arizona and for all of us. Building Arizona's future workforce will attract more businesses to our state, increase the tax base, and decrease poverty.

Postsecondary education can take many forms – from earning a certificate or license, to earning an associate or bachelor's degree. And the pathways to attainment are just as diverse. In fact, to reach the 60 percent goal, adults over age 24 who are not considered "traditional students" must be engaged and supported to earn postsecondary credentials. As this issue brief outlines, one of the most effective ways to connect with Arizona adults is through their employer. For about 300,000 Arizonans that employer is a public entity. Public employers, like many private employers, can offer tuition supports to employees that reduce barriers to access.

An economic analysis conducted to determine the benefit to the public employer when they invest in their employees through education shows tremendous return on investment. A baseline scenario determined a public investment of \$1.2 million over ten years realizes a \$7.3 million net gain through increased productivity. Multiple studies of employee educational programs in private companies also show savings through increased retention of employees and employee satisfaction in the workplace.

Adults are motivated, hard-working students and when successful in completing a postsecondary education, their health and financial stability improve dramatically. While most adults surveyed nationally agree that more education would improve their lives, significant barriers exist. In preparing this report, we learned that employees in the public sector face these primary challenges:

- Access is supervisor dependent: Employees whose direct supervisors support and understand continuing education will be granted the benefit, others will not.
  - Access is job dependent: Those who are "front-line" during the standard business hours of 9-to-5 are not afforded time away for education.
  - Awareness is not uniform: About 12 percent of public employees surveyed were unaware they had access to educational benefits, and significantly more were misinformed about how to utilize the benefits.
  - Lack of awareness is not the same as lack of interest: Roughly 3 in 4 of the unaware employees agreed that having access to such benefits would make them more likely to continue their education.
  - Tuition support programs sometimes miss the mark: Upfront costs or uncovered "extras" often remain a barrier.
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Working with partner communities across Arizona who have adopted the state's attainment goal, a better approach was conceived. First, the existing policies of employee tuition reimbursement were analyzed and a new best in class policy was designed. These best practices have been elevated in this brief, which is intended to be used as a toolkit in other communities. Solutions can be modified to fit any public employer across Arizona and constraints can be factored in while still maintaining a focus on access and equity. Second, community partners designed tools that allow for more flexibility and accessibility to employees. Examples include:

- Arizona Department of Administration: A Policy for Educational Accommodations, such as approving alternate work schedules and allowing the use of technology during breaks or lunch hours to complete coursework.
- Diné College: Tribal Community Adoption of Attainment Goal, thus making the goal specific and personal to sovereign nations.
- Coconino Community College: Educational Leave Time Policy, allowing employees to use paid time off to pursue education, and also offering incentives for education.
- City of Tempe: Educational Partnership Program, allowing employees to engage with a multitude of educational partners in a transparent and clear process.
- Pima Community College: Employer Agreement and Implementation Checklist, in which the community college starts by understanding the training, upskilling and reskilling needs of area employers and then works to meet those needs on behalf of the learner.
- Maricopa Community College: Education Concierge Services Marketing, in which the concierge acts on behalf of the district's 10 colleges in working with employers to provide onsite admissions, advising, success coaching, and classes.

To reach 60 percent attainment, Arizona must employ a variety of tactics and place a specific focus on supporting adults age 25-64. This Arizona Public Service Promise brief offers tools, policy templates, and research to galvanize action so that public employees can lead in postsecondary attainment. For more information, email [erineccleston@expectmorearizona.org](mailto:erineccleston@expectmorearizona.org).

### **About Achieve60AZ**

*As of Feb. 1, 2021, Achieve60AZ, College Success Arizona and Expect More Arizona have pooled their resources and teams to become one organization. The enhanced organization will advance a cohesive education agenda to reach the goals outlined in the Arizona Education Progress Meter and support the success of all Arizona children and adults along the education continuum, from early learning through postsecondary attainment.*

# THE PATH TO 60 PERCENT ATTAINMENT RUNS THROUGH ARIZONA'S STATE, LOCAL AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS.

## ARIZONA HAS AN AMBITIOUS GOAL FOR 60 PERCENT OF ADULTS TO HOLD A POSTSECONDARY DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL BY 2030.

Arizona cannot reach this goal without engaging and graduating substantial numbers of adults currently in the workforce. State, local and tribal governments that are actively supporting attainment efforts often overlook a major way they can contribute – as employers themselves. Public sector employees make up a significant percentage of the workforce in Arizona but are not always considered in economic development and postsecondary attainment discussions.

**46%** of Arizonans currently hold a postsecondary degree or credential <sup>[i]</sup>

## ADULTS MUST BE ENGAGED IF ATTAINMENT GOALS ARE GOING TO BE MET.

- To achieve 60 percent, one million more Arizonans need to earn a credential by 2030. <sup>[ii]</sup>
- At least half of those new credentials will need to be earned by adults currently in the workforce with only some college or no college experience at all.

## ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE THESE ADULTS IS THROUGH THEIR EMPLOYER – AND FOR MANY, THEIR EMPLOYER IS STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL GOVERNMENT.

- Nearly 300,000 Arizonans work in public service as an employee of state, local and tribal government and public school systems.<sup>[iii]</sup>
- 29 percent of surveyed public employees had earned some college credit but no degree.<sup>[iv]</sup>

### The Return on Investment for public sector educational benefits is undeniable.

- Economic projections show that regardless of the assumptions or input criteria feeding the model, ROI is always positive for investment in public employee educational advancement.
- In a baseline scenario, a public investment of \$1.2 million results in a projected \$7.3 million in productivity gains that is either passed on to taxpayers as lower taxes or reinvested in higher-quality government services.<sup>[v]</sup>

Recruiting adult students back to higher education is not enough. Our colleges and universities must do a better job of serving them. Currently:

Nationally, **5 in 10 adult students graduate** compared to 7 in 10 for younger students.<sup>[vi]</sup>

Many adults attend part-time. Students who attend full-time are **4 times more likely** to graduate than their part-time peers.<sup>[vii]</sup>

On average, students who start college after age 20 take nearly **7 years to complete a 2-year associate degree**<sup>[viii]</sup> and **8.4 years to complete a 4-year bachelor's degree.**<sup>[ix]</sup>

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## ADULTS ARE MOTIVATED, HARD-WORKING STUDENTS. THEY JUST NEED SUPPORTS BUILT FOR THEM.

### Adults need fair and equitable access to the educational benefits.

There are real and perceived inequities regarding who can take advantage of educational benefits currently. <sup>[x]</sup>

#### *Access is supervisor-dependent:*

Employees whose supervisors support continuing education will be granted the benefit, others will not. (There are also varying levels to which individual supervisors feel they are allowed to encourage and approve continuing education.)

*Access is job-dependent:* Those who are “front-line” during the standard business hours of 9-to-5 are not afforded time away for continuing education.



*Awareness is not uniform:* About 12 percent of public employees surveyed were unaware they had access to educational benefits. Others were misinformed about to utilize the benefits.

*Lack of awareness is not the same as lack of interest:* Roughly 3 in 4 of the unaware employees agreed that having access to such benefits would make them more likely to continue their education.

**A better approach:** A uniform commitment on the part of public employers to the continuing education of employees. This means standardized communication and outreach about the benefits, a top-down directive to supervisors to encourage all their direct reports to take advantage of the benefits, and a plan for how front-line, 9-to-5 employees can participate.

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### Adults need well-designed financial supports.

Tuition support programs are meant to alleviate the financial burden so employees can pursue continuing education. But, in many ways, they miss the mark.<sup>[xi]</sup>

*Upfront cost:* In the most-common model of tuition reimbursement, employees must have the cash on hand to pay the tuition upfront and wait months to be reimbursed. Public employees without a postsecondary degree or credential often do not have the kind of financial liquidity to be able to part with thousands of dollars for several months.

*Upfront risk:* Many of these programs are capped at a particular dollar amount per year and set specific grade requirements. When employees pay tuition upfront with the promise of reimbursement, they are very anxious about whether their grades will be sufficient for reimbursement or whether it will be processed before the program runs out of funds.

*Out-of-pocket “extras”:* Tuition support policies by definition cover tuition. They do not generally acknowledge and fund the myriad other costs related to continuing education – fees, textbooks, supplies, parking, and childcare to name a few. Even the most generous tuition support programs might not address the true financial barriers that stand between their employees and those employees’ postsecondary degrees.

**A better approach:** An education support program that covers a variety of education-related costs, pays those costs upfront, and guarantees the support.

### Adults need colleges and universities committed to serving adults.

Public employees surveyed<sup>[xii]</sup> often cited their employer’s scheduling inflexibility but overlooked that higher education institutions did not offer the night, weekend or online courses that might work for them. Adults said they needed assistance navigating the enrollment process and the institutions in general. And with time limits on their educational benefits, they need an accelerated path to graduation.

# TOOLS FOR TAKING ACTION

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Arizona's colleges and universities, along with its public sector entities, are taking bold action to reach the state's 60 percent attainment goal by providing educational supports for adults working in public service. Taking into account the specific context of their regions and the needs of public service employees in those communities, they are developing innovative solutions that will make it easier for those adults to enroll in college or finish degree programs already in progress. Through this process, they have created unique tools that can be adopted by other states and cities.

The tools are provided in this section, along with recommendations to guide customization. The final tool, a collaboratively-designed, best-in-class policy, represents the culmination of learning from these communities' efforts.



# TOOLKIT RESOURCES

## Policies and Legal Documents

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### Policy for Educational Accommodations

Arizona Department of Administration

### Tribal Community Adoption of Attainment Goal

Diné College

### Educational Leave Time Policy

Coconino Community College

## Internal Process and Planning Documents

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### Educational Partnership Program Process Document

City of Tempe

### Employer Agreement and Implementation Checklist

Pima Community College

## Marketing and Advocacy Materials

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### Education Incentives Program and Marketing Collateral

Coconino Community College

### Education Concierge Services Flyer

Maricopa Community College

## Best-in-Class Public Service Promise

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# POLICY FOR EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS



## Arizona Department of Administration

Among other roles, the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) is the internal services agency that oversees human resources for the State of Arizona. ADOA's new policy provides accommodations for educational activities to support employees in their educational pursuits. In collaboration with human resources representatives serving all agencies, as well as legal, policy, technical writing, and information technology teams, this statewide policy allows State employees to use State resources “for educational activities related to completion of an approved educational program” and to request an alternate work schedule to accommodate required educational activities. It prohibits State employees from using State funds to purchase equipment, software, or office space. This policy pairs with agency-specific policies on tuition reimbursement and other educational support, and each State agency will establish and apply its own internal procedures for requesting and approving the use of State resources and flexible work options. The alternative to a state-level policy was individualized, case-by-case approval, which could not be promoted across an agency and thus would have limited impact on employees’ educational pursuits, employee morale, and on the 60 percent attainment goal.



*“We love our employees, we want to support them. We want them to love their career at the State of Arizona. We’re thinking of every creative way to support them.”*

# POLICY FOR EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Arizona Department of Administration

## CONSIDER, CUSTOMIZE, CREATE

Those looking to adopt or adapt a policy on accommodations for educational activities should:

- Promote it to internal stakeholders as a creative, budget-neutral way to promote a well-educated workforce and provide a supportive benefit to employees.
- Engage in a thoughtful and inclusive review process that involves all necessary HR, policy, legal, technical, and political stakeholders.
- Apply the policy to employees in all worksite circumstances: in-person, telework, or hybrid.
- Secure buy-in from executive-level and HR professionals, but allow agencies to tailor their procedures for implementation.
- Embed the policy in employee materials, such as remote work agreements.



# POLICY FOR EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

## Arizona Department of Administration



### ARIZONA STATE PERSONNEL SYSTEM STATEWIDE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Resources in Support of Educational Activities

This policy does not create a contract for employment between any employee and the State of Arizona (State). Nothing in this policy changes the fact that all uncovered employees of the state are at-will employees and serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

#### **Scope and Applicability:**

This policy applies to all agencies, boards, offices, authorities, commissions or other governmental budget units in the State Personnel System.

#### **Definitions:**

*"Approved educational program"* means the following:

- A program that leads to a certificate, associate degree, baccalaureate degree, master's degree, or Ph.D., offered by a public or private nonprofit college, university, technical school, or correspondence school' courses that are offered by such accredited institutions through distance learning are acceptable
- A program that leads to completion of a high school equivalency diploma, offered by an approved provider
- A non-credit bearing certification, if approved by the employing agency

*"Educational activities"* means the following:

- Participation in an online class session
- Completion of class assignments
- Research necessary to complete class requirements
- Electronic communication with faculty and staff of the educational provider

*"Employee"* means an employee of the State of Arizona.

*"Routine work duties"* means regularly performed actions and tasks that are aligned to an employee's job description or annual work plan.

*"State resources"* means, for the purposes of this policy, the following:

- Computers, tablets, smartphones, and other technology owned by the State and issued to a State employee for completion of routine work duties
- Software and licenses that are provided by the State to a State employee for completion of routine work duties
- Office space that is owned by the State and made available to an employee for completion of routine work duties

# POLICY FOR EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

## Arizona Department of Administration

### Policy:

The State of Arizona has determined that education is a top priority and it is a statewide goal to achieve a more highly educated population. To that end, the intent of this policy is to support State employees participating in approved postsecondary education pursuits.

A.A.C. R2-5A-501(B) Prohibited conduct, states, in pertinent part, "A State employee shall not: (5) Directly or indirectly use or allow the use of State equipment or property of any kind, including equipment and property leased to the State, for other than official activities unless authorized by written agency policy..."

A.A.C. R2-5A-502(C) provides that: "An agency head may offer a flexible 40-hour work week option to an employee if the agency head determines the agency's services can be maintained."

This statewide policy constitutes the authorization by written agency policy as required under A.A.C. R2-5A-501(B) and provides a general framework for the use of State's resources and flexible work options in support of educational activities as outlined in this policy. State agencies are encouraged to develop their own policies that are not in conflict with State statute, rules, or this statewide policy.

1. This policy applies to all employees regardless of whether they report work in person, via remote work, or a combination of the two.
2. Subject to the approval of the employing agency, an employee may use State resources for educational activities related to completion of an approved educational program.
3. A State agency may not require any payment from the employee or deduct funds from the the employee's pay in exchange for use of state resources for approved educational programs.
4. An employee may not use State funds to purchase equipment, software, or office space for the completion of educational activities that would not otherwise be available to the employee for routine work duties.
5. If the educational program requires the installation of a specific software or application on a device, the employee shall obtain the necessary approvals from the employing agency prior to installing non-State software on any State resources.
6. Educational activities must be completed during the employee's off-duty hours or during periods of approved leave. Consideration may be given to the following, provided the arrangement does not impair delivery of services or attainment of work objectives: an alternate work schedule or the employee's voluntary use of compensatory or annual leave.

# POLICY FOR EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

## Arizona Department of Administration

7. An employee may request an alternate work schedule or leave if the employee's current work schedule prohibits the employee from completing required educational activities for an approved educational program.

- a. An alternate work schedule shall maintain the same overall hours worked each week.
- b. The employee may submit a request for an alternate work schedule or leave in accordance with the employing agency's established policies and procedures.

**Procedure:**

Agencies will establish their own internal procedures for requesting and approving the use of State responses and flexible work options in support of educational activities. Agency-specific policies based upon this statewide policy may be more restrictive, but not more permissive, than this statewide policy.

**Related Document(s)/Links(s):**

ADOA Benefits website for high education discounts for State of Arizona employees: <https://benefit.options.az.gov/highered>

**Corresponding Policy(ies):**

Not applicable

**Contact:**

If you have any questions related to this policy, please contact your agency's Human Resources Office/representative.

# TRIBAL COMMUNITY ADOPTION OF ATTAINMENT GOAL



## Diné College

Instituting education benefits policies goes hand-in-hand with creating cultures of postsecondary going and learning. This is true for all levels of government, including in our tribal nations. As part of efforts to draw attention to and build awareness around the state's postsecondary goal, Diné College has been working with tribal nations in Arizona to formally adopt the state's postsecondary attainment goal. To facilitate this process, Diné College drafted a resolution for the Navajo Nation Board of Education to officially support the goal, which was also officially adopted by the institution's Board of Regents. The resolution language was designed to be easily adaptable to other nations' needs, as well.

## CONSIDER, CUSTOMIZE, CREATE

Those looking to adopt or adapt this resolution should:

- Update all legal citations as appropriate. Tailor the adopting entity to the specific infrastructure of the tribal community.
- Work with the state's Indian education office or liaison to coordinate efforts.
- Identify additional potential partners to support efforts.
- If using an attainment statistic, determine the optimal definition of the population (e.g., does it include Urban Indians) and the availability of data.
- Identify how the resolution aligns with the tribe's other educational goals or objectives.
- Develop a plan for broadly communicating the attainment goal to the community.



# TRIBAL COMMUNITY ADOPTION OF ATTAINMENT GOAL

Diné College



Navajo Nation  
Department of Diné Education



## RESOLUTION OF THE NAVAJO NATION BOARD OF EDUCATION

**In support of the Navajo Nation setting a goal that by 2030, 60% of Navajo Nation adults, ages 25 to 64, will hold a secondary credential or degree.**

### WHEREAS:

1. The Department of Diné Education (hereinafter the "Department") is the administrative agency within the Navajo Nation with responsibility and authority for implementing and enforcing the educational laws of the Navajo Nation. 2 N.N.C. § 1801 (B); 10 N.N.C. § 107 (A). The Department is under the immediate direction of the Board. 10 N.N.C. § 107 (B); and,
2. The Navajo Nation Board of Education (hereinafter the "Board") is the education agent in the Executive Branch for the purposes of overseeing the operation of all schools serving the Navajo Nation. 10 N.N.C. § 106 (A). The Board carries out its duties and responsibilities through the Department of Diné Education. 10 N.N.C. § 106 (G)(3). In addition, "the Board [has the] general power to monitor the activities of all Bureau of Indian Affairs funded schools and local community school boards serving the Navajo Nation..." 10 N.N.C. § 106 (G)(1); and,
3. The Navajo Nation Board of Education advocates to raise awareness of the importance of education to the quality of life for the Navajo Nation and the states within the exterior boundaries of the Navajo reservation; and
4. With only eight percent (8%) of the Navajo population having earned a college degree (bachelors, associates and certificates), it is negatively impacting the economic growth and workforce of the Navajo Nation; and
5. By setting an aggressive goal to increase the number of Navajo college graduates, it will also align with the Navajo Nation Board of Education's goal improve the Navajo Nation's education system and demonstrate meaningful progress on indicators of student success, from early learning through postsecondary attainment; and
6. The Navajo Nation Board of Education understands the importance and will seek partnerships with various educational, economic and social entities in order to increase the number of Navajo graduates.

# TRIBAL COMMUNITY ADOPTION OF ATTAINMENT GOAL

## Diné College

### NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Navajo Nation Board of Education supports the Navajo Nation setting a goal that by 2030, 60% of Navajo Nation adults, ages 25 to 64, will hold a postsecondary credential or degree.
2. The Navajo Nation Board of Education hereby recommends and empowers the Superintendent of Schools to take any actions deemed necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of this resolution and directive.

### CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Board of Education of the Navajo Nation at a duly called meeting at Window Rock, Arizona (Navajo Nation) at which a quorum was present, motion by - \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ and that the same was passed by a vote of \_\_ in favor; \_\_ opposed; \_\_ abstained, this \_\_ day of \_\_\_\_ 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Priscilla Manuelito, President  
Navajo Nation Board of Education

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# EDUCATIONAL LEAVE TIME POLICY

## Coconino Community College



Coconino Community College (CCC) expanded its community leave policy to create a policy for Employee Investment Leave that supports eight hours of paid time off, per academic year, for educational activities, in addition to the community service activities previously covered. CCC had heard from its employees that the barrier to education was not necessarily money, but time. Although the eight hours is not sufficient to take most courses, the time available through the policy is flexible and can be used for any activity related to postsecondary education, including: travel to or from class, time to enroll or visit a counselor, homework or studying, and even supporting the postsecondary attainment of a family member (e.g., conducting a college visit). CCC framed the policy to be deliberately broad, so that employees can use the policy in the way that best fits their needs. CCC also developed the policy to be widely adaptable to another employer's circumstances.



*"The number one challenge wasn't necessarily money to take classes, it was time."*

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# EDUCATIONAL LEAVE TIME POLICY

Coconino Community College

## CONSIDER, CUSTOMIZE, CREATE

Those looking to adopt or adapt the policy should:

- Build on existing community-service leave and flex-schedule policies or similar.
- Consider whether the employer can offer even more time than eight hours (e.g., enough time to take and complete a course).
- Train supervisors on the benefits and intent of the policy, and anticipate offering support related to flex schedules.
- To work toward the overall attainment goal, focus marketing on employees with no postsecondary education, even if the policy cannot prioritize those employees.
- Use the policy as a starting point for conversation, and adapt it to employer-specific needs, contexts, and constraints.



# EDUCATIONAL LEAVE TIME POLICY

## Coconino Community College



### Procedure 410-19 Employee Investment Leave Procedure

Sponsor: Human Resources

#### Purpose

The purpose of employee investment leave is to value our employees' educational aspirations and encourage their involvement in the communities we serve as a college district. The expected outcomes of employee investment leave are:

- Provide opportunities outside of the workplace for full-time employees to engage with our community and "make a difference".
- Provide a low-cost benefit to the College for employees to engage in their education careers.
- Create lines of communication and establish partnerships with community members that increase knowledge and support for the College.
- Encourage our employees to engage in their career fields.
- Support the Achieve60AZ initiative to achieve the goal by 2030.

#### Definitions

Achieve60AZ: The state of Arizona adopted a goal that by 2030, 60% of Arizona adults, ages 25-64, will hold a postsecondary credential or degree.

#### Procedure

##### Benefit

All full-time employees receive eight hours of employee investment leave per year. The leave time is reflected in a separate leave summary line on our employee pay stubs and electronically in the Mypay system.

##### Usage

1. All requests for employee investment leave time must be pre-approved in advance by the employee's Dean or Supervisor. Please note, the needs of the College and individuals' duties take precedent to employee investment leave activities, however, where possible, leadership will attempt to approve requests.
2. This leave time does not roll over, has no cash value, is not paid out upon separation and cannot be transferred to another leave type.
3. It may be used in increments of one hour.
4. Use of leave time must be during regularly scheduled work hours. If the employee is volunteering or attending classes on a weekend, these activities are the employee's after-hours voluntary choice.

# EDUCATIONAL LEAVE TIME POLICY

## Coconino Community College

### Non-Profit Organizations and Educational Institutions must be Pre-approved

To support appropriate liability coverage for College employees and a safe as possible community experience for staff, Nonprofit organizations must be pre-approved by Human Resources. Educational institutions must also be pre-approved by Human Resources to ensure it is an accredited certificate or degree program.

### Expectations of Participation

All participants must complete, including approvals, a time off request form prior to their use of employee investment leave and submit, approved, via normal payroll processes.

Upon completion of employee investment leave, employees are encouraged to provide human resources with a brief, one paragraph summary of the experience to share and encourage others to participate. Human Resources will collaborate with our Public Relations team to showcase the College's involvement in the local non-profit and educational community. Employees can remain anonymous as well.

### Additional Details

1. Reminder: approvals are based upon College needs. The employee's job requirements must always take precedent.
2. Time can be taken in 1-hour increments during an employee's normally scheduled day. (A "normally schedule day" for example would be 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday. Thus, community time can only be used 7-4 M-F). Time outside of an employee's normal schedule is their own volunteer time.
3. The College may approve additional time with VP approval.
4. Employees and their Dean or Supervisor are encouraged to also find ways to flex employee work schedules to ensure productivity while allowing for educational and community service activities. If flex schedules do not work, then employee investment leave and/or other accrued paid leave options are available per request.
5. Once an employee is out of employee investment leave, all other activities voluntarily selected by the employee are on their own time. Participation is not required for any of these activities.
6. While using Employee Investment Leave, the employee is not eligible for any/all travel reimbursements.

# EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM PROCESS DOCUMENT



## City of Tempe

Several years ago, the City of Tempe adopted a postsecondary attainment goal that exceeded the statewide goal. As part of the city's 2040 General Plan, it aims for 65 percent of its residents to have a postsecondary credential by 2030. The city enjoyed existing educational partnerships, as well as a policy for prepaid tuition, that set it apart from other public employers. Every few years, program developers reported 20-40 people would begin a postsecondary program under these partnerships, but only a handful would finish their credential. City leadership saw the potential, however, for significantly greater impact with an expansion of the range of educational partnerships, a formalization and documentation of the process, and an increase in employee awareness through marketing materials and "champions" placed strategically throughout the city. In addition to the potential to contribute to the statewide and local postsecondary attainment goals, the developers of the collateral anticipate it will positively impact employee recruitment and retention, continually improving the caliber of public employees in the City of Tempe.



### **About the 65% educational attainment goal:**

*"If we are going to say that about our city, [we had to ask ourselves,] what are we doing for our own employees to support that."*

# EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM PROCESS DOCUMENT

## City of Tempe

The program relied on existing policies and procedures coupled with a Request for Proposal process to add partnerships with additional colleges and universities. Staff received fewer requests than anticipated so they were not able to apply review criteria as rigorously as originally hoped. They intend to do so in the future, following additional recruitment of educational partners.

### CONSIDER, CUSTOMIZE, CREATE

Those looking to adopt or adapt the collateral should:

- Tie the program to larger goals and objectives, such as a statewide or local education attainment goal.
- Build on existing or establish new higher education partnerships, tuition reimbursement or prepayment policies, program approval processes, and mechanisms for internal marketing and awareness building (e.g., employee intranet, orientation packets).
- Be prepared for active and deliberate recruitment of high-quality educational partners.
- Proactively seek the participation of employees without postsecondary education, whom the city expects may be the least likely to become aware of and use a program like this.
- Pair it with a “champions” program, which engages people throughout the city who have bought into the idea and will market it with their employees, and as many other internal marketing channels as possible.



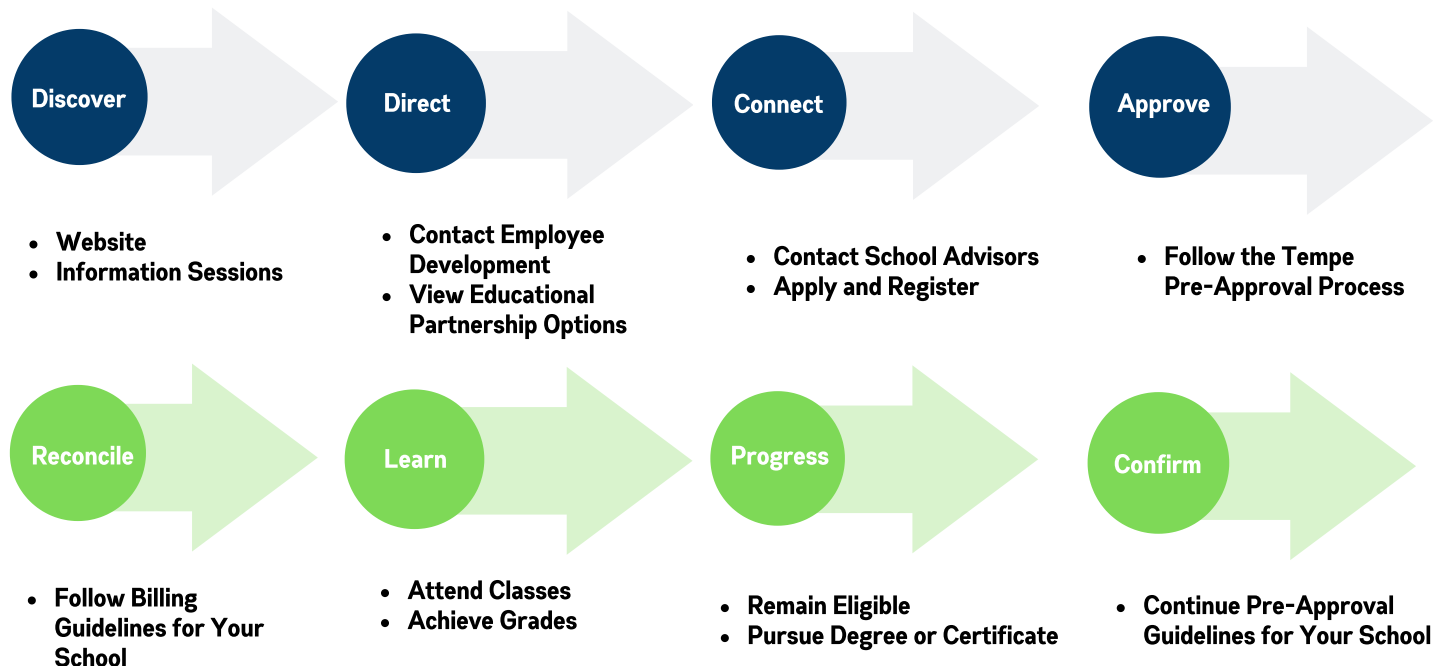
# EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM PROCESS DOCUMENT

City of Tempe



## City of Tempe Educational Partnership: Steps in the Process

Every life changing moment begins with a first step.  
Discover your path and take the next step toward higher education.



1. **Discover** - Find City of Tempe Educational Partnerships on The Bridge in the Employee Development Tab or attend an Informational Meeting.
2. **Direct** - Contact employee development staff to pick the right educational partnerships for your goals.
3. **Connect** - Make a direct connection with the educational partnership assigned to Tempe. Apply for financial aid (if eligible) and explore degree programs and classes with your school's academic advisors. Employees are responsible for all steps in the application process with help from your school's academic advisors.
4. **Approve** - Complete the pre-approval process before starting class to make sure you qualify for pre-paid tuition through the COT Educational Partnership program.
5. **Reconcile** - Follow your school's billing agreement with COT to get your tuition paid. All additional eligible purposes must be paid by employee and submitted through the tuition reimbursement process.
6. **Learn** - To keep up your approved status with the COT Educational Partnership program, you must complete classes and achieve minimum grade requirements.
7. **Progress** - Continue registering for and completing classes in your approved educational programs.
8. **Confirm** - Students must complete the pre-approval process, including submitting unofficial transcripts to show acceptable completion each semester or year depending on program. View the Educational Partnership section of the tuition reimbursement guideline for more information.

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# EMPLOYER AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST



## Pima Community College

The Pima Community College (PCC) Business Development and Engagement team works with community-based organizations and businesses to bring training, upskilling, and reskilling opportunities to the community. The processes to engage employers, assess needs, identify solutions, and support employees in training was embedded as institutional knowledge within the team, but it had never been documented. The formalized, step-by-step employer agreement walks employers through a series of programmatic and operational questions, and the implementation guide provides them with a checklist of steps to maximize the success of employer-sponsored educational programs. The creation of the collateral had both direct and indirect benefits to PCC. It provided legacy documentation for future team members to use and implementation guidance for employers, whose day-to-day focus is not workforce development, while also prompting PCC to assess and improve its operations and evaluate and simplify its employer agreement steps. Considering how another college's workforce development division might use the document, the team took steps to make it as broadly applicable as possible. PCC views this document as an important step in enabling the team to maximize its benefit to employers. Specifically, it is seen as a way to reinforce the value of partnering with the workforce development team, rather than "going it alone" with a basic tuition reimbursement policy. In addition to increasing rates of educational attainment, the team views this work, and the documentation that supports it, as a means to deepen relationships with local employers.

# EMPLOYER AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Pima Community College



*“As we bring on new team members in the future, now we have resources that make the process for them to get up to speed a lot easier.”*

## CONSIDER, CUSTOMIZE, CREATE

Those looking to adopt or adapt the agreement checklist and implementation guide should:

- Review each step to check its relevance to their organization, and add site-specific requirements to the checklist. Focus on superb customer service, where the customer is the employer and their employees.
- Pilot the agreement with a few trusted employers, and revise the documentation based on feedback.
- Prepare for a significant investment of time on the part of the education institution. This document is not designed for an employer to use without college staff guidance and support.
- Pair the two documents together, since PCC reports that marketing is a critical and often overlooked step in encouraging employees to take part in training and higher education initiatives.
- Foster and maintain strong internal working relationships to ensure workforce and business development staff can navigate college systems on the employer’s behalf.
- Continue to tweak the documents as processes change and improve.



# EMPLOYER AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

## Pima Community College



**PimaCommunityCollege**  
Workforce Development  
& Continuing Education

What type of training do you want to provide to your employees?

- ☐ Single Focus Training (i.e. AC101)
- ☐ Multiple Focus Training (i.e. AC101 and/or FIN220)
- ☐ Open Enrollment (i.e. any course with HR approval)

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Is this a one-time training program or will it be ongoing? \_\_\_\_\_

How frequently will you want to run this training? \_\_\_\_\_

When would you like to begin the first session? (minimum 90 days from contract)

---

Do you want this training to take place at your site or will you employees be coming to one of ours? \_\_\_\_\_

Do employees need to receive credit toward a degree for this training?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

How will fees be covered and what will that include: Tuition / Fees / Books / All Costs?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deferred billing for open enrollment courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition Reimbursement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct prepay                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____          |

# EMPLOYER AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

## Pima Community College



**PimaCommunityCollege**  
Workforce Development  
& Continuing Education

Do you have a grade requirement employees must meet to have their courses paid for (C or better, for instance)?

How do you want to handle an incomplete grade (if choosing something other than Direct Pay)?

☐

Pay for the course

☐

Require the employee to pay for the course

(At the discretion of the faculty, students may receive an incomplete for their course. The student then has one year from the end of the incomplete course semester to complete the same course for a grade. If a student does not complete the course within that one-year time period, the student receives an "F" grade for their course.)

Do you have an existing intergovernmental agreement in place with the college for billing?

☐

Yes

☐

No

# EMPLOYER AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

## Pima Community College

### Implementation guide for your employer-sponsored educational program.

#### BUILDING ENTHUSIASM

- ☐ Create information sheet for employees to explain new program to employees
- ☐ Share Pima.edu/yourcompanyname
- ☐ Define what this means for your employee
- ☐ Define the programs included and share with employees
- ☐ Advertise to employees that employer has an educational agreement with Pima Community College

#### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- ☐ Define for this employee what you will pay for within this program (tuition, fees, books)
- ☐ Define your grade requirement, if any
- ☐ Define how you will handle "incomplete" grades

#### ACTIONABLE ITEMS

- ☐ Inform employees who their designated person is to accept/receive employee's name, course(s), name and CRNs (1)
- ☐ Provide employee with Enrollment and Transition Checklist
- ☐ Confirm you received an employer-specific FERPA (2) from Pima Community College Client Services
- ☐ Share employer-specific FERPA with employees
- ☐ Inform employees they need to submit a FERPA to take courses. FERPA's are good for one year.
- ☐ Send employee information to pcc-clientservices@pima.edu (Once received by Pima, employees will have their courses protected from being dropped.)

1. **CRN:** Course Registration Number – The specific course section a student wants to take. There can be many sections of a particular course. The CRN designates which course the student wants to take.
2. **FERPA:** Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act – A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. It determines what student information an educational institution can share with whom. If a college does not have a FERPA form on file for a student, the college is unable to share grade information, for instance, with an employer.

# EMPLOYER AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

## Pima Community College

To better assist you on your path toward your educational goal, please see the list of items below for a smooth college enrollment and transition.

- ☐ Decide on Pima course(s) you want to take
- ☐ Get approval from your employer for course(s) and CRN you want to take (employer must email your name, course & CRN to Pima)

Have you been a Pima student in the last three semesters?

No → Complete section 1      Yes → Complete section 2

### Section 1: New to Pima

- ☐ Apply to the college: <https://pima.edu/admission/apply-to-pima/index> (Photograph or write down your "A" number (3)).
- ☐ Activate your MyPima Account
- ☐ Speak to an enrollment advisor to discuss your best educational pathway. Sign in to receive a call: <https://kiosk.na1.qless.com/kiosk/app/home/100100000137>
- ☐ Take placement exams, if needed
- ☐ Attend the online orientation: Got your [MyPima](#) portal > select the blue "MyPima" rectangle > select the "New Student" black tab toward the top > scroll down to step 5: Attend New Student Orientation > review New Student Orientation packet > complete "Online Orientation"
- ☐ Register for your classes
- ☐ Submit your FERPA through your MyPima portal: MyPima > select "Student" tab at the top > "Register and Pay" > bottom of page in the "Registrar File Upload" section > select the type of form the student wants to upload, attach the file (photo, pdf, etc.) and upload OR email [pcc-clientservices@pima.edu](mailto:pcc-clientservices@pima.edu)

### Section 2: Returning Pima student

- ☐ If you have not been a student in the past 3 semesters, re-apply <https://pima.edu/admission/apply-to-pima/index> (photograph or write down your "A" number)
- ☐ Reactivate your MyPima account
- ☐ Address any holds, if needed
- ☐ Speak to an enrollment advisor to discuss your best educational pathway. Sign in to receive a call: <https://kiosk.na1.qless.com/kiosk/app/home/100100000137>
- ☐ Take placement exams, if needed
- ☐ Register for your classes
- ☐ Submit your FERPA through your MyPima portal: MyPima > select "Student" tab at the top > "Register and Pay" > bottom of page in the "Registrar File Upload" section > select the type of form the student wants to upload, attach the file (photo, pdf, etc.) and upload OR email [pcc-clientservices@pima.edu](mailto:pcc-clientservices@pima.edu)

3. "A" number: A unique student identifying number

# EDUCATION INCENTIVES PROGRAM AND MARKETING COLLATERAL



## Coconino Community College

The Coconino Community College (CCC) flyer advertises a free class to employees of public organizations who are part of the Northern Arizona Public Employees Benefit Trust (NAPEBT). In addition to CCC, members of NAPEBT include Coconino County, the City of Flagstaff, Flagstaff Housing Authority, Flagstaff Unified School District, and NAIPTA. This new initiative grew out of an opportunity for the college to use a small amount of grant funds for progress toward Arizona's 60 percent postsecondary attainment goal. The flyer will be included in employee orientation and open-enrollment benefits packets, reaching all employees of NAPEBT member organizations. Building on its existing structure and its status as a NAPEBT employee, CCC saw the potential to promote a new benefit to fellow public employers, expand awareness and access to postsecondary education for public employees in the region, and reach new segments of the community college market. The flyer focuses on the free class and also prompts employees to ask about their employer's tuition reimbursement policies, in acknowledgement of underutilization of many employers' education support programs. CCC plans to track the program's financial feasibility and return to determine if it can continue to offer a free course to interested employees of NABEPT members once grant funds are depleted.



*"Some agencies might be more active in promoting it than others, but if it's in the open enrollment packet, it doesn't matter — the materials will be given to people."*

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# EDUCATION INCENTIVES PROGRAM AND MARKETING FLYER

Coconino Community College

## CONSIDER, CUSTOMIZE, CREATE

Those looking to adopt or adapt the collateral should:

- Plan for sustainability up front, and track and measure return on investment (e.g., how many people took one or more additional classes.)
- Embed marketing materials into places and processes that allow as many employees as possible to automatically receive them. This should be included in orientation packets and open-enrollment benefits packets.
- Consider the potential optics and impacts of discounted tuition, and market it in a manner that retains the value of a community college education.



# EDUCATION INCENTIVES PROGRAM AND MARKETING FLYER



**YOU DO SO MUCH**

**TO SERVE THIS COMMUNITY.**

**IT'S OUR TURN TO INVEST IN YOU!**

**Apply for a free class at Coconino Community College through  
the Northern Arizona Public Employee Benefit Trust**

## TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD YOUR NEXT STEP.

Is your employer part of the Benefit Trust? Are you eligible to receive benefits? If so, you may be able to enroll in a **FREE** college class at Coconino Community College.

Scholarships are being provided by Achieve60AZ, an organization dedicated to helping workers like you gain education and skills for the future.

**START EARNING COLLEGE CREDIT WITHOUT SPENDING A DIME.**

If you have thought about going to college, take advantage of this special NAPEBT member benefit.

**Available funds are limited, so don't delay.**

**Contact your Human Resources department today to apply!**



**DID YOU KNOW YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO TAKE MORE FREE CLASSES?**

While completing an application, ask your HR representative about tuition reimbursement.

# EDUCATION CONCIERGE SERVICES FLYER



## Maricopa Community College

The Maricopa Community College District developed its Corporate Learning Concierge program in response to conversations with employers that indicated 80-90% of employees never access employee education assistance. District staff acknowledged that an employer's workforce may struggle with company tuition policies and with barriers to accessing higher education, such as travel for enrollment and advising. The concierge acts on behalf of the district's 10 colleges in working with employers to provide onsite admissions, advising, success coaching, and classes, depending on the circumstance. The marketing collateral was developed to succinctly describe the program's range of value-added services. Additional materials use the company's branding, so it becomes a retention tool that highlights a benefit of working at that company.




*"It takes ongoing marketing and promotion and communication to the employees— 'you said you want to go to college, let us help you.'"*

# EDUCATION CONCIERGE SERVICES FLYER

Maricopa Community College

## CONSIDER, CUSTOMIZE, CREATE

Those looking to adopt or adapt a corporate learning concierge program and accompanying marketing materials should:

- 
- Prepare Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with employers, so that college staff can become familiar with the details of a company's education assistance programs and the concierge can tailor support to that employer's specific circumstances.
  - Advise employers on the tradeoffs between various policies, such as tuition reimbursement versus prepayment, but anticipate working within employers' established policies.
  - In addition to MOUs, pair the concierge flyer with employer-specific marketing materials and reminder messages to each employer's employees about available benefits and enrollment deadlines.
  - Leverage a customer relationship management (CRM) system to stay connected to students.
  - Demonstrate the value of deep and customized employer support to internal college stakeholders to gain broad institutional support.
  - Leverage digital communication, including video calls and meetings, to reach smaller employers.
  - If operating as a district or collaborative, work closely with each institution's workforce development team, or a similar entity, to develop and implement the program.

# EDUCATION CONCIERGE SERVICES FLYER

## Maricopa Community College



A SMARTER SOLUTION FOR A **SMARTER WORKFORCE.**

### SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE



of employees say that using their employer's tuition assistance program helped them develop the skills they needed to grow within their company

### RECRUITMENT



of employees call tuition assistance an important or very important factor in joining their company

### RETENTION



of employees say that their employer's tuition assistance program makes them more likely to stay with the organization

### RETURN ON INVESTMENT



invested in tuition assistance was earned back along with an additional in savings on recruitment and training costs **\$1.29**

To view sources, visit [maricopacorporate.com/stats](http://maricopacorporate.com/stats).

### EDUCATION CONCIERGE

It's our goal at Maricopa Corporate College (MCOR) to support and empower your employees as they seek to earn a college education. With our education concierge services, we make it convenient for your employees to enroll in classes at any of our 10 Maricopa Community Colleges with onsite admissions, advising, success coaching, and even onsite classes offered conveniently at your location.



AT



[maricopacorporate.com](http://maricopacorporate.com)

480.377.2700



@MCORCollege

# EDUCATION CONCIERGE SERVICES FLYER

## Maricopa Community College



### Community College Education Concierge

Empowering your employees to achieve their education and career goals.



#### Employee Engagement

Let us help you engage and inspire your employees as they begin or continue their academic journey. With our Education Concierge Services, we take an innovative approach to reduce intimidation and simplify the tuition benefit and enrollment process to create a seamless student experience for your employees.



#### Tuition Assistance Program Navigation

You are providing a life-changing opportunity to your employees, and it's our goal to increase your team's utilization of their tuition benefits. We know your employees are busy and while they desire to continue their education, life happens and degrees are delayed. Whether it's eligibility or deadlines, we're here to help your team navigate the process for successful outcomes and a diploma.



#### Academic Advisement

Your employees will have the opportunity to schedule academic advising appointments and office hours at their convenience from the workplace. Whether in-person or virtual, each employee will receive personalized guidance to save time, avoid excess credits, connect with university partners, and achieve their educational goals.



#### Admission and Registration

With our dedicated concierge services, we remove common frustrations and barriers often associated with the enrollment and registration process. At this stage, your employees have determined their education and career aspirations. We help ensure nothing gets in their way.



#### Success Coaching

As your employees progress through their academic journey, we are there to support them every step of the way. From finding class times that work with their busy schedules to coaching and connecting them to on-campus services such as tutoring, we are committed to helping your employees succeed.



#### Onsite Class Coordination

Let us bring education to you! Remove the commute, fear, and other barriers and increase success by empowering your employees to pursue their education together in onsite class cohorts. We work with you to determine common college courses your employees need so they can go straight to class without having to leave the workplace.



#### Customized Third-Party Billing

The Maricopa Community College system consists of 10 individually accredited colleges and we believe an outstanding array of educational options shouldn't be complicated. We take the hassle out of billing by consolidating the tuition, fees, and textbooks for all of your employees into one convenient monthly invoice.



Chandler-Gilbert | Estrella Mountain | Gateway | Glendale | Mesa  
Paradise Valley | Phoenix | Rio Salado | Scottsdale | South Mountain

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# PUBLIC SERVICE PROMISE POLICY

## Achieve60AZ



State, local, and tribal governments can dramatically increase the overall education level of the public workforce, particularly if they adopt robust, well-constructed advising and financial supports. Recognizing their crucial role in achieving 60 percent postsecondary attainment in Arizona, the partner communities included in this guide came together to co-create a best-in-class policy.

The foundation of this collaborative process was the extensive professional expertise of the project participants, including human resources, policymaking, and postsecondary education structures. This foundation was scaffolded by intentional research that studied return on investment, scanned the nation for optimal policies, and interviewed Arizona's public service employees about their interest in and needs around educational benefits.



*"We were consistently hearing people talk about the role of private employers in supporting Arizona's attainment goal. These conversations overlooked the fact that, in many communities, the largest employers are actually public entities - state, county, municipal, and tribal governments. We sought to engage public employers and their employees by ensuring they had access to an equitable, best-in-class educational support policy."*

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# PUBLIC SERVICE PROMISE POLICY

**Achieve60AZ**

## CONSIDER, CUSTOMIZE, CREATE

Those looking to adopt or adapt the policy should:

- Identify the available, sustainable financial resources to support the program and the anticipated usage, and set the benefit level accordingly.
- Consider the political implications related to the selection of programs and/or institutions that the educational benefit supports.
- Determine the best prioritization of applicants based on the public interest of the community and the needs of the local economy.
- Ensure the policy has a corresponding employee awareness plan that is implemented with fidelity.



## ARIZONA'S PLAN: A BEST-IN-CLASS EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT POLICY TO BE SCALED ACROSS ITS STATE, LOCAL AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

Through well-constructed financial supports and intentional discussions with employees about their education paths, state, local, and tribal governments can dramatically increase the overall education level of the public workforce, accelerate progress toward attainment goals, and create a more effective and productive public sector.

### ARIZONA'S PUBLIC SERVICE PROMISE<sup>[xiii]</sup>

**Who:** All full-time and part-time employees who are eligible for other benefits are also eligible to receive educational benefits. Priority is given to employees who are currently enrolled in an educational program using Promise dollars, followed by those who do not yet hold a workforce certification, postsecondary certificate, associate degree or higher. Discrimination based on race, religion, age, sex, and other such factors is strictly prohibited.

**What:** Employees may receive up to \$5,250 per year to support direct educational costs like tuition, fees and textbooks. Employees may also apply for supplemental assistance if they need support with costs such as childcare, transportation, or internet access to be able to participate in the educational program. All employees have access to an employer match for contributions to an education savings account.

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**When:** The costs are paid up-front by the employer. Employees become eligible for Public Service Promise benefits at the same time they become eligible for other benefits such as health care and retirement. There is no lifetime maximum for how long an employee can access the educational benefits.

**Where:** Employees may use the benefit at any accredited Arizona college or university. They may also use the benefit to participate in online programs that award postsecondary credit that applies to a degree or credential at an accredited Arizona college or university.

**How:** Employees will complete an application and the employer will award funds according to established funding windows, most commonly twice per year. All employees will receive information about the program as part of orientation. Supervisors will receive annual training to help them equitably identify candidates for the program, encourage their participation and provide appropriate workplace accommodations to support their academic pursuits. If several employers in a community participate, employees benefit from reciprocity if they transfer employment to another participating employer.



**As Arizona's public servants gain access to continuing education through this best-in-class policy, progress to the state's 60 percent attainment goal will accelerate and Arizona's public employees, taxpayers, and communities will experience meaningful and long-standing benefits.**

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# PUBLIC SERVICE PROMISE

Achieve60AZ

## Public Service Promise Policy



### Purpose

The Public Service Promise policy, enacted by \_\_\_\_\_ (public employer name, hereafter referred to as “the agency”), is intended to create an equitable and transparent educational benefit for its employees to pursue postsecondary degrees and credentials. This policy benefits multiple constituencies:

- **The employees.** Providing educational benefits helps employees overcome financial hurdles and out-of-pocket expenses that prevent them from continuing their education.
- **The agency.** Providing educational benefits has been proven to yield positive return on investment for employers through reduced turnover and related reduced re-hiring costs as well as increased skills and competencies of staff.
- **Taxpayers.** Any savings or improved quality realized by the agency will directly benefit the community and taxpayers the agency serves either through reduced taxes or improved services.
- **The Community.** The overall increase in economic activity from this policy will improve the standard of living for citizens throughout the community. Reduction in the disparities in educational attainment based on race, age, and financial circumstance will strengthen communities in myriad ways, including more equitable access to opportunity and growing social awareness and empathy that results from more diverse workplaces and boardrooms.
- **The State.** Achieve60AZ works across Arizona to improve overall educational attainment and economic well-being in each of its diverse communities. This policy adheres to statewide recommended best practice and aligns our efforts with those of sister communities all building toward a stronger Arizona.

### Definitions

**Educational program:** credit or non-credit coursework that leads directly to or contributes to a degree or credential at an accredited in-state postsecondary institution.

**Educational Benefits:** a set of specific financial and non-financial supports provided by the agency to its employees to support the costs related to employees’ participation in educational programs. (Reference the “Program Benefits” section of this policy for more detail.)

**Core Educational Costs:** financial obligations directly related to academic instruction including tuition, fees, required course materials, and supplies.

**Supplemental Educational Costs:** financial obligations not directly related to academic instruction that an employee must pay to be able to participate in an educational program, including childcare, transportation, computer hardware, and internet access.

# PUBLIC SERVICE PROMISE

## Achieve60AZ

**Request Process:** The process through which an employee formally requests use of educational benefits.

**Partnering Agency:** A separate state, local or tribal government that also offers educational attainment benefits aligned to the framework of the Public Service Promise.

**Other Benefits:** Non-educational benefits offered by the employer such as health care, retirement and similar incentives.

**Full-time employee:** *(insert definition from employee handbook)*

**Part-time employee:** *(insert definition from employee handbook)*

### Employee Eligibility

This policy provides equal access to educational benefits and prohibits discrimination in the policy's administration based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.

All full-time and part-time employees who are eligible for other benefits are also eligible to receive educational benefits. Employees become eligible to receive the educational benefits at the same time they become eligible to receive other benefits.

Should available resources be less than the total amount requested from employees, benefits shall be allocated as follows:

- First, to employees who are currently enrolled in an educational program, used the educational benefit in the immediately preceding funding cycle and meet criteria for continued use;
- Second, to employees who did not use the educational benefit in the immediately preceding funding cycle and who do not currently hold a workforce certification, postsecondary certificate, associate degree or higher;
- Third, on a first-come first-served basis for all other employees based on when they completed the request process.

An employee of a Partnering Organization who transfers employment to the agency will have the employee's experience at their previous organization honored and incorporated in the same manner as existing employees of the agency as it relates to this policy, provided the Partnering Organization has a similar and reciprocal policy in place.

Employees who use the educational benefits must remain in good academic standing as defined by the educational provider and good employment standing as defined by the agency to be eligible for educational benefits in future terms.

# PUBLIC SERVICE PROMISE

## Achieve60AZ

### Program Benefits

#### *Support for Core Educational Costs*

All employees who meet the eligibility requirements listed in the previous section may receive the lesser of \$5,250 per year or the employee's actual core educational costs. These costs will be paid by the employer without a requirement of pre-payment by the employee. The total amount allocated to this portion of the program is \$X per year.

#### *Short-Term Supplemental Assistance*

Employees using the core educational cost benefit may also request an additional benefit to support supplemental costs. An employee and/or the employee's supervisor may submit a request for this category of funding. All requests submitted are strictly confidential. These requests will be considered and awarded on a rolling basis based on the requests submitted. The total amount allocated to this portion of the program is \$X per year funded by the agency and \$Y funded by outside foundations or contributors.

#### *Educational Savings Accounts*

For employees who do not meet the eligibility criteria for direct assistance or who wish to direct their educational benefits to a spouse, employees may contribute to an educational savings account that have the same tax benefits as health savings accounts and retirement accounts. The agency will match X% of contributions up to an annual limit of \$X.

### Request Process

An employee may request the benefit at any time during the year by completing the agency's application (include directions or link to access the application). The agency will evaluate applications, prioritize applicants according to this policy and award funds X times per year. The funding windows are as follows:

- MM/DD to MM/DD
- MM/DD to MM/DD

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# PUBLIC SERVICE PROMISE

## Achieve60AZ

### Awareness and Training

The agency will ensure uniform access to information about this policy through the following activities.

All newly hired employees will receive written and verbal information about the educational benefits policy and the request process as a standard part of orientation. Anyone who supervises one or more employees will receive annual training related to this policy, including how to (1) identify employees who would benefit from the program, (2) encourage them to participate, (3) offer appropriate work accommodations to allow them to participate in the educational program, and (4) ensure equitable treatment of all employees in these efforts.

### Referral Program

Employees may refer other employees to the program by submitting a nomination to the director of human resources. If the nominated employee enrolls in an educational program after being nominated, the nominating employee will receive a one-time incentive payment of \$50.

### Procurement

The agency will examine its procurement policy and consider modifications to give preference to vendors and contractors that have an educational benefit policy in place for their employees.

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Achieve60AZ would also like to take the opportunity to thank all of the participating communities who are featured in this document.

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## APPENDIX

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- ii. [Goal](#). Achieve60AZ.
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- iv. "Public Institution Employer Education Assistance." Community Alliance Consulting, January 29, 2020.
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- viii. "Time to Degree: A National View of the Time Enrolled and Elapsed for Associate and Bachelor's Degree Earners." National Student Clearinghouse. September 2016.
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- xiii. Developed collaboratively at a March 2020 design workshop in Tempe, AZ with participation from state, county and city governments, postsecondary institutions and national experts.

