

**Revised May 17, 2019**

## **University Services Enrichment Program (USEP)**

### **Policy document**

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University Services is offering a career enrichment program for current Twin Cities University Services Teamster represented employees to obtain education in order to qualify for FM mechanic positions. FM faces a shortage of trained mechanics to meet the needs of the business. With an aging work force, University Services is offering an educational incentive program to encourage interested workers to obtain a 2-year degree in Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC).

This program will be available to all Twin Cities Campus University Services Teamster represented employees. The program would provide financial assistance, in the form of tuition reimbursement, for individuals enrolled and attending classes in a certified 2-year Associate of Applied Science degree in (HVAC). These programs are not available at the University of Minnesota. However, five (5) metropolitan area technical colleges offer degree programs, which match the required needs of the Mechanic 1, 2, and 3 positions.

By providing financial assistance, University Services will create an opportunity for employees interested in remaining with the organization to gain the necessary technical skills to expand their career path as well as assist with filling these increasingly difficult positions to fill.

### **Details on the University Services Enrichment Program (USEP)**

The USEP program is available to full time, Teamster represented, University Services employees in any job class, except Mechanics 1, 2 and 3, who desire to further their education in this field of study. Listed below are key features and expectations of the program.

- Application dates will be from May 22, 2019 –September 1, 2019.
- Applications for USEP funds will not be accepted after September 1, 2019.
- Funding will continue into 2020 for those interested in participating starting in January 2020. Application dates will be announced later in the fall, 2020.
- Applicants are responsible for gaining admission to the Technical institution of their choice. USEP funds will not reimburse fees associated with the application process.
- Employees are responsible to enroll in, and to finance their classes.
- USEP funds will be provided at the conclusion of the class as a reimbursement for a portion of the expenses.

- Based on available funding, qualified individuals will be selected to receive reimbursement of a portion of their tuition (maximum \$1,250 per semester and \$2,500 per calendar year).
- USEP funds are a taxable benefit capped at 50% of approved expenses.
- These funds can be applied toward reimbursement of the cost of tuition and required textbooks and tools, minus any amount received from scholarships, government sponsored grants or other service awards.
- The employee is responsible to report all monetary assistance received through scholarships, grants, or any other source for the course(s) in which they are receiving tuition assistance under this program. Failure to do so may result in immediate disqualification from the program.
- Eligibility requirements: active full-time University Services Teamster represented employees, with 18 months continuous service and no active discipline.
- Employee's supervisor must approve application form.
- Employees must be active full-time continuing employees at the start of the course and at the time of reimbursement.

**USEP awards will be determined based on the following criteria:**

- Eligible current University Services Teamster represented employees who have received previous USEP assistance and are continuing their certification program.
- Eligible current University Services Teamster represented employees who are already in the process of earning a certification (i.e. enrolled and already completed some classes).
- Eligible current University Services Teamster represented employees who have gained acceptance into an eligible technical school but have not begun taking classes.
- Employees have 4 years from the date of acceptance into the USEP to complete their program. If an employee is not showing progress towards completing the program in 4 years they may no longer be eligible to continue to benefit from program.

**Disclaimer: The USEP program is a taxable benefit offered to assist University Services Teamster represented employees in achieving their career goals. There is no guarantee that employees who participate in this program will be hired as mechanics at the University of Minnesota.**