



Staff Professional Development Grants (FY27)

Summer/Fall application cycle (for activities July 1, 2026 - December 31, 2026)

At a glance

- **Who can apply:** Regular/permanent UNC School of Medicine (SOM) staff with at least 12 months of service in SOM at the time of application.
- **What it funds:** Professional education/training that makes an immediate impact in your current role (credit and non-credit courses, conferences, certificates; may include registration, materials, and domestic travel).
- **Key rule:** One award per fiscal year (Fall 2026 or Spring 2027). FY27 exception: continuous degree programs may be funded in both cycles after tuition waivers are applied (funding not guaranteed).
- **Submission window:** May 1- May 18, 2026 (11:59 p.m.)
- **Decision notification:** By June 30, 2026
- **Deadline for using funds:** Expenses must be incurred by December 31, 2026 (example: you may apply for a January 2027 conference if registration/airfare are paid by December 31).

Overview

The UNC School of Medicine Staff Professional Development Grant is being offered to invest in the professional development of the school's talented and dedicated staff. We strongly encourage staff to apply, and requests will be reviewed by committee. Those approved will receive grant award letters for the specified program and further reimbursement details.

Eligibility

- Must have 12 months of service with the School of Medicine as a regular/permanent SOM employee at the time of application.
- **Not eligible:** Temporary employees (including postdocs and student SHRA categories) and employees classified as faculty.

Funding rules

- One grant award per fiscal year (Fall 2026 or Spring 2027).
- FY27 exception: Tuition reimbursement for continuous degree programs may be funded in both cycles after any available tuition waivers are applied.
- Awards within a given fiscal year are not guaranteed.

What the grant covers

The grant covers professional education and training that can make **an immediate impact on an employee's current role**. Eligible opportunities may include credit and non-credit courses, conferences, certificate programs, or similar instructional opportunities.

- Expenses may include registration, materials, and travel, when those costs cannot be covered by your department or other sources.
- Memberships are only covered when the total cost of participation in a program is less than the cost without membership (for example, conference registration).
- Requests may be accepted and funded, accepted and partially funded, or denied (if not eligible or if funds have been depleted for that cycle).

Program priorities

Demand for grant funds exceeds available funds. Funding priorities include:

- Tuition reimbursement for degree programs, certification, and development courses supporting you in your current role.
- For conference travel requests, preference is given to presenters who have been invited to present and who outline clear objectives for attendance. Virtual options are recommended.
- International conference travel requests will not be considered.

Tuition reimbursement (for-credit courses)

- Courses for academic credit not covered through the University's tuition waiver benefit or current department commitments are eligible if you are currently enrolled or plan to enroll in a degree program or academic (for-credit) course provided by an accredited community college, college, or university for a Summer II or Fall term, where courses are completed by December 31, 2026.
- You must meet the eligibility requirements to receive reimbursement for the semester as outlined in the UNC Educational Assistance Program, as reimbursement will need to be requested through that program using the chartfield code we will provide. The Educational Assistance Program requires that reimbursement be processed **after** successful completion of the course.
- Other scholarships or awards must be applied first; the remaining gap may be filled using grant funds.
- Book expenses may be reimbursed for books noted on the class syllabus.
- If eligible for tuition waiver, we ask that at least one tuition waiver be used when possible, with grant funds helping to cover the gap.
- The grant may not cover all tuition expenses or costs, especially programs outside of the UNC System or are not eligible for tuition waiver benefits. Please keep this in mind when planning the total cost of your degree program.

How to apply

- **Complete the online application** (https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0IK2T7KwANvzU46).
- **Prepare your budget** before starting your application. You may download the [optional worksheet](#) to organize your information in preparation.
- **Draft your essay in Word**, then paste it into the application. *The essay is key in the approval process—* please be thoughtful in your response. Essay prompt: How does this opportunity relate **to your current position**, AND, how will this opportunity advance your professional goals? (Maximum 400 words)
- **Submit online:** Only complete applications will be considered. If you are unable to submit through the online application, please contact marilyn_butterworth@med.unc.edu.
- **Provide name/details about the program**, including links for reference. Funding must be for individual benefit and meet a professional development purpose.
- **Apply within the submission window:** May 1, 2026–May 18, 2026 (11:59 p.m.) only. Applicants will be notified by June 30, 2026.
- **Plan your spending:** Applicants may apply for funds for professional development activities with expenses incurred by December 31, 2026. Example: you may apply for a Fall grant for a conference in January 2027 if registration fees and airfare are incurred in this cycle; final costs are expected to be submitted for reimbursement in January immediately following. Tuition reimbursement requires planning for courses that

may be ending in multiple terms: courses ending in summer, and courses ending in fall. Prepayment is required, with reimbursement processed at the end of each term, per University policy.

- **Questions?** Contact Martha Modlin, martha_modlin@med.unc.edu.