

Date: December 17, 2008

To: Tuition Reimbursement Recipients

From: Stacie J. Dineen, Staff Representative
Michigan *AFSCME* Council 25

Re: Employee Education and Resource Fund

The Education and Resources Fund serves two purposes; one is to assist members who wish to better their educational opportunities by attending higher educational institutions or trade schools, the other is to assist members who have been laid off from work as a result of a reduction in force from the State.

During good times, we have utilized the fund to help members in their quest to further their education. During the last three years we have paid out over \$200,000.00 to AFSCME members for this reason. During hard times, we have a commitment to help those that are laid off. The fund is designed to reimburse members the cost of their State of Michigan group health insurance for up to 3 months.

During our last set of negotiations, the amount that was allocated for tuition reimbursement was reduced to \$25,000.00/year. After paying the reimbursements for members who were pending from 2007, the fund is now at approximately \$19,000.00. No monies have been paid out to anyone for classes taken in the 2008/2009 fiscal year. We will not receive any additional funds until October, 2009, when we will receive \$50,000.00 for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

Early December, the Committee met to discuss the low balance in the fund and to decide where the allocations should be spent. It was decided that effective immediately the funds for tuition reimbursement would be suspended and the balance remaining would be made available for employees who are laid off due to a reduction in force. Currently, we have been notified of facility closings in the Department of Corrections and the Department of Human Services.

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During the upcoming months the Committee intends to review the current policy for reimbursement with an attempt to ensure that the membership as a whole will be able to benefit from the fund. These changes may have an impact on your tuition reimbursements.

Please continue to send in your tuition reimbursement applications to the Kalamazoo office, attention: Stacie Dineen. All applications will be retained throughout the year, and any monies remaining at the end of this fiscal year will be distributed as outlined in the criteria in effect at that time. All applications will continue to be date stamped when received and all current requirements for time limits to submit will be enforced.

We hope you will understand the reasons behind the steps taken, and we are sorry for any inconvenience this has caused. It was not a decision reached lightly and we hope that you will continue to participate in the AFSCME tuition reimbursement program.

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Copy: Edward L. McNeil, Special Assistant to the President
Mark Smith, Chairperson, I.U.C.C.
Sylvester Austin, I.U.C.C.
Myrtel Brown, I.U.C.C.
Dave Baker, I.U.C.C.
Mark Williams, I.U.C.C.
Robyn Price, Civil Service Staff
Mary Hartwig, Civil Service Staff
Pete Dompierre, Civil Service Staff