**Guidelines for individuals interested in an RPLC Educational Grant**

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| **Residency** | You must have lived in our benefit area (TW10, TW9, SW13 or SW14) for at least 6 months. Trustees will be particularly sympathetic to applicants who have been educated in the borough and/or can demonstrate community links (e.g. family or voluntary work).Non-residents who have worked for a charitable organisation or social enterprise in the borough for at least 12 months can request a **sector training grant** with the support of their employer.  |
| **Age** | Grants are primarily targeted at applicants over the age of 18. Students aged 16 to19 may, however, also be assisted. Very exceptionally, help is available for those under 16.  |
| **Place of Study** | The school/college/university or training provider should be part of the state sector. Private institutions and fees will only be considered for courses or training programmes the state sector does not offer. |
| **Course/training programme** | The course must lead to a properly accredited, recognised qualification and enable the recipient to improve their chances of finding work or increasing their earning potential in their chosen field. The only exceptions are recreational classes that have a therapeutic value for residents with mental health issues or that enable the elderly to remain integrated into their local community. Applicants should be able to demonstrate a clear vocational or financial need to retrain when already holding qualifications in a different area or when interested in study beyond first degree.  Those interested in a **sector training grant** must show that the qualification they seek will not only benefit their own career, but also their current employer. We also impose the condition that successful recipients commit to staying with their employer for at least 12 more months upon completion of the agreed course or training programme.As for those interested in * **Psychology/counselling courses** - Candidates are expected to demonstrate their commitment to, and understanding of, the sector by ensuring they have a significant amount of relevant voluntary/paid experience for organisations such as Mind, Child Helpline and the Samaritans. In addition, trustees would like to see clear evidence of how the applicant is intending to access work in an area where there is strong competition for paid job opportunities.
* **Unpaid internships** – Students wishing to gain relevant experience in a particular area during the Summer may need to do so on an unpaid basis. They are welcome to apply for support with transport costs, work clothes and other living expenses during this period of employment provided the employer confirms the duration of the contract and the unpaid nature of the work.
* **Master degrees** – Now that the government has introduced a subsidised loan of up to £10,000 to help with the cost of postgraduate study we don’t normally support Master candidates.
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| **Costs covered** | Applicants can request help with fees, transport, childcare, books, equipment, uniform and other living costs associated with the course or training programme.  |
| **Financial criteria** | In cases where government funded loans are available for tuition fees and/or living costs through Student Finance England, students are expected to take out their full entitlement. Career Development loans should be considered where feasible as well as scholarships, bursaries and grants on offer through universities and other organisations.Grants are means tested and household income of the applicant and – where applicable their partner - is also taken into account. For those under 25, evidence of parental income will normally be requested.Trustees look favourably upon those that contribute to any shortfall in income through a part-time or holiday job. Applicants who are divorced will also be asked to share their Financial Order.  |
| **Selection process** | Once an application form has been submitted, you will be asked to visit our office for an informal interview. You will need to bring evidence of your address and income plus anything else that is asked of you.The final decision for support is up to the Education Committee which meets 5 times a year. All applicants must make sure to complete the application form truthfully and provide comprehensive information about their background and needs. You will be notified of the outcome via e-mail as to whether you have been successful or not. The process is competitive and the outcome is not guaranteed due to limited resources. |
| **Next steps** | Please contact the Education Director if you have any further questions. This can be done through the education support page on the website ([www.rplc.org.uk](http://www.rplc.org.uk)) or by sending a message to nancy@rplc.org.uk. Once you have carried out your research and are clear about the course/training programme you want to do and the amount of financial support you require, you will need to complete the appropriate application form on the same education support web page. Please be sure to include* A full list of your **previous qualifications** and results
* A detailed **employment history**
* A **breakdown of your anticipated outgoings and income during your studies**
* A **supporting statement by the applicant** that clearly explains why you want to do the course, how it is going to improve your employability chances or career prospects and reasons as to why you are requesting financial support
* **Two referees** – at least one needs to be an employer for whom you have done paid or voluntary work in recent years. If you have studied in not too distant a past, you should opt for a teacher/tutor/professor. Otherwise, you can also go for a respected professional who knows you well such as your mental health support worker or your GP. Relatives or close friends are usually not acceptable.
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**GOOD LUCK.**

Last updated October 2016