

**OR/WA Education Award Program FY2008**  
**Oregon/Washington Human Resource Development Committee (OR/WA HRDC)**

A. Name of Program: OR/WA Education Award Program, which is statewide. There will be 11 awards, one per district and one for the State Office. Alternates will be selected should an award be forfeited.

B. Summary of Program Objective: Career development for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) employees in OR/WA.

Under this program, the employee will propose training that will aid his or her performance of "official duties" and/or accomplishment of career goals. Official duties mean those tasks which are currently being performed, or which could reasonably be expected to be performed in the future. This includes potential duties in a different job or occupation. Each course proposal will be evaluated in terms of BLM needs and staffing plans, and the career development needs of the employee.

C. Location: Provided the proposed course meets the identified career goals, the employee may request courses from any institution or organization. On-site, correspondence, extension, or telecommunication classes are acceptable.

D. Program Administration:

1. The Program Administrator is the OR/WA HRDC. HRDC members may apply.

2. An Education Award is a grant to an employee in an amount not to exceed \$400.00.

An award may be applied to one course, or to a series of courses which continues for more than one semester or quarter. The employee does not receive the award as cash. Rather, the BLM is billed by the education/training institution or supplier for the direct cost of tuition. Books may also be paid for with BLM funds. However, they become the property of the BLM and must be turned in to the appropriate BLM library upon completion of the course (employees who want to retain their books must pay for them with personal funds). The employee must pay for all student activity fees, if applicable. Courses may be substituted only by written petition to the Program Administrator, who must determine whether the request for substitution preserves the purpose of the original proposal.

Only one award may be held by an employee at any one time. Study under a prior award must have been successfully completed before another award can be granted. If an employee receives awards for two consecutive years, he or she must wait two years from the last award date before reapplying. Alternately, they may receive an award every other year.

3. The employee will not have to pay back any tuition if he/she is transferring or moving within a federal agency.

#### 4. Selection of Participants

a. All participants must at the time of application and use of the award:

- (1) Be currently employed by OR/WA BLM.
- (2) Be serving under a career, career-conditional, unlimited excepted (SCEP, STEP, Federal Career Intern), or term appointment (refer to BLM Manual 1400-410 [rev. 10/92]).
- (3) Have a current performance appraisal of Fully Successful or above.
- (4) Be currently employed in a position that is at or below a GS-11 full performance level or equivalent.

b. Application process:

- (1) In accordance with instructions in the annual announcement of the program, interested employees should submit the application (Attachment 1) to their OR/WA HRDC representative. The application should be detailed with both long-range and short-range goals clearly defined, together with specific supplemental data as to how this particular course of study will be utilized to achieve those career goals. When more than one course is sought, the information must be given for each. If specific course names are not available at the time the application is prepared, the applicant should describe the general course type which is desired. The statement should also relate the separate courses to one another in terms of the career goals.
- (2) Employees may submit only one application per year.
- (3) The application must be signed by the employee's supervisor.

c. Following the closing date for applications, the OR/WA HRDC representative will assign an "identification code" to each application to maintain anonymity. Applications will be forwarded to the local HRDC for rating. Each committee shall document their selection process.

d. On the basis of the information submitted by the applicants, each selection committee will determine by consensus which applicant may be recommended to the respective District Manager or Associate State Director for approval of an Education Award. Upon approval, the selection will be forwarded to the OR/WA HRDC for funding. The recipients will be subsequently announced by the State Director.

e. Along with their recommended selection, the respective districts and the State Office should include at least one, but not more than two alternates (ranked if more than one). If an award is forfeited before the program begins, an alternate may be awarded the amount unused by the original recipient. This change can be made by the OR/WA HRDC District representative and reported to the state committee by conference call, email or at the next meeting. Participants who leave Oregon

Washington, or the BLM, will forfeit the award and must notify the Program Administrator so that an alternate may benefit from the remaining award.

#### 5. Use of an Education Award

a. In all cases, the Education Award funds must be obligated in the fiscal year they are awarded or the award will be forfeited. Courses must be completed within TWO CALENDAR YEARS from the date study began. Class attendance (or use of correspondence or self-study material) ordinarily will occur outside the person's normal duty hours. However, if the requirement to complete the course after hours would prevent a recipient from participation, office time may be approved in advance by the appropriate supervisor. Participants should work with their local HRDC representative to obligate have the funds obligated.

b. When each course of instruction has been completed, award recipients must, within 30 days, present their course grade or certificate of completion to the Program Administrator, who will document that the course has been satisfactorily completed. If the recipient fails to complete the course work or attend the training, they may be required to personally pay for the costs of the course(s) (refer to BLM Manual 1400-410, paragraph 1.2f. [rev. 10/92]).

c. Provided the proposed course meets the identified career goal, the employee may request courses from any institution or organization. On-site, correspondence, telecommunication, or extension courses are acceptable. This also includes study to prepare for a high school diploma equivalency examination. Grants under this program are outside and in addition to training and education scheduled and approved in the Annual Work Plan.