

## **GAIA Employee Recruitment & Retention Program**

**Purpose:** GAIA recognizes the difficulties faced by local businesses in recruiting and retaining employees for positions requiring specialized skills or knowledge obtained through post-secondary education (college/university or vocational school). GAIA also recognizes the costs incurred by employees relocating to the Garrison area for employment. As a result, GAIA has created a program to assist with the following for essential service workers for any Garrison area business:

1. Tuition reimbursement,
2. Student loan payment reimbursement, or
3. Home closing costs.

**Eligibility:** Any business in the Garrison trade area.

**Maximum Grant:** Maximum of \$1500 on a dollar for dollar match with an employer to assist with any of the aforementioned costs.

**Terms:** Grant funds may be escrowed for up to 3 years to meet employment requirements if desired by employer. Grant funds will be forfeited if not utilized within 48 months of approval.

While this program is primarily for employees who have worked for 5+ years in their position, an employer may submit an application for a tenured employee with outstanding student loans, training needs, or relocation/home purchase closing costs.

No employer may receive more than \$3,000.00 per year under this program. GAIA may have to limit the number of applications approved under this program based upon available funding. Eligible businesses must operate within the Garrison community and the designated employee must be assigned to the Garrison community 60% or more of their work schedule. Priority will be given to applications received for career fields that do not qualify for tuition assistance under other State or Federal programs.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

- ◆ Please contact the GAIA office for an application. All applicants must submit an application form including a description of how program funds are to be used. Further supporting information may be requested by the board of directors. Application forms are available at the GAIA office.
- ◆ All applications must be submitted at least one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board of directors. A schedule will be provided to the applicant at the time the application is picked up.
- ◆ Applicants will be notified by the GAIA office as to board decisions within one week of review.