

V:02:09 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE (STUDENT FEE DISCOUNT) FOR SPOUSE AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN OF EMPLOYEES

Support for Educational Assistance

Volunteer State Community College is committed to the need for the continued professional growth and development of employees. Support for educational assistance of personnel and their dependents is an important vehicle for addressing that need. The programs for Volunteer State Community College employees and dependents are available subject to funds being budgeted and available within Volunteer State Community College. The Office of Human Resources is responsible for the administration of the various programs with the exception of the program for dependents of veterans (Tennessee Board of Regents Guideline B-061) and two (2) programs offered to general state employees and the dependents of licensed teachers and State employees (Tennessee Board of Regents Guideline B-062). Exceptions to the provisions of the programs for Tennessee Board of Regents employees can be made upon recommendation of the President and approval by the Chancellor.

Types of Support for Educational Assistance

The Program in Tennessee Board of Regents Guideline P-131 provides benefits for dependents of Volunteer State Community College employees. The programs in Tennessee Board of Regents Guideline B-061 provide assistance to dependents of veterans and to state employees sixty-five (65) years of age and older. The programs in Tennessee Board of Regents Guideline B-062 provide assistance to state employees and dependents of public school teachers. The programs are:

- A. P-131 – Educational Assistance for Spouse and Dependents of Volunteer State Community College employees
 - 1. Fee Discount for Spouse and/or Dependent Children Program

 - B. B-061 – Educational Assistance for State Employees and Dependents of State Employees or Public School Teachers
 - 1. Public Higher Education Fee Waiver for State Employees Program
 - 2. Fee Discount for Dependent Children of Licensed Public School Teachers or State Employees Program

 - C. B-062 – Other Educational Assistance Programs
 - 1. Veterans’ Dependents’ Post-Secondary Education Program
 - 2. Age sixty-five (65) or Above Program
1. Taxation of Educational Assistance Programs

Undergraduate and graduate course tuition, up to \$5250 per year, paid by Volunteer State Community College for their employees is eligible for exclusion from the employees' gross annual income, in accordance with Internal Revenue code (IRC) Section 127.

2. Fee Discount for Spouse and/or Dependent Children Program

The purpose of this policy is to establish the provisions for such fee discounts up to fifty percent (50%) of the undergraduate fee and all mandatory student fees payable at the time of registration for spouses and dependent children of regular full-time and regular part-time employees, and to

encourage such qualified students to attend the Tennessee technology centers, Tennessee Board of Regents and University of Tennessee institutions. These mandatory student fees include maintenance fees, tuition, debt service fee, student activity fee, general access fee, student government fee, and technology access fee. The mandatory student fees do not include the application fee, off-campus facilities fee, or any special course fees.

A. Eligibility

The following groups will be eligible under this program:

- (1) Regular full-time employees are eligible for a student fee discount for their spouses and dependent children who have been admitted to any of the institutions in the Tennessee Board of Regents or University of Tennessee system as undergraduate students through regular admission procedures. Spouses and dependent children of regular part-time employees who have one or more years of continuous service within either system working a minimum of fifty percent (50%) time shall receive a pro rata discount based on the employee's percentage of employment. (Part-time employees with temporary service immediately preceding regular service shall receive credit for such service if they are eligible for leave accrual adjustments.)
- (2) Spouses of employees having ten (10) or more years of continuous full-time service within the Tennessee Board of Regents system immediately preceding retirement or death are eligible for the fee discount for five (5) years from the date of death or retirement of the employee whichever shall occur first. Dependent children of such employees who are age twenty-six (26) and under are eligible for the fee discount.
- (3) Spouses of employees having less than ten (10) years of full-time continuous service within the Tennessee Board of Regents system immediately preceding retirement or death are eligible for the fee discount for two (2) years from the date of death or retirement of the employee, whichever shall occur first.

Dependent children of employees having less than ten (10) years of full-time continuous service immediately preceding retirement or death are eligible for the fee discount for two (2) years from the date of death or retirement of the employee, whichever comes first. The fee discount is only available for dependent children age twenty-six (26) and under. However, in accordance with TCA§ 8-50-115, dependents under age twenty-four (24) at the end of the two (2) year period become eligible for a twenty-five percent (25%) discount if the parent:

- a. died while employed full-time (effective May 31, 1997
- or
- b. was killed on the job or in the line of duty while a full-time employee

Example 1: A dependent is twenty-four (24) years of age when an employee with less than ten (10) years of service retires/dies. The dependent is eligible for the 50% discount for two (2) years or through age twenty-six (26), whichever comes first. Since he/she is twenty-six (26) at the end of two (2) years, no additional benefit is available under TCA§8-50-115.

Example 2: A dependent is eighteen (18) years old when an employee dies with less than ten (10) years of service. He/she is eligible for a fifty percent (50%) discount for two (2) years. Since he/she is twenty (20) when the two (2) year period expires, the dependent is then eligible for a twenty-five (25%) discount through age twenty (23).

- (4) Spouses of employees who had ten (10) or more years of continuous regular part-time service immediately preceding retirement or death are eligible for the fee discount on a pro rata basis for two (2) years from the date of death or retirement of the employee.
Dependent children of such employees are eligible for the fee discount for two (2) years from the date of death or retirement of the employee. The pro rata discount will be based on the employee's percentage of employment at the time of retirement or death.
- (5) Spouses and dependent children must be admitted to the Tennessee Board of Regents or University of Tennessee institutions, or Tennessee Technology centers, through standard admissions procedures.
- (6) For purposes of this program, dependent children shall be defined as:
- The employee's natural children twenty-six (26) years of age or under;
 - The employee's stepchildren, provided such children are twenty-six (26) years of age or under;
 - The employee's legally adopted children who are twenty-six (26) years of age or under; or
 - Any other individuals who are twenty-six (26) years of age or under and living in a parent/child relationship with the employee, such as children of deceased parents who are being raised by a grandparent who is a Volunteer State Community College employee. Volunteer State Community College may require satisfactory proof of the relationship or criteria qualifying an employee's dependent for eligibility under this program.
- (7) Benefits provided by the Veterans' Dependents' Post Secondary Education Program are greater than those provided by the Student Fee Discount for Spouse and Dependent Children of Employees Program. Therefore, dependents receiving such benefits are not simultaneously eligible for benefits from this program.
- Example:** A female employee has an eighteen (18) year old son whose father died while serving in the U.S. military during a qualifying period of armed conflict as defined in the Veterans' Dependents' Post Secondary Education Program. The dependent has been approved for monetary benefits under that program. As a result, he is no longer eligible for benefits under the Student Fee Discount for Spouse and Dependent Children of Employees Program.
- (8) The employment status of the employee on the first day of classes for each term in which the spouse and/or dependent enrolls shall be used to determine eligibility and the amount of the student fee discount for his or her spouse and/or dependent children; a change in employee status after the first day of classes shall not affect eligibility for the student fee discount for that term.
- (9) For employees who meet eligibility requirements after the first day of classes in which the spouse and/or dependent enrolls, the discount will be available at the beginning of the next term.
- (10) Volunteer State Community College shall be responsible for certifying employee eligibility for fee discounts under this policy.
- (11) Employees who are on leave of absence with pay will retain eligibility under this policy; the employee's percentage of employment immediately prior to the effective date of the leave of absence shall determine the amount of the student fee discount.
- (12) Employees who are on leave of absence without pay are not eligible for the spouse/dependent discount under this policy unless the leave of absence
- is due to an on-the-job injury,

- b. complies with the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, or
- c. is approved by Volunteer State Community College to permit the employees to engage in teaching or other job-related activities intended to increase their efficiency as employees. Examples are activities such as student teaching or internships that are required parts of a degree program being sought.

- (13) If a regular employee also qualifies under this policy as an employee's spouse or dependent child, other fee waiver and staff development provisions for employees shall take precedence.
- (14) Employees are responsible for notifying the Office of Human Resources of any changes in eligibility.

B. Fees Paid/Type Course Paid/Number of Hours

- (1) This program is applicable to undergraduate courses at Tennessee Board of Regents and University of Tennessee institutions up to and including full-time study.
- (2) Correspondence or non-credit courses are not eligible. If the spouse or dependent child is receiving Title IV Financial Aid, the employee must notify the Financial Aid Office. The amount remaining after financial aid and the discount rendered under this program may be paid in accordance with the provisions of Deferred Payment Plan, Tennessee Board of Regents Guideline B-070 provided a Deferred Payment Plan has been implemented at the institution the employee's spouse/dependent is attending.
- (3) Auditing a course is allowed if the course is a credit course.

C. Payback Provisions

Payback provisions do not exist.

D. When the Participant May Attend

Does not apply

E. Accounting/Budgeting Provisions

- (1) Discounts of fifty percent (50%) of the undergraduate maintenance fee and mandatory student fees are available for dependents of full-time employees; discounts for dependent children and spouses of eligible part-time employees are prorated based on percentage of time worked.
- (2) The discount shall not be applicable to other fees (application for admission fees, applied music fees, lab fees, books and supplies, parking fees, dormitory charges or meal plans). The amount of the discount shall be rounded to the nearest dollar.
- (3) The request needs to be submitted two weeks prior to enrollment a Fee Discount for Spouse and/or Dependent form.
- (4) Volunteer State Community College where the person is an employee shall account for the chargeback as an employee benefit to indicate Volunteer State Community College is paying the cost for the benefit of the employee. Volunteer State Community College shall remit the tuition fees to the institution providing instruction as maintenance income.

F. Where the Participant May Attend

Spouses and dependent children may enroll in undergraduate courses in either the Tennessee Board of Regents or the University of Tennessee Systems.

TBR Sources: P-131: Presidents Meeting February 7, 2006; Presidents Meeting November 8, 2006; Presidents Meeting August 19, 2008; Presidents Meeting August 19, 2008. B-061: Presidents Meeting, February 7, 2006; Presidents Meeting, November 6, 2006; President Meeting, May 15, 2007; Presidents Meeting November 6, 2007. B-062: Presidents Meeting February 7, 2006; Presidents Meeting November 8, 2006; Presidents meeting August 21, 2007; Presidents Meeting November 6, 2007; Presidents Meeting November 5, 2008. B-070: May 14, 1996 Presidents Meeting; May 9, 2000 Presidents Meeting; November 6, 2002 Presidents Meeting.

VSCC Source: November 11, 1987, President; April 6, 1999, President; January 12, 2009, President's Cabinet.