Program for Continuing Education
Policy Guidelines and Procedures

I. Purpose

The P.E.O. Program for Continuing Education is a need based grant program providing one-time financial assistance to women whose education has been interrupted and who find it necessary to return to school to complete a degree or certification that improves their marketable skills for employment to support them.

II. Eligibility

A. A woman is eligible for recommendation by a local chapter if she:
- is a citizen or legal permanent resident of the United States or Canada;
- is enrolled in a certification or degree program from an accredited institution;
- is living and studying in the United States or Canada for the entire course of study;
- has had at least 24 consecutive months as a nonstudent sometime in her adult life;
- is within 18 consecutive months of completing her educational program which, at the conclusion of, will lead to employment or job advancement.

B. A woman is <u>not</u> eligible for grant consideration if she:
- is requesting the grant for use in prerequisite courses needed to secure admission into another program of study;
- is choosing immediate continuation of her education beyond the current program for which the grant is requested;
- is enrolled in a post master's certificate or doctoral program.

C. A chapter recommendation must be submitted <u>no less than 8 weeks</u> prior to the start date of the term for which the grant is requested; however, it cannot be accepted <u>more than 14 weeks</u> in advance of that date.

D. Grants may be awarded for one term of academic or technical courses, including online programs offered by educational institution in the United States or Canada.

E. The applications of individuals who satisfy these eligibility criteria will be evaluated on a nondiscriminatory basis without consideration of race, national origin, religious affiliation, disability, or P.E.O. connection.

III. Amount of Grant

The maximum grant is $3,000. A request for less than a maximum grant is encouraged when the full amount is not essential. The total grant awarded is based on the availability of funds and applicants' individual needs. Regardless of the amount awarded, recipients are only eligible to receive one PCE grant.

Grants to Canadian women will be paid in Canadian dollars unless attending an educational program in the U.S.; then payment may be in U.S. dollars if requested by the recipient.

IV. Use of Grant

The money is intended as a grant-in-aid for educational expenses such as:
- tuition;
- books and supplies;
- testing and graduation fees;
- transportation (only for estimated cost of gas, parking, and local bus fare, not for automobile loan payments or maintenance);
- childcare (only while in class or studying);
- uniforms required by the educational program;
- equipment/tools necessary for the course of study.

The grant is **not** to be used for living expenses, to repay educational loans or personal debt.

PROCEDURES FOR SPONSORSHIP

I. Interview

When a local chapter identifies a prospective applicant, the chapter chairman will schedule an interview. The *Chapter's PCE Pre-Application Eligibility Worksheet* and the *Candidate's PCE Pre-Application Income and Expense Guide and Worksheet*, available on the PCE portion of the P.E.O. International website, are to be used by the interviewing committee. No guarantee should be given as to eligibility or the probability of receiving a grant in the amount requested.

II. Chapter Approval

Chapter approval is granted by a majority voice vote at a regular or special meeting.

III. Recommendation Process

PCE recommendations may only be submitted electronically using the online *Chapter Recommendation Form.* Instructions and form can be found on the PCE member page of the P.E.O. International website. The chapter recommendation may not be written by a family member.

Once the recommendation is reviewed, instructions will be emailed to the applicant, including the specific deadline for submitting her completed forms.

IV. Due Date for Completed Application

Each applicant is given 30 days from the date she receives the email from the PCE Supervisor to complete and submit her forms. The local chapter contact will be sent an email with the applicant's submission deadline and should follow up with the applicant to make certain she submits her information on or before the submission deadline date.

V. Result of Grant Consideration

When a grant is awarded, payment will be made by direct deposit into the recipient's bank account, using the information provided during the application process. The chapter will be encouraged to meet in person to present her with a PCE certificate which is available on the P.E.O. website. For those recipients without access to a bank account and those in Canada, a check, in the recipient's name, is mailed to the local chapter's PCE contact as listed on the chapter recommendation form. The check should be presented personally to the recipient, preferably at a meeting of the chapter. The check should be cashed promptly; the check is void 90 days after issue date and will not be reissued. In the event the recipient is unable to begin her studies as scheduled, the grant should be returned to the PCE office.

In the event an applicant is not awarded a grant the denial letter is sent to the applicant, and a copy of the letter is sent to the sponsoring chapter. If grant denial is due to an insufficient financial plan, the trustees encourage a reapplication with an improved financial plan.

VI. Chapter Involvement

Local chapters are encouraged to become involved in developing the potential of women in their own communities. The personal interest and encouragement shown by the chapter members are often as important as the grant itself in assisting the student as she faces a change in her life situation. The P.E.O. Program for Continuing Education is a combined effort of all P.E.O. members, the sponsoring chapter, and the grant recipient.