

WEBSTER STAFF ALLIANCE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS PROGRAM POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to support continuous learning by University staff members by providing a funding source for participation in work-related development and training. Such opportunities include professional development classes, workshops, and seminars where funding for such programs is not otherwise included in departmental operating budgets.

ELIGIBILITY

All full-time and part-time staff and administration staff members, departmental Director level and below, of Webster University U.S. campuses are eligible to participate. Staff within their first year of employment with the University are eligible with additional application requirements. Temporary staff, Graduate Assistants, and student staff members are not eligible for programs offered under this Policy.

POLICY

Webster University is committed to ongoing development of its staff members and to providing an environment and resources to allow staff members to develop and grow within the organization. Funds will be made available on an annual basis, subject to budgetary approval, to support staff member development and training opportunities that are not otherwise included in departmental operating budgets. The WSA is responsible for reviewing applications and distributing funds.

Professional development funding is available throughout the fiscal year or until the funds are exhausted, whichever comes first. In seeking to be fiscally responsible, WSA considers a wide variety of factors in considering individual applications for professional development funds. These factors include: the benefit to the individual staff member, department, and university as a whole; available funding; number of applications received; etc. Staff members are eligible to receive funds **once every other fiscal year**. Individual awards are limited to **a maximum of \$2000.00**.

These funds may be used to cover program enrollment fees, transportation, parking, meals, any required program components (i.e. books, printed materials, etc.), and lodging during the program. These funds may not be used to cover supplemental materials not required for program participation. Organizational membership or professional certification fees are not eligible expenses. Funds may also be used to provide on-site staff professional development opportunities (i.e., speakers) held at the University that benefit multiple staff members. Requests for such programs will be considered as departmental requests rather than individuals requests.

Individuals wishing to attend a meeting, conference, or workshops sponsored by Webster University are not eligible under this Policy. Classes for college credit, as part of a degree program, or for professional certification are not eligible under this Policy.

Transfer of approved funds from one staff member to another is not permitted. It is the responsibility of the staff member originally awarded the funds to inform the WSA Associate Compensation Chair if the award will not be used. Awards that will be used to pay for expense shared by more than one staff members (i.e., hotel rooms, rental cars) must be indicated on the application. No expenses beyond the original award amount will be reimbursed/transferred without the approval of the Committee prior to expenditure. Any expenditure in excess of the approved award is the responsibility of the award recipient.

The ultimate responsibility for personal development rests with each staff member. Supervisors are responsible for providing support and opportunities for staff member development and to discuss staff member development goals as part of ongoing performance assessment.

The University provides time off from regular duties for program participation. A staff member must receive approval from their supervisor and department head before being granted release time for program attendance. Staff members should not be required to make up time missed due to program participation and

time off shall not be charged to leave time. In granting release time, the supervisor should consider the professional development needs of the staff member as well as the needs of the department for each request submitted.

The Professional Development Funds Committee may be called upon to interpret this policy when considering a request that has not be specifically addressed here.

PROCEDURE

The following list provides a complete overview of the application, approval, and reimbursement procedures for staff members who wish to participate in professional development opportunities under this program.

1. The staff member must submit their package of application materials to wsa@webster.edu at least **30 days** before the professional development program is scheduled. A complete application will include the following materials:
 - **Required for all applications:**
 - A “Request for WSA Professional Development Funds” form signed by the staff member’s supervisor and department head indicating their approval of program participation.
 - A written proposal/statement explaining how this program will benefit the participant and the department and/or University. Applicants should describe in detail how the professional development opportunity would improve their skills and job performance.
 - A copy of the program brochure or the conference webpage(s) that describe the program content, registration fees, and any other associated expenses.
 - **Required if applicable to request:**
 - Documentation of airfare cost estimates from Concur. All airline travel must be arranged through the Concur portal. In the airfare line of your request form, remember to factor in the \$8 agent fee that is charged for all airfare booked in Concur.
 - Documentation of accommodation cost estimates, including applicable taxes and fees.
 - Meal cost estimates. In approving funding for meals, WSA will follow IRS guidelines. Additional factors that may be taken into consideration when approving funding for meals include, but are not limited to, travel/partial days and meals provided by the professional development opportunity.
 - Documentation of expenses listed in the “Other” category.
 - Staff within their first year of employment will need to include an additional statement from their supervisor providing rationale and support for attendance.
2. The Professional Development Funds Committee will consider all requests for funds under this Policy. The Committee will notify each staff member who has requested funds regarding the approval or denial of the request.
3. For all approved requests, the Committee will authorize payment of funds from a special Professional Development Fund Account. Participants are responsible for submitting expense reports via Concur, along with all receipts, to the WSA Associate Compensation Chair for approval and subsequent reimbursement.

ADMINISTRATION

This Policy is administered by the Webster Staff Alliance and the Human Resources Department and may be revised by them as necessary.