



Employer Guide

Tuition Assistance and Support Programs

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Executive Summary

The quest for securing the best and brightest in the workforce is a challenge, especially as employers need more highly educated or technically trained employees. It is estimated that more than two-thirds of all U.S. jobs will require some type of postsecondary degree or credential by 2018. In Springfield, only 33% of individuals in the area have completed an associate degree or higher. In order to help meet this overwhelming demand, the Lumina Foundation has challenged communities across the country to increase their postsecondary credential attainment to 60% by the year 2025. Your business can play an important role in this local effort, called the Springfield Higher Education Project 2025, while also strategically and financially benefiting from increasing education levels among your employees.

This document is a blueprint for establishing a new or renewed college degree or skill certificate attainment program for your employees. Most often, companies participate in this type of work in the form of tuition reimbursement or assistance programs, although there are a variety of ways to encourage degree attainment among employees. In this handbook, you'll learn why attainment programs are good for your bottom line, and how to get this type of education program started in your company.

Top benefits to tuition assistance and support programs:

- Economic Return: A 1% increase in postsecondary education rate would cause the Springfield region to see about \$225 million in economic return.
- Economic Growth: A lack of skilled workers in a regional economy can constrain growth, limiting employers' ability to expand unless they move jobs to where talent resides or accept the cost of upgrading the skills of workers.
- Addressing the Talent Gap: More than two-thirds of all U.S. jobs will require a postsecondary degree or credential by 2018.

As you evaluate establishing a degree attainment support program, consider:

- How will you set clear, direct expectations of employees in the program?
- How do companies establish a culture or expectation that the student-employee will be supported at all levels of the company?
- How do companies structure a tuition assistance program?
- What is involved with working with accredited institutions, and why does school accreditation matter?
- How do we determine the types of degrees that qualify for tuition assistance?
- How do we determine tuition caps?
- What does IRS tax policy say regarding maximum tax breaks and spending on programs like this?

To maximize the funds an employee can receive for school, employers should encourage employees to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and apply for other scholarships alongside your company's program benefits. These topics are covered in depth in the Financial Aid section.

Best practices for developing a tuition assistance or degree attainment program and reflections from area employers are included in this guide. Contact information for area university and college contacts to support your efforts can be found in Appendix A.

The partnership between business and education is vital for the overall economic success of a community. We hope this guide serves as a resource for your company and your workforce development programs.

Springfield Higher Education Project 2025

The need for some higher education attainment has reached national attention as the U.S. is in critical need of skilled employees. The Lumina Foundation has been working with Springfield as part of their national campaign to address this need by making efforts to increase postsecondary credential attainment in the U.S. to 60% by the year 2025. For Springfield purposes, we are defining postsecondary credential attainment as all degrees (associate, bachelor's, master's, etc.) and credentialed certificates.

In seeking to promote optimal economic growth in the Springfield region, we realize the critical role that postsecondary education plays in achieving this objective. It has been estimated that a 1% increase in postsecondary education rate would cause the Springfield region to see about \$225 million in economic return. All else constant and bearing in mind the type of degree, this would be an estimated 3,000 more people completing a two-year, four-year, or graduate degree.

Currently, Lumina is working with a variety of schools and nonprofits including the Missouri Department of Higher Education, Alliance for Leadership, Advancement and Success (ALAS), Missouri Career Center, Missouri College Advising Corps (MCAC), Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, Springfield Public Schools, Evangel University, Drury University, Ozarks Technical Community College, and Missouri State University to ensure our community reaches this goal. Your company's work in this space is vital to a successful outcome, and we appreciate your support.

Benefits of Supporting an Employee's Continued Education

Talent Attraction and Retention of Quality Employees

The costs of recruiting and replacing employees can be astronomical. Loss of productivity plus training and attracting new employees is costly. It is estimated by the Center for American Progress that for jobs earning around \$50,000, turnover costs reach nearly 20% of the lost employee's salary. For jobs earning less than \$30,000, the turnover costs amount to around 16% of the lost employee's salary. For lost executives, this amount skyrockets to around 213% of the employee's salary.

The Center for American Progress estimates that for jobs earning around \$50,000, turnover costs reach nearly 20% of the lost employee's salary.

As turnover is expensive and demand for well-educated and highly-skilled employees is high, retention of quality employees is vital. In order to keep talented employees, employee satisfaction is important. Tuition assistance was labeled as the second most desired employee benefit in a survey by *Entrepreneur* magazine. Additionally, a 2015 *Talent Culture* article cited 27% of employees feel that paid training and tuition reimbursement are very important to their overall job satisfaction. Increasing employee satisfaction can also augment employee loyalty and cause employees to become champions for their company. Springfield area employers note that retention of talented employees can be a challenge, and they cannot always find appropriately skilled people for jobs.

Securing New Talent and Retaining Talent

Allowing individuals to work part-time and obtain a degree or supporting an employee who seeks to advance their education during off-hours in nontraditional ways can be a valuable way to support individuals who want to advance themselves. Businesses can offer internships, apprenticeships or part-time employment as candidates complete credentials or degrees. Tuition reimbursement or scholarships can also ensure the cost associated with that degree or credential does not stop someone from taking that step. Exposure to the company in this way can potentially lead to full-time employees having a working knowledge of your company plus the certificate or degree. One study found nearly 64% of employees using tuition assistance programs indicated a significant or very significant improvement in overall engagement with their company/employer, while the same percentage reported significant improvement in commitment to their employer.

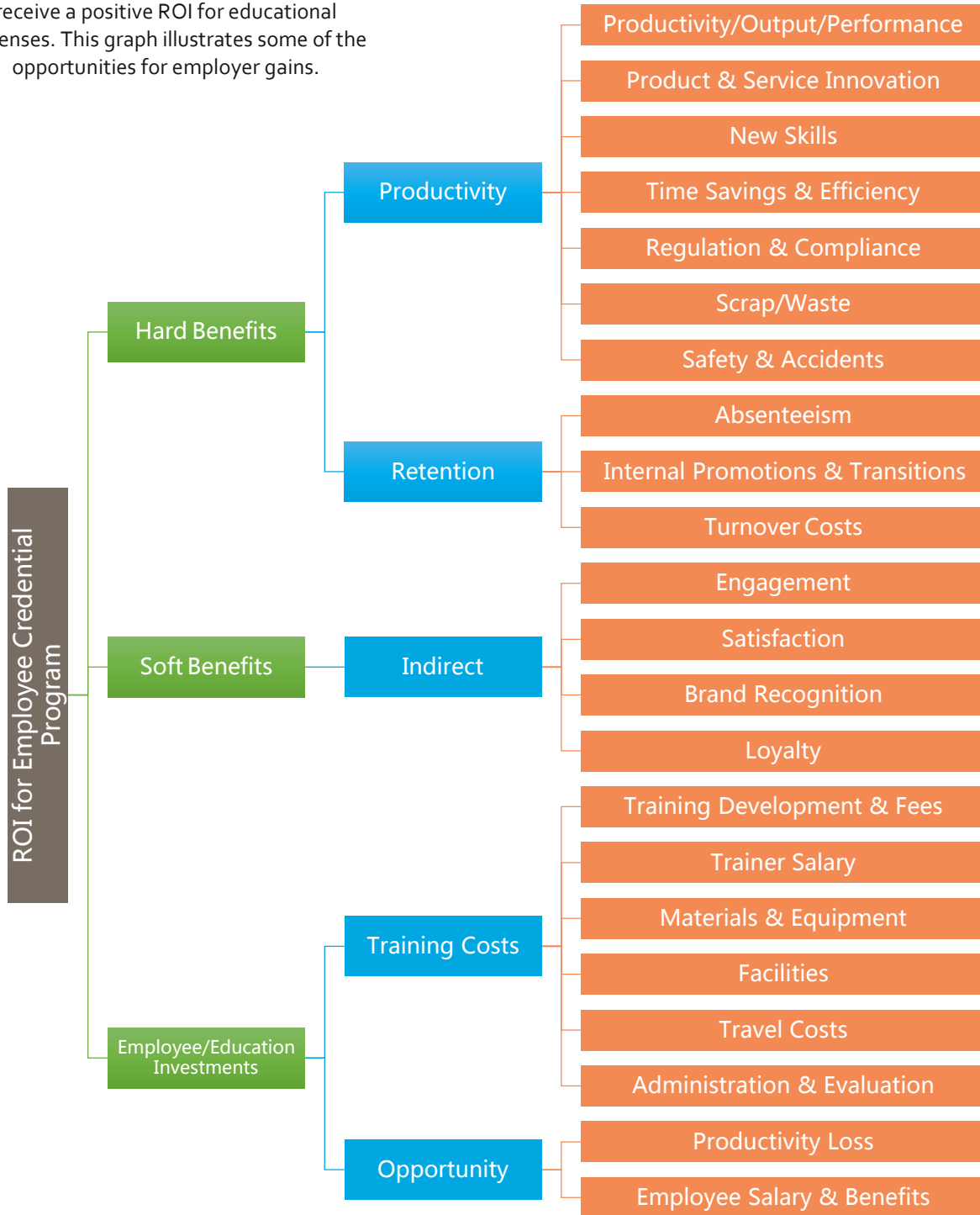
95% of employers agree that ongoing education has a positive impact on employee job performance.

Continued Economic Growth

To ensure the economic growth of a company, well-educated and highly-trained employees are paramount for success. As employee training and education goes up, generally speaking job performance also increases. An EvoLLLution Research Report cited 95% of general business sector employers agree that ongoing education has a positive impact on employee job performance. Furthermore, 79% of employers drew a link between salary and educational attainment, many pointing out the virtues of employees who show dedication to obtaining new skills and integrating themselves further into their chosen industry. Having employees equipped with knowledge and experience can yield even greater dividends for your company. According to the National Governors Association, a lack of skilled workers in a regional economy can constrain growth, limiting employers' ability to expand unless they move jobs to where talent resides or accept the cost of upgrading the skills of workers.

Return on Investment

There is much potential for employers to receive a positive ROI for educational expenses. This graph illustrates some of the opportunities for employer gains.

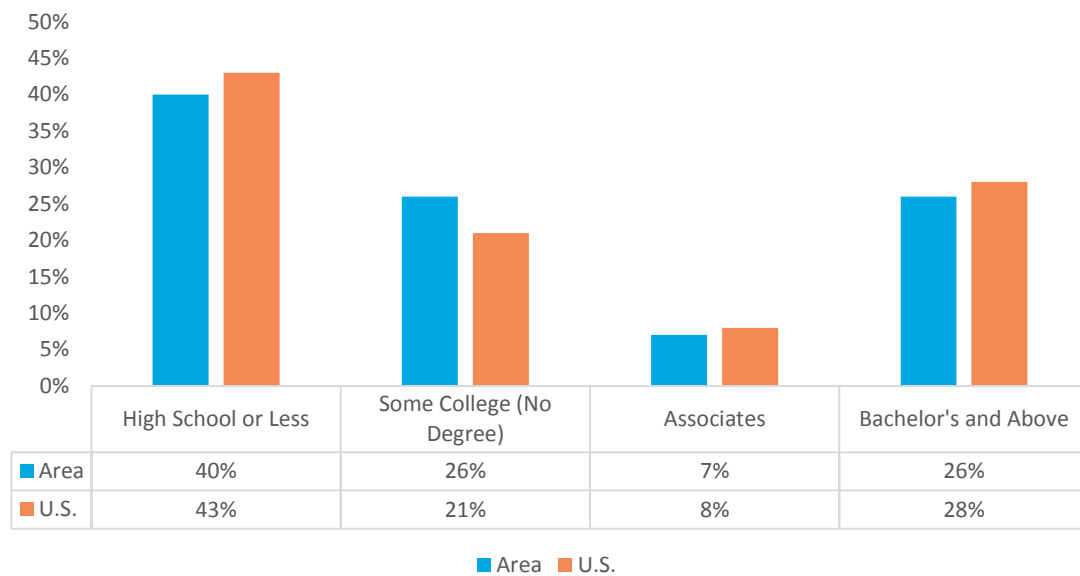


* This graphic was taken from a Lumina webinar on Employer Practices for Attainment

Talent Gap

As our society becomes more advanced, at least some college education is becoming the new minimum for employees in the U.S. While not every individual needs a four-year degree, having skills is vital. Completion of a certificate, industry-recognized credential, associate degree or bachelor's degree is becoming necessary to meet the demands of the ever-evolving market. As employers are increasingly seeking skilled job candidates, it is becoming increasingly necessary for individuals to explore opportunities and obtain certifications to advance and thrive in their given field.

Educational Attainment-Springfield, MO (2013)



*Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, 2013, Partnership for Attainment: Regional Indicators: Springfield, MO

Creating Your Own Tuition Assistance Program

There are many reasons to support your employees, current and future, in advancing their education and skill levels. The most common way to do this is through tuition assistance programs, often coordinated by a company's talent management or development team. While tuition assistance programs can yield enormous dividends, it is important to consider several factors to ensure that the program is structured in a way that mutually benefits the employer and the employee.

Financial Structure

Generally speaking there are two strategies for structuring a tuition assistance program: reimbursement and pre-payment/direct billing. While both strategies can work well, about 60% of companies choose reimbursement, while 40% choose pre-payment/direct billing.

- **Reimbursement**
With this structure, an employee will initially pay for education course costs out of their own pocket. Later, the employer will reimburse the employee for the agreed sum (if not for the whole class, the agreed upon cap). One concern with this type of structure is some individuals may not be able to afford the up-front costs, and this might prevent them from taking advantage of the program.

- Pre-Payment/Direct Billing

With this structure, employers will pay the school directly for the agreed sum. Employees do not need to worry about paying out of pocket, then waiting for the employers to refund their money later.

Eligibility, Employment and Grade Requirements

A company should consider several factors in determining how an employee can qualify for the company's tuition assistance program and what requirements must be met to continue to receive this assistance. Consideration of these factors can ensure the program is maintaining benefit for both the employer and employee.

Employment Contract

Many employers require that if an employee receives tuition assistance from their company, they must remain at the company for a set number of years upon completion of a certificate, industry-recognized credential, associate degree or bachelor's degree. This helps to ensure that an employee does not simply utilize employer resources to get a degree and take their talent immediately elsewhere. It may also be required that an employee must have completed a certain number of years of service before they can take advantage of a tuition assistance program. Stricter yet, some companies put repayment contracts in place should an individual leave before the required years of service is met.

Grades

Some employers make tuition repayment contingent on the grade an employee earns for the course. Employers should decide what grades they will accept for their program. The United States Defense Department requires that in order for their employees to receive full benefit from their tuition assistance program, they must receive a "C" or higher in an undergraduate course and a "B" or higher in a graduate course. Employers could consider having employees pay them back for grades that fall below their criteria. At least one of the local Springfield companies interviewed in the research for this guide book offers reimbursement tiered to grades: Any grade that is a "C" or better receives 100% reimbursement. Any grade below a "C" receives 0% reimbursement.

Institution and Degree

It is a best practice for employers to only offer tuition assistance to their employees from accredited educational providers. An employer may also consider if they prefer their employees to take online or seated degrees. Employers may also put restrictions on what types of degrees an employee can earn, choosing to only support with company funds what they consider a worthy investment. An employer could consider listing degrees or credentials that they would like to see better-represented within a company to so employees know what type of program they can pursue and have it paid for/reimbursed by their employer. This helps better align employer, employee and company goals.

Partnerships

Employers should also consider partnering with area universities to work towards offering certain programs for their employees. Employer and university/college connections can yield benefits for everyone involved by offering reduced costs. A notable, albeit massive employer example is Starbucks and their recent partnership with Arizona State University's online program. While partnerships have many benefits, the drawback of such a move for employers could be that the institutions they select may not be the best fit for the employee. Employers should gauge such factors before forming partnerships.

Tuition Cap

Employers may consider also restricting how many degrees they will reimburse and how much they are willing to pay in tuition. For example, if an employee has already earned a master's degree through an employer's tuition assistance program, the employer may pre-determine that they are not also going to pay for a master's degree for the same employee. An exception to this could be if an employee decides to attain two degrees concurrently. If an employee is able to double major and not increase the number of years it takes to complete a degree, an employer may pay for both. Employers may decide that they will only pay for classes directly taken towards an employee's major. For example, if an employee is pursuing a degree in economics, an employer may be unwilling to pay for an art history class if it does not directly relate to the company. As for the tuition cap, the amount could vary per semester, per year, or could even dictate how much a company is willing to pay over the employee's time with the company.

IRS/Tax Policy & Spending

When putting together a tuition assistance program, one should consult their tax professional to ensure that the business takes the proper steps to qualify for the maximum tax exclusions. Below are sections of the IRS Tax Code that apply to tuition reductions.

For All Employers:

- IRC 132(d)-Education as a Working Condition Fringe Benefit
- IRC 127-Qualified Educational Assistance Program

For Certain Other Employers:

- IRC 117(b)-Qualified Scholarships
- IRC 117(d)-Qualified Tuition Reductions

Please review the IRS Fringe Benefit Guide section on Educational Reimbursements and Allowances on pages 75-83 for more detailed information: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p5137.pdf>

Financial Aid: FAFSA, Pell Grants, Scholarships

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The FAFSA is an application that students can file online to determine if they qualify for need-based federal aid. The federal deadline for this application to be considered for each fall school start is June 30 at midnight (CST). However, each state has differing deadlines. For Missouri, the deadline is April 1 by midnight. It is recommended that you fill out the form as soon as possible after January 1 to make sure that you do not miss out on aid that is potentially available to you. Starting for the 2017-2018 year, the FAFSA is undergoing changes, including a moved deadline of October 1, to allow families more time to see how much aid they can receive to help determine college affordability.

Changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid		
When a student is attending college (school year)	When a student can submit a FAFSA (Federal Deadline)	Which year's information is required
July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016	January 1, 2015-June 30, 2016	2014
July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017	January 1, 2016-June 30, 2017	2015
July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018	October 1, 2016-June 30, 2018	2015
July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019	October 1, 2017-June 30, 2019	2016

*U.S. Department of Education, FAFSA Changes for 2017-18

Federal student aid from the U.S. Department of Education can help your employees and colleagues with expenses at a college, career school, university, or graduate school. The U.S. government has over \$150 billion in federal aid available for those who qualify. Applying is free, there is no credit check required to receive federal student aid, and there is no age limit.

Pell Grants

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the federal Pell Grant program provides need-based grants to low-income, undergraduate and certain post-baccalaureate students to promote access to postsecondary education. Students may use their grants at any one of approximately 5,400 participating postsecondary institutions. Grant amounts are dependent on the student's expected family contribution; the cost of attendance (as determined by the institution); the student's enrollment status (full-time or part-time); and whether the student attends for a full academic year or less. Qualification for Pell Grants can be determined through the FAFSA.

Scholarships

While there are set restrictions for tuition assistance programs for tax exclusions, employers can offer scholarships to employees as a separate way to aid their employees. Also, employees should consider looking for outside scholarships that are offered through a variety of organizations to supplement their aid for tuition assistance programs.

One Springfield area company in the manufacturing industry reported that they offer employee-funded scholarships. They have designed a program in which employees can opt to have \$1-\$5 of their weekly pay automatically deposited into this account. These funds can go to employees, their dependents or next of kin. In order to qualify for these funds, the employee must have contributed for at least six months. Interns and part-time workers can also qualify for these funds, which are provided in the form of a \$2,000 grant paid directly to the accredited school or certificate program of the employee or dependent's choice.

Credit Auditing and Credit for Prior Learning

It is wise to ensure that any prior college credits an employee has earned are counted toward the degree they are seeking with their existing employer, as possible. In some cases, employees may be eligible for a reverse transfer degree, where they apply credits they have received at a four-year college to a two-year college, to receive an Associate's degree. Prior credits earned, credit for prior learning and "real world experience" all might factor in to courses being waived or substituted, depending on the circumstances. It is worth having an admissions counselor performing a credit audit and assess prior learning before courses are selected.

Potential Barriers that Deter Employees from Continued Education

According to national data, there are a few distinct barriers that may interfere with an employee taking advantage of an employer's tuition assistance program. The following includes some of the biggest contributing factors:

Lack of Management Support

One of the top reasons cited for employees not taking advantage of a company's tuition program was perceived or real barriers put up by their direct report and management team. Furthermore, it was suggested some companies do not publicize their tuition support programs intentionally, because there is not an appetite for employees to pursue such endeavors. Managerial staff and leadership must be the

leaders in supporting a culture of continuous improvement, with education attainment as one vital component. Team members in middle management should be encouraged to support employees that are working to develop professionally with a degree or training program.

One of the biggest ways management can be supportive is providing a certain degree of flexibility with employees in scheduling time off work. While employees are taking courses, they must still fulfill their work obligations related to their position and keep up with an academic load. Employers want to receive a maximum return on the investment they have made in the educational development of their employees, while also maintaining productivity. In order for employers and employees to receive maximum benefit from a tuition assistance program, flexibility and open communication is key.

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Lack of Up Front Funds to Enter College

While employer tuition assistance programs are helpful, they often do not cover everything an employee may need to go back to school (e.g. books, certain fees, entire tuition costs, etc.). Encourage employees to look for scholarships. Looking for local scholarships can be particularly helpful, as the odds are better to earn them. An employer might also consider matching a certain percentage of an employee's savings in a specific account to pay for school. Sometimes even seemingly small expenses can block an employee from considering college – such as the admissions fee. Companies being willing to provide simple financial planning supports for employees, so they can prepare and plan for the expenses associated with entering college, can go a long way.

Fear and Challenges of Being a Working Adult and Student

There are many challenges a working adult will face as they enter college. Returning to school can be intimidating, especially if one has been out of the academic setting for quite some time. Generally speaking, older working adults tend to have more life commitments than students in their early 20s. The balance of managing stressors like mortgage and car payments, children and dependents at home, job-related responsibilities, and an academic course load can be daunting. In order to make a tuition assistance program successful, encouragement and support are vital. Some companies overcome this type of barrier with innovative ideas like childcare reimbursement for employees in school or book/supply stipends.

No Visible Link Between Career Progress and Education Attainment

As employees look to the future, they may not see how education can help them if they are already employed. Employers might consider explaining clear paths for advancement, if certain postsecondary credentials are obtained. For example, if an employee without a degree is able to acquire a bachelor's degree, showing this individual what kind of pay raises they could achieve and what routes are available to move up in your company with this additional training can be helpful.

Supporting Employees Interested in Pursuing a Degree or Certificate

Find Champions to Mentor Other Employees

As employers look to find ways to support their employees, perhaps one of the most valuable programs they can consider is a mentor program for degree and credential-seeking employees. A mentor should be an individual who has successfully completed a degree or certificate in the same field, and connects well with others. This mentor can serve as a soundboard for the degree-seeking employee. Going back to school can involve a host of personal and professional challenges. Having someone who cares and wants to invest in you can be invaluable. See the Mentor Checklist in Appendix D for information on the ideal skillset of a mentor.

Encourage Managerial Support

When companies make an investment in the education of their employees, they are making an investment in the growth and prosperity of their company. Managers need to understand this. Balancing work, school and other obligations can be stressful. Managers should hold employees accountable for their work, but also understand an employee's need to study and successfully complete their schoolwork. Flexibility and encouragement will support employee success. One Springfield manufacturer emphasized that going back to school requires great sacrifice by the employee. Employers should ask employees how they are best supported. This particular employer has found that his employees work harder and faster when they feel supported and valued.

Provide Incentives and Celebrate Degree Completion

A company could consider financial rewards for completing a degree. One Springfield company provides bonuses to degree-completers, such as \$250 for an associate degree, \$1,500 for a bachelor's degree, \$2,000 for a master's degree, and \$1,000 for accreditation in the employee's field. At the very least, managers should congratulate employees on their success and find ways to celebrate employee success in education attainment.

A simple name recognition and congratulations in a company newsletter or other outlet can also help engage employees further. A 2013 *Harvard Business Review* report on the Impact of Employee Engagement on Performance found that 72% of respondents say being recognized as a high performer has a significant impact on employee engagement.

Conclusion

One area manufacturing employer said that he found value in offering tuition assistance for the message it sends to the employees: the company has confidence in you. Tuition assistance is one of the top ways companies support their employees; however, developing a culture of encouragement and acceptance for employees who wish to pursue their education cannot be left to chance. The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, along with area colleges, universities and other workforce partners, are eager to support companies who want to develop programming around degree and credential attainment. In Appendix A you'll find contact information for those who are eager to support your efforts. In Appendix B you'll find employers who are currently offering degree attainment/tuition assistance programs, highlights of the work of the Lumina Foundation, and lists of other partners active with their work. We thank you for your interest and support in higher education attainment for Springfield's workforce.

Appendix A: Resources

Adult Student Services by Institution

Drury University - College of Continuing Professional Studies

Phone: (417)-873-7373 / Email: ccps@drury.edu

Website: <http://www.drury.edu/ccps/>

- College of Continuing Professional Studies: Houses evening, online, branch locations and dual credit
- One-Stop Shop Services: Advising, registration, financial aid, veterans' benefits and bookstore
- Academic Support: Writing Center and Smarthinking online tutoring
- New Student Orientation: Fall and Spring
- Financial Support: CCPS, Archie and Marion Russell and Phi Theta Kappa Scholarships
- Counseling Support: Offered through a partnership with Ozarks Counseling Center

Evangel University - Adult & Graduate Studies

Phone: (417)-865-2815 Ext.8269 / Email: AdultStudies@evangel.edu

Website: <https://www.evangel.edu/academics/adult-studies/programs/>

- Adult Services: Academic support and advising for evening and online adult studies programs
- New Student Orientation: Fall, spring, summer and online
- Academic Support Center: Disability support services, and tutoring in both study skills and specific content areas
- The Write Place: Tutoring in English

Missouri State University - Adult Student Services

Phone: (417)-836-6929 / Email: AdultStudentServices@missouristate.edu

Website: <http://adultstudents.missouristate.edu/>

- Adult Services is a One-Stop Shop: Academic advising, registration, financial aid, placement testing
- Scholarships/Fee Waivers: Return to Learn Scholarship, MSU 62-fee waiver for senior citizens
- Adult Welcome Orientation: Fall and Spring
- Advising: Springfield advisors travel to branches and sites to provide a one-stop shop
- Evening College Plus: Reserve seats for adult students in MSU classes

Ozarks Technical Community College - Student Services

Phone: (417)-447-6900 / Email: StudentServices@otc.edu

Website: <http://www.otc.edu/currentstudents/studentsservices.php>

Website Adult Education & Literacy: <http://www.otc.edu/programs/adulteducation.php>

- One Stop Student Services: Academic advising, student advising & registration (STAR) services and counseling services
- Academic Support: Tutoring and learning center, writing center, speech communication center and Academic Fresh Start
- Financial Aid: Scholarship Opportunities and Emergency Assistance Fund
- Miscellaneous Student Services: Disability support services, veterans lounge, Early Childhood Center, First Generation College Mentor Program
- Adult Education and Literacy: Preparation for high-school equivalency exam, improvement of math and English skills.

Career Services Contacts

Drury University - Career Planning and Development

Phone: 417-873-7284 / Email: career@drury.edu

Website: <http://www.drury.edu/career/>

DU's Career Planning & Development offers a variety of services to students, alumni, and employers. Services include assessments, resume assistance, interview preparation, career counseling, assistance with internship opportunities, graduate school exploration, and job searches.

Evangel University - Career Services

Phone: 417-865-2815 Ext.7896 / Email: CareerServices@evangel.edu

Website: <https://www.HireEvangel.com>

Career Services at EU works with students, alumni and employers to aid in job searches, provides career guidance, offers resume preparation, interview skills, and job-skill training.

Missouri State University - Career Center

Phone: 417-836-5636 / Email: CareerCenter@MissouriState.edu

Website: <http://careercenter.missouristate.edu/>

The Career Center at MSU assists students in exploring occupational options, writing resumes, improving interviewing skills, and developing job related skills through academic coursework and internship/career shadowing opportunities.

Ozarks Technical Community College - Career Services

Phone: 417-447-6964 / Email: Careeremp@otc.edu

Website: <http://students.otc.edu/careerservices/>

Career Employment Services is ready to educate and support students, alumni, and community members in their search for employment and to provide individual and group assistance with career exploration, occupational research, resume and interview preparation, job search strategies, and labor market information.

Business Services Contacts

Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Contact: Lindsay Haymes, Manager of Business Assistance

Phone: (417)-862-5567 / Email: Lindsay@SpringfieldChamber.com

Contact: Danny Perches, Business Assistance Coordinator

Phone: (417)-862-5567 / Email: Danny@SpringfieldChamber.com

Adult Career and Workforce Development Services

Missouri Career Center (Branson)

Address: 2720 Shepherd of the Hills Expressway, Suite B, Branson, MO 65616

Phone: (417)-334-4156

- Workshops
- Employment Services
- Hiring Fairs

Missouri Career Center (Springfield)

Address: 2900 E. Sunshine, Springfield, MO 65804

Phone: (417)-887-4343 / Toll Free: (800)-562-7284

Website: www.springfieldmo.gov/careercenter

- Workshops
- Employment Services
- Hiring Fairs
- Adult Non-Credit Training and Consultation Services

OTC Center for Workforce Development

Address: 1001 E. Chestnut Expressway, Springfield, MO 65802

Phone: (417)-447-8884

Website: <https://workforce.otc.edu/>

The OTC CWD provides non-credit technical, leadership and organizational development courses to help you reach your educational goals. Some courses may articulate as credit. Contact OTC Center for Workforce Development for more information.

Management Development Institute (MDI)

Address: 405 N. Jefferson Ave., Springfield, MO 65806

Phone: (417)-837-2615 / Email: MDI@MissouriState.edu

Website: <http://mdi.missouristate.edu/>

The Management Development Institute, an outreach program of the Department of Research and Economic Development at MSU, provides quality professional development education to individuals and corporate clients

Appendix B: Lumina Foundation efforts and Area Employers that Offer Tuition Assistance

The Lumina Foundation has challenged communities across the country to increase their postsecondary credential attainment to 60% by the year 2025. Your business can play an important role in this local effort, called the Springfield Higher Education Project 2025, while also strategically and financially benefiting from increasing education levels among your employees. Groups around Springfield including the Missouri Department of Higher Education, Alliance for Leadership, Advancement and Success (ALAS), Missouri Career Center, Missouri College Advising Corps (MCAC), Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, Springfield Public Schools, Evangel University, Drury University, Ozarks Technical Community College and Missouri State University have been working to make such goals a reality.

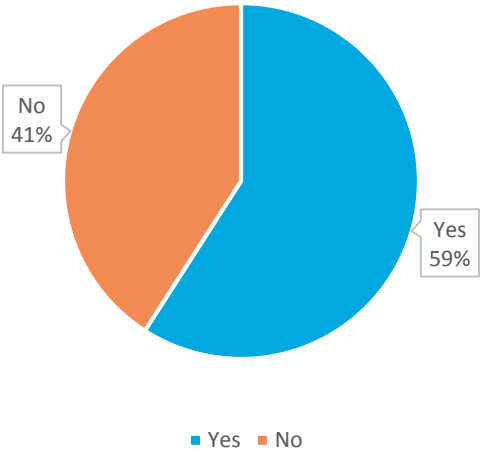
According to our research, the following is a list of business offering some form of tuition assistance or reimbursement. Please notify us with any businesses that we have missed.

Branco Enterprises, Inc.
Buckhorn, Inc.
Bryan University
Citizens Memorial Healthcare
City of Hollister
City of Springfield
JP Morgan Chase
CNH Industrial Reman
Community Foundation of the Ozarks
CoxHealth
CSI
Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.
Drury University
Evangel University
Guaranty Bank
Jarden Plastic Solutions
John Deere Reman-Springfield
Mercy
Missouri Career Center
Missouri State University
Multi-Craft Contractors
Olsson Associates
Ozarks Technical Community College
Paul Mueller Company
Positronic Industries, Inc.
SMC Packaging Group
Springfield Remanufacturing, Corp.
Tuthill Vacuum & Blower Systems

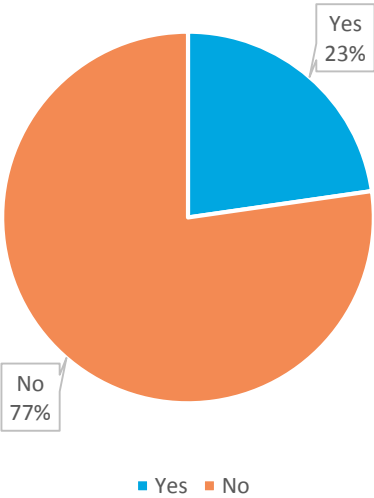
Appendix C: Education Attainment in the Springfield Region

In order to gain a better idea of what the climate for tuition assistance is like in the Springfield region, a survey was administered to large employers (50 or more employees) throughout the region. Forty-four businesses responded, representing a variety of industries including healthcare, education, manufacturing, government, technology, financial/banking and non-profits.

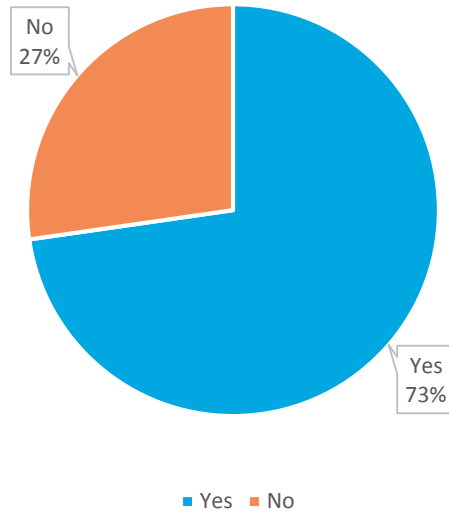
Does your company offer tuition assistance?



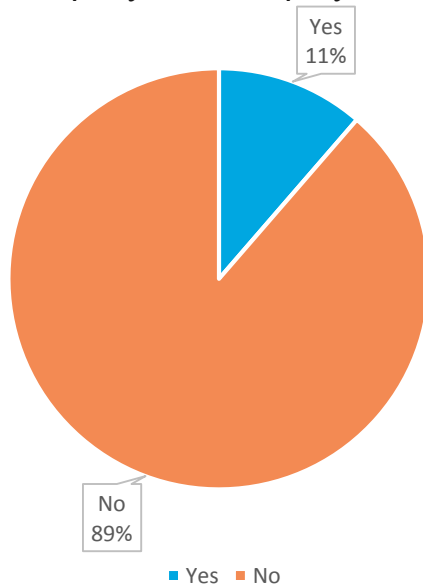
Do you have college and career counseling or guidance available to employees?



Does your company have policies in place to support employee's continued education?



Does your company offer employee scholarships?



Appendix D: Mentor Checklist

Active listeners

Look for mentors who ask questions, take notes or summarize conversations. These are among many ways one can actively listen. Active listening shows engagement and lets the mentee know that the mentor is engaged and is actually paying attention to what the mentee is saying.

Provides sound advice

Look for mentors that exhibit good judgment and will be able to encourage mentees to make wise personal decisions.

Successfully completed or is in later stages of their own degree program completion

Finding a mentor who can empathize and show mentees that balancing higher education and a job can be paramount to success. Mentees need to see that their goals are attainable and that someone genuinely understands them.

Dedicated to not only their success, but the success of others

Finding a mentor that invests not only in their own personal gain, but fosters that in others is important. Utilize these people to bring others to their level and grow.

Engaged and passionate about the company

Look for people who are excited about your company and wish to be ambassadors for it. This can promote enthusiasm and additional drive for a mentee.

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