



FY24/25 MEA Tuition Reimbursement Kickoff Training Q&As

- 1. I tried to submit a pre-authorization request recently but received a message saying that all funds had been exhausted already.**

The system is closed in July for FY23/24 closing and FY24/25 budget configuration. Please submit an expense authorization on 8/5/2024 when the system opens for FY24/25 requests.

- 2. Can I submit my request before one year of service? One year will be complete in September.**

The MOU language states employees can submit expense authorizations upon one-year of continuous service at the time of application/submission.

- 3. If I went on maternity leave and it broke up my 1 year continuous. (but I now have over a year post leave) does that mean I am not eligible?**

An employee on maternity leave is still on the City's payroll and is not deemed a break in service. The employee would be eligible for one-year continuous service that includes the maternity leave.

- 4. Does equipment reimbursement also go through as Tuition Reimbursement?**

Yes, please submit an expense authorization for the equipment request.

- 5. Is the tuition reimbursement payment taxable income?**

No, the tuition reimbursements are not taxable income.

- 6. Is the \$2000 limit inclusive of training and equipment?**

Yes, per the MOU, the \$2,000 annual allowance per employee includes equipment and other training expenses per fiscal year. Please note that the maximum equipment allowance is \$1,000.

- 7. Does supporting documentation include pre-approval from my manager?**

No, you don't need pre-approval from your supervisor for an expense authorization request. The system will route the expense authorization to MEA directly for review and approval

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- 8. If a conference cost is not available until much later but we can estimate cost based on past conferences, do you advise us to submit request as soon as conference "save the date" is announced?**

Supporting documentation for conference should include a description, date, location and quote.

- 9. Is the timeline of submitting a request by fiscal year or a year from the date of your last request? For example, if I submitted a request last November, can I submit a new equipment request now, or do I need to wait until November?**

Employees can submit a new expense authorization for equipment request in August when the system opens for FY24/25 requests. However, per the equipment policy, MEA will process first-time requests for equipment, then not those previously purchased one equipment (e.g. cell phone if prior purchase was laptop). Finally, requests for replacements for equipment previously purchased will be processed assuming funds are still available.

- 10. If I'm getting pre-approval for a device, i.e., iPad, and a newer version of that same iPad comes out with same cost, is that allowable?**

Yes, you may purchase the newer version iPad but limited to the pre-approved amount. Please note that there is a 60-day deadline once you have been approved by MEA to make the purchase and submit the proof of payment documentation.

- 11. I want to buy a new laptop. Does the model I submit in the EA need to be the exact model that I purchase in October?**

If you were approved for a laptop, you can buy a different model. However, the reimbursable amount cannot be greater than the approved amount. Please note that there is a 60-day deadline once you have been approved by MEA to make the purchase and submit the proof of payment documentation.

- 12. Can we get approval to purchase a used Tablet or Laptop?**

Yes, if supporting documentation provides the vendor's/seller's information, product name, and pricing details.

- 13. Does equipment have to be purchased from an approved City vendor?**

Equipment needs to be purchased from a legitimate vendor.

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14. I was approved for a laptop in 2018 and a cell phone in 2014. Am I eligible for equipment purchase again?

Yes, as long as there are available equipment funds. Per the equipment policy, MEA will process first-time requests for equipment, then not those previously purchased one equipment (e.g. cell phone if prior purchase was laptop). Finally, requests for replacements for equipment previously purchased will be processed assuming funds are still available.

15. If the equipment amount is over \$1,000, do I just put \$1,000 in the Expense Authorization (EA)?

Yes, if the requested equipment costs more than \$1,000, please enter \$1,000 in the EA. MEA will send back the EA if the entered equipment amount was greater than \$1,000.

16. If the equipment becomes outdated after a few years (i.e. iPad or laptop), do we need to return the old one if we want to get a new updated one?

No, the equipment does not need to be returned to the City.

17. How can I request the \$50 per diem for travel? Do I need to provide receipts for this amount? Please provide some examples of allowable expenses covered by the per diem.

Pre-approval is required for the use of all management training funds. Therefore, EAs are submitted in advance of incurring the expense. Upload a request for the \$50 per diem with other quotes.

18. When I upload a screenshot of the equipment information, should I include an itemized amount, or the total amount is sufficient?

Both total amount and itemized amount are required.

19. What if the quote of airline fare goes up in the time it takes for approval?

Please submit a new expense authorization for the difference in airline fare and upload the previous request information (including the initial expense authorization number and requested amount) and the new quote as supporting documents.

20. Am I allowed to purchase the airfare while waiting for approval, or must I wait until after it has been pre-approved?

MEA pre-approval is required for the use of all management training funds.

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21. Is international travel expense eligible for the tuition reimbursement program?

Yes, international travel expenses related to professional training or conference are eligible for the tuition reimbursement program. Supporting documentation for “international” conference should include a description, date, location and quote. Employees should also upload supporting documentation with amount converted to US dollars.

22. Where can I find the required conference or travel documentation for an expense authorization request?

Please take a screenshot of the conference website showing the registration fees. If you plan to stay at the conference hotel, provide a screenshot of the hotel information with the rates displayed. If you plan to stay at other hotels, please take a screenshot of the Federal Per Diem website <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> showing hotel rate of the conference location. For airfare expenses requests, please include a screenshot from a travel fare aggregator website (e.g., Expedia, Hotwire, Kayak) showing at least one quote for travel from San Francisco Bay Area direct to the conference/training location.

23. Are software or subscriptions eligible?

Per the MEA MOU, professional software and subscriptions intended to improve employee’s job performance are eligible tuition expenses. Please submit an expense authorization in August when the system opens for FY24/25 requests.

24. How are coaching sessions reimbursed? Is it reimbursed by session?

Executive coaching sessions are reimbursable tuition expenses. Please submit an expense authorization along with supporting documentation that lists the number of sessions, the coach’s name, description of each coaching session, and the cost.

25. For a training course, are employees reimbursed as soon as the course is paid by the employee or at the completion of the training course which may be weeks after incurring the expense?

Employees should submit an expense authorization before attending a training course. Once the expense authorization has been pre-approved, employees can attend the training course. After successfully completing the training, employees should submit an expense report to receive payment reimbursement.

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26. I am interested in a popular training course. Can I register for the training before pre-approval?

A pre-approved expense authorization is required for MEA tuition reimbursement requests.