



SCOPE:

The policy applies to colleagues of Decatur Memorial Hospital, Jacksonville Memorial Hospital, Lincoln Memorial Hospital, Memorial Behavioral Health, Memorial Health Corporate, Memorial Home Services, Memorial Care, Springfield Memorial Hospital, and Taylorville Memorial Hospital.

OBJECTIVE:

In order for Memorial Health to achieve its mission to improve lives and build stronger communities through better health and fulfill its vision to be the health partner of choice, it is critical for the organization to meet its strategic objective to retain, develop, and recruit the current and future healthcare workforce. In order to achieve this objective, it is the policy of Memorial Health to offer Tuition Assistance to colleagues who seek to further their education.

POLICY:

The Tuition Assistance program is a tool for workforce planning and development. It provides a mechanism to support academic activities that align with the organization's immediate and future operational needs.

PROCEDURE:

1. Colleague Eligibility

- a. May be a full-time, part-time, or per diem colleague who has worked a minimum of 200 hours in a 12-month period.
- b. No active corrective action on file.
- c. Cannot be actively receiving any other Memorial Health sponsored financial education assistance (i.e., Foundation education grants or scholarships).
- d. Demonstrate behaviors consistent with Memorial Health's values and policies.
- e. All coursework must be performed on a colleague's own time. It is expected that education activities not interfere with the colleague's work, and unsatisfactory job performance during enrollment may result in forfeiture of all benefits provided under this program. Education leave may be available on a case-by-case basis.
- f. Denial of participation in the Tuition Assistance program is not eligible for the Colleague Grievance Policy.

2. Academic Coursework Eligibility

- a. Course must be related to the colleague's present job or to prepare the colleague for future advancement at Memorial Health.

- b. Colleagues' selected education institution and program of study must both be fully accredited.
- c. Programs of study through for-profit institutions are discouraged.

3. Application Process

- a. Colleagues will need to collect the following documentation to apply for Tuition Assistance:
 - i. Verifiable documentation of itemized tuition statement from the academic institution verifying costs for current coursework.
 - ii. Verifiable documentation of scheduled coursework to be completed for the semester.
 - iii. Verifiable documentation of itemized textbook expenses associated with current coursework.
 - iv. Most recent transcript (unofficial is acceptable)
- b. Memorial Health, under no circumstances, will provide Tuition Assistance that exceeds total program costs. This includes the combined total of Tuition Assistance, outside scholarships, grants and program discounts.
- c. Complete the Tuition Assistance application located on the [Education Financial Assistance page](#).
- d. Please note colleagues must submit the application with all required attachments. Incomplete applications will not be moved forward for approval.
- e. Workforce Planning and Development will review all applications and confirm they are complete. Applications will then be forwarded to the colleague's direct leader for review and approval.
- f. The colleague's direct leader will receive an email request via TuitionManager to review the application.

4. Review and Approval Process

- a. Workforce Planning and Development will review all applications for Tuition Assistance.
- b. Decisions will be rendered based on the following criteria:
 - i. Education preparation aligns with an immediate or future operational need.
 - ii. Funding is available to support the assistance.
 - iii. Colleague meets all eligibility requirements.
- c. Colleagues will be notified of their acceptance or denial for Tuition Assistance.

5. Post Approval Process

- a. Once colleagues have been notified of their Tuition Assistance award, recipients will receive a Tuition Assistance contract for review prior to signing.

- b. In order to receive Tuition Assistance disbursements, colleagues must sign the Tuition Assistance contract agreeing to a rolling one-year work commitment with Memorial Health from their latest disbursement received.
- c. All signatures on the contract will need to be secured and a fully executed agreement will need to be in place before the Workforce Development Program Facilitator can process the payment to the Tuition Assistance recipient.

6. Tuition Assistance Disbursements

- a. Tuition Assistance disbursements are processed bi-weekly and will be included via direct deposit through payroll. Colleagues should allow up to two pay periods for processing.
- b. In order to receive a disbursement the following eligibility must be met by the recipient throughout their program:
 - i. Colleagues must maintain full-time or part-time academic status.
 - ii. Colleagues must maintain a 3.00 cumulative GPA each semester of academic study. If a colleague fails to meet this requirement, they will not be awarded Tuition Assistance funds for the upcoming term.
 - 1. Colleagues will have a probation period of 1 semester to achieve the GPA requirements. If they achieve the 3.00 GPA the next semester, they may apply for Tuition Assistance. (Please note Tuition Assistance funds cannot be recovered and the total amount of the funds will be adjusted to reflect the accurate amount paid to the colleague).
 - 2. If the minimum GPA is not achieved after one-semester suspension of funding, the recipient will be in default of the grant agreement and will be contacted to create a repayment plan for any monies previously disbursed.
- c. If colleagues submit required documentation to Workforce Planning & Development after the second week in December, Tuition Assistance may not be issued until after January 1 or later of the following calendar year. PLEASE NOTE: the annual assistance limits are based on the year the colleague receives the assistance, not when the course(s) are taken.

7. Tuition Assistance Work Commitment

- a. To receive Tuition Assistance funding, colleagues must sign a Tuition Assistance contract agreeing to a rolling one-year work commitment with Memorial Health that will begin from the latest tuition assistance disbursement received by the colleague.

- b. If a colleague separates from Memorial Health while in school or prior to completing the work commitment, they will be responsible for repaying the amount of funding received.
- c. At the completion of the degree, the colleague will furnish their final transcript or diploma within thirty days of completion.

8. Repayment of Tuition Assistance

- a. Recipient shall reimburse Memorial Health the full amount of Tuition Assistance paid pursuant to their contract in the event:
 - i. Colleague fails to work for Memorial Health as required in their work commitment.
 - ii. Colleague's employment at Memorial Health is terminated prior to completing the work commitment as the result of Colleague's willful misconduct, for performance-related reasons or behavior not consistent with the Mission and Vision and Statement of Values of Memorial, or due to Colleague's failure to maintain a license required for employment (as determined by Memorial).
 - iii. Colleague voluntarily resigns from employment at Memorial Health while still a student or prior to completing the required work commitment.

9. Tax Implications

- a. Company paid Tuition Assistance is regulated by the U.S. Federal Income Tax Code 127.
- b. Colleagues should be aware that tuition assistance under this policy may or may not be deductible under the IRS tax code; in addition, the receipt of this tuition assistance may well be taxable. The following information is provided as information for the colleague's benefit only, and should not be construed as the Company providing tax advice to colleagues. Colleagues are strongly encouraged to discuss this information with their personal tax advisor.
- c. Under the U.S. Federal Income Tax Code 127, colleagues can exclude from income amounts paid by employer for educational assistance furnished pursuant to an educational assistance program. Currently, the annual exclusion is limited to a maximum of \$5,250.00 per calendar year, from employers in that year. That annual amount of \$5,250.00 encompasses funding that a colleague can receive in a given calendar year from Memorial Health's Tuition Assistance, Certification Reimbursement, and Affiliate Hospital Foundation Education Grant programs. Amounts in excess of \$5,250.00 in a calendar year are includible in income and subject to income and withholding taxes.

- d. Should lawmakers enact an increase or decrease to the \$5,250.00 ceiling, this Plan will automatically adopt the new ceiling on its effective date and be in agreement with the regulations of the U.S. Federal Income Tax Code 127.

APPROVAL:

This policy has been reviewed and approved by:

Dolan Dalpoas

Chief Human Resource Officer (Interim) & Chief Executive Officer Lincoln Memorial Hospital

Approval & Revision Dates:	Approved By:
Approved: February 2022	Dolan Dalpoas: Chief Human Resource Officer (Interim) & Chief Executive Officer Lincoln Memorial Hospital
Approved: July 2023	Mike Woods: System Director Workforce Planning & Development Memorial Hospital