

**Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program (CLEFR)
for
UUP-Represented Employees**

**Program Guidelines
January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024**

1. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The New York State/United University Professions Joint Labor-Management Committees' Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement (NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR) Program reimburses the cost of examinations for first-time certification, licensure, or designation of UUP-represented employees. The NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program enables employees to improve job-related skills in their profession and gain the knowledge and skills necessary for promotional opportunities and career mobility within the State University of New York (SUNY)..

2. FUNDING AND OVERSIGHT

Funding for the NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program is provided through Article 21, Statewide Joint Labor-Management Committees of the 2022-2026 Agreement between the State of New York and United University Professions. The State and UUP have adopted these Program Guidelines and delegated responsibility for overseeing the administration of this program to the Article 42, Professional Development Committee (PDC).

3. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Reimbursement is provided for up to \$1,200 for the cost of exam fees for first-time certification, licensure, or designation of exams that begin during the period of January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.
- Maximum reimbursement is \$1,200 for the period January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.
- Reimbursement requires a passing exam grade. Fees for an incomplete or failed exam will not be reimbursed.
- All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within 90 days after the end date of the exam. In instances where an applicant does not expect to receive a grade confirmation within 90 days after the end date of the exam, the applicant must notify NYS/UUP JLMC staff in writing within 90 days after the end date of the exam and provide documentation that the grade will not be available and when it will be provided to determine eligibility.

4. EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY

UUP-represented employees are eligible to participate in the NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program under the following conditions:

Current Employees

At both the start and end dates of the exam, the applicant must be on the payroll, on approved leave (whether paid or unpaid), or off obligation between consecutive appointments.

Retrenched Employees

Employees who are retrenched and are eligible for the NYS/UUP JLMC Retraining Fellowship Program may apply for the NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program through the NYS/UUP JLMC Retraining Fellowship Program at <https://oer.ny.gov/grant-opportunities>.

5. EXAM ELIGIBILITY

The NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program is available for job-related and career-related exams that result in first-time certification, licensure, or designation at an approved institution or professional association including, where an eligible employee, by virtue of experience and training, is permitted to seek an evaluation of credentials in lieu of an examination.

Job-Related or Career-Related

- *Job-related* exams must directly relate to the employee's current profession or job assignments, duties, and responsibilities.
- *Career-related* exams must provide the employee with the knowledge, skills, or abilities to increase opportunity for advancement or career mobility within their current profession or in an occupation which currently exists in SUNY.
- Exams leading to certificates or licenses in fields such as real estate, personal tax preparation, and self-help will not be eligible for reimbursement unless the applicant can demonstrate that the subject matter is directly relevant to their job or career in SUNY.

Certification, Licensure, or Designation

The exam must result in first-time certification, licensure, or designation for an occupation that currently exists in SUNY including, where an eligible employee, by virtue of experience and training, is permitted to seek an evaluation of credentials in lieu of an examination.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- *Information Technology*: Exams for certification in specific software programs or hardware by corporations, such as Microsoft, Novell, and Oracle
- *Substance Abuse*: Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor written exam
- *Law*: New York State Bar exam
- *Finance*: Certified Public Accountant exam
- *Nursing*: Certification in specific nursing disciplines, such as psychiatry or forensics
- *Engineering*: Certification in specific engineering disciplines such as storm water management
- *Medicine*: Board Certification in specific medical fields or specialties

The PDC maintains sole discretion for making the final determination on whether an exam is eligible for reimbursement.

6. PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY

The certification, licensure, or designation must be awarded by an eligible provider who is defined by one or more of the following:

- Chartered, approved, or authorized by the New York State Board of Regents or an equivalent recognized body.

- Licensed or registered by the New York State Education Department or an equivalent recognized accrediting body.
- Licensed, registered, or approved by a department or agency of the State of New York to provide specific certification or licensing exams.
- Certified computer or software corporations, such as Microsoft or Oracle, and authorized third parties who administer classes and certification exams on software, hardware, and other related information technology equipment.
- Nationally recognized professional associations or their state or local chapters accredited to administer specific exams and award certification by the appropriate accrediting body.
- Other providers may be approved at the sole discretion of the PDC.

7. RELEASE TIME

Employees are not entitled to receive release time to take an exam under this program.

8. EXPENSES COVERED

Eligible employees will be reimbursed for the cost of exam fees up to \$1,200 for first-time certification, licensure, or designation.

Where an eligible employee, by virtue of experience and training, is permitted to seek evaluation of credentials in lieu of an examination, reimbursement of fees paid for this evaluation will be permitted provided the evaluation leads to initial certification, licensure, or designation in New York State and all other program requirements are met.

9. EXPENSES NOT COVERED

Costs and fees **not** reimbursed by this program include, but are not limited to:

- Civil Service exam fees
- Fees for renewing or maintaining existing certifications, licenses, and designations whether by application or re-examination.
- Any fees that are not part of the examination fee (application, processing, academic fees, shipping fees).
- Study material (e.g., books, CDs, DVDs) and supplies.
- Fees for exams leading to certification in a career that doesn't exist in New York State service.
- Fees for exams leading to college credit for life experience.

10. ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program reimbursement will be secondary to any other financial assistance received. If the applicant receives assistance from any source, such as other NYS/UUP JLMC funded programs or the applicant's campus, including department, program, or unit, or a professional organization, the source and amount must be reported on the NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program Application and on the paid invoice. This amount must be subtracted from the total reimbursement amount requested. An employee who fails to report the amount of assistance must repay the overpayment and may be excluded from participating in future programs.

11. TAXATION OF CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE EXAM FEE REIMBURSEMENT

The Internal Revenue Service considers reimbursement of exam fees under the NYS/UUP JLMC Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program to be taxable income.

- At the end of each calendar year, Office of the State Comptroller will withhold estimated taxes. The tax reports are based on the reimbursement check date. This may result in substantial withholding from paychecks and applicants should plan accordingly.
- Employees should consult a tax expert with questions regarding taxation of these benefits (reimbursements). Neither State nor UUP can provide any tax clarification or advice.

12. APPLICATION PROCESS

Read the NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Guidelines prior to completing the application.

The NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program Guidelines and a printable application form may be accessed as follows:

NYS/UUP JLMC Website: <https://oer.ny.gov/nysuupclefr>
 Email: nysuupclefr@oer.ny.gov
 Phone: 518-486-4666

Step 1: Application Form (Fillable)

- Fill in the application form with the required information. Information provided must be complete and legible to be considered for reimbursement. Illegible and incomplete applications may delay processing the application and may result in denial of your application.
- A separate CLEFR application must be completed for each certification, licensure, or designation exam reimbursement request.

Step 2: Required Documentation

The following documents are required and must be attached to the completed, signed, and dated application:

- An unaltered invoice, receipt, or itemized account summary from the provider showing the registration cost.
- Proof of payment such as a bank statement, credit card statement, or cancelled check.
- Any financial assistance that has been received or will be received toward the cost of the exam indicating the name of the entity providing the assistance.
- Documentation showing the date of the exam (month, day, and year).
- Documentation from the provider confirming successful passing (a license or certificate will not be accepted).

PLEASE NOTE

All supporting documentation must have the applicant's name printed on it by the issuing entity.

Documentation **must be converted to a PDF format** and attached to the completed, signed, and dated NYS/UUP JLMC CLEFR Program Application for reimbursement. All other formats (JPGs or other photo formats, Word documents, links to documentation or websites, etc.) will **not** be accepted.

Applicants should retain a copy of all documentation submitted for their records.

If all required documentation is not received within 90 days after the end date of the exam, your application for reimbursement will be denied.

If you are unable to obtain the required documentation within the 90-day period, you must submit your application and contact NYS/UUP JLMC staff prior to this deadline.

Step 3: Submit the Application

- Applications can only be submitted after successful completion of the exam and must be submitted within 90 calendar days after receipt of notification of a passing grade. Failure to submit an application within the 90-day period may result in a denial of the application.
- Applications submitted prior to receipt of notification of a passing grade will not be accepted except where an applicant does not expect to receive a grade confirmation within 90 days after the end date of the exam. In such instances, the applicant must notify NYS/UUP JLMC staff in writing within 90 days after the completion date of the exam and provide documentation that the grade will not be available and when it will be provided to determine eligibility.
- The postmark or email date will be used to determine the timeliness of the application.
- An incomplete application cannot be processed until all information is submitted.

A signed and dated application, with all supporting documentation in a PDF format may be submitted in one of the following ways and must be submitted within 90 days after the date of the exam.

Email: nysuupclefr@oer.ny.gov
Mail: NYS/UUP- CLEFR
2 Empire State Plaza, 8th Floor
Albany, NY 12223

Step 4: Application Status

After an application has been received, the following notifications will be sent via email. Accordingly, please be sure your application includes a valid email address.

Notification of Receipt

Applicants will be notified within 10 business days that the application has been received and is being reviewed.

Notification of Hold

Applicants will be notified when additional information is needed or supporting documentation has not been received. Failure to provide the required documentation may result in denial of an applicant's reimbursement request.

Notification of Denial

Applicants will be notified when their application has been denied and why.

- If all required documentation is not received within 90 days **after** the end date of the exam, your application for reimbursement will be denied.
- If the application is denied for reasons such as being ineligible or incomplete, the applicant may resubmit the claim for reimbursement with additional documentation, provided the application is still submitted within 90 days after the completion date of the requested exam.
- In instances where an applicant does not expect to receive a grade confirmation within 90 days after the end date of the exam, the applicant must notify NYS/UUP JLMC staff in writing within 90 days after the completion date of the requested exam and provide documentation that the grade will not be available and when it will be provided to determine eligibility.
- Applicants will have 30 days from the date of the denial to appeal the decision for any other reason(s). The denial appeal may contain additional supporting documentation and a letter from the applicant's supervisor.

Notification of Approval

Applicants will be notified when the application has been approved for payment.

13. REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

NOTE: To receive your reimbursement check in a timely manner, please make sure the address on the application is current.

- Once an application has been approved, allow up to four weeks for check processing and delivery.
- Reimbursement checks will be mailed from the New York State Office of the State Comptroller to the applicant's address on the application. This is a paper check and is not directly deposited into the employee's account. The check will resemble a paycheck or travel expense check, where you tear away three sides in order to open the check.
- Employees should check their mail and records carefully prior to reporting a missing check.

All reimbursements issued during the calendar year are reported to the Office of the State Comptroller during the month of October. Once these reimbursements are reported, no further payments will be issued until after January 1 of the following calendar year.