



TEXAS REALTORS® Staff Development Grant Program

Texas Realtors® supports and encourages the process of continuous learning to help employees meet their career goals and maximize the collective skill set of the organization. Through the Texas Realtors® Staff Development Grant Program, staff members are eligible to apply for and be reimbursed up to \$1,000 per year for qualifying professional development activities. This program allows for individual employees to determine the skill sets they'd most like to enhance. Here are the program guidelines:

- Qualifying professional development programs are those which mutually benefit the employee and the association through an expanded skillset or area of expertise.
- Learning activities must be related to an employee's work or be associated with a business-related or job-related program.
- Funds are limited and are available on a first come, first-served basis. Once the yearly allocation of funds is depleted, no funds will be approved until the following year. Employees may inquire about the availability of funds with the Vice President/Chief Operating Officer.
- Employees must obtain pre-approval for reimbursement by completing a program application form. Approval is based on availability of funds and determination of mutual benefit. The supervisor of the applying employee and the Vice President/Chief Operating Officer will jointly determine approval. Reimbursement is limited up to the pre-approved amount.
- Approval of funding does not guarantee approval of time off. If a learning opportunity will require time away from work, employees should to work with their supervisor to ensure feasibility.
- Funding is on a reimbursement basis and only occurs after a course or activity has been successfully completed. Documentation, such as a certificate of completion or program summary, will be required to substantiation completion before reimbursement is authorized.
- Eligibility is limited to non-vice president and director-level positions.
- Employees must have 6 months tenure with Texas REALTORS® before applying for participation in the program.
- The program does not include funding for programs and events hosted by REALTOR® organizations.
- Guidelines subject to change at any time.

Program FAQ's

1. **Can I utilize the grant program more than once in a year?** Yes, as long as your aggregate amount of reimbursement (including travel and other expenses) does not exceed \$1,000 in a calendar year.

2. **If my supervisor or department requires me to attend a professional development activity, does that count against this grant allocation?** No, the Self-Directed Professional Development Grant Program is self-directed and only applies to professional development activities that you individually propose and apply for.
3. **If the professional development activity is during business hours, do I have to use PTO?** This will be determined on a case-by-case basis by your supervisor and departmental vice president, taking into consideration factors such as workloads, other out-of-office commitments, and whether the activity is offered outside of work hours.
4. **Would an application be approved if the course or program is held out of town?** The program is intended to focus on developing skills and expanding knowledge, not to fund travel-related expenses. However, if there is a clear benefit to the association, the application will be considered. Factors such as workloads and other time out of the office will be taken into consideration. If approved, travel and expenses will be included in the reimbursement allocation. In other words, the cost of the program and travel expenses would all need to be \$1,000 or less.
5. **What does mutually beneficial mean? Does there have to be a direct link between a course I want to take and my current job?** The purpose of the program is to allow employees to direct their own learning path by selecting their own opportunities to sharpen their skills and knowledge and develop competencies beyond skills training that is offered in-house. That means that the opportunities you choose may or may not relate directly to your job duties. That's ok, as long as it is evident that the professional development activity tangibly contributes to enhancing your professional skills and ability to serve Texas Realtors® at a higher level. While mental and physical wellness are important, that's not what this program is about. It's about enhancing professional skills and competencies.
6. **What if I apply this year for a program that will take place next year?** Apply in the last quarter of the year and funds from next year's budget will be held for that approved event, assuming the program is included in the next year's budget.
7. **How many reimbursement grants will be approved in a year?** The 2019 and 2020 budgets contain \$20,000 each for this program. The amounts individually granted will determine the number awarded. Once the total awarded amount reaches \$20,000, no more grants will be awarded for the year.
8. **When do I get reimbursed?** You will be reimbursed after submitting expenses and substantiation of successful completion of the activity. Most courses will offer a certificate of completion. Whether that is the case or not, you must submit some substantiation that you did participate in the activity.