



Tuition and Certification Reimbursement Policy

Policy No. C-08¹

The Scope of this policy includes the following individuals:²

- ✓ Employees (including Full-Time At-Will Employees, Civil Service Employees, Teamsters Employees, HPOA, HPSA, and IAFF Employees)

I. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for the tuition reimbursement program.

II. POLICY APPLICATION

By providing a tuition reimbursement program to full-time non-probationary employees, the City supports employees in furthering their education, improving performance in their current positions, and better preparing the employee for future assignments within the City.

Regular, full-time, non-probationary employees are eligible to apply for tuition reimbursement in order to complete college-level courses and degree programs. Employees must have successfully completed their initial probationary period prior to the start of the course of study to be eligible for educational assistance.

This policy does not apply to employees obtaining or maintaining certifications required for the employee's position with the City. Also excluded are expenses for workshops, seminars, conferences, institutes, courses for which continuing education units (CEUs) are awarded, and courses at non-degree granting educational institutions which are required by management as essential in the performance of an employee's job. These expenses may be covered through the department budget.

¹ This policy is not to be construed as a contract or an implied contract concerning any employment-related decision or term or condition of employment. The City reserves the right to revise, delete or add to any and all policies, procedures, work rules or benefits stated in this policy at its sole discretion. See Introduction, Administrative Policy No. A-01.

² The relevant definitions for the individuals identified in the Scope of this policy are defined in Introduction, Administrative Policy No. A-01.

A. College or University Accreditation and Approved Courses

The course for which educational assistance is requested must be taken for college credit at an educational institution that is either regionally or nationally accredited by a recognized accrediting body. Continuing education and other non-degree related courses are not eligible.

Courses must be related to a program of study and satisfy at least one (1) of the following:

- Directly relate to the employee's current position;
- Increase the employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities relative to their current position;
- Enhance the employee's development and better prepare them for a future assignment within the City.

Juris Doctorate degrees and degrees above a master's level are not covered by this policy and are not eligible for education assistance.

Employees are responsible for determining any personal tax implications related to tuition or certification reimbursements received.

B. Certifications

In an effort to advance career development opportunities, the City will reimburse employees for job related certifications. The certifications for which assistance is requested MUST:

- Be required for a full-time City position, as demonstrated by the job description, for a position the employee is not currently holding.
- Not be listed as "required" or "desirable" for the employee's current position.

Reimbursement for certifications is limited to a maximum of two (2) certifications per fiscal year.

Employees are responsible for determining any personal tax implications related to tuition or certification reimbursements received.

C. Requesting to Participate in the Tuition Reimbursement Program

Request for tuition and certification reimbursement forms should be routed and signed via the DocuSign system.

Employees must complete a request form, attach a grade report/evidence of certification completion, and receipt for each course/certification to the form.

The request will be reviewed to:

- Validate the institution's accreditation;
- Verify course compliance with this policy's guidelines.

It is the employee's responsibility to seek guidance to determine whether a certification is eligible for reimbursement under this policy. Employees should consult with their Human Resources Business Partner and/or HR's Training and Organizational Effectiveness Team for questions related to tuition and certification reimbursement.

D. Other Requirements

Courses and classes must be scheduled outside of the employee's regular work hours. When there is an unavoidable conflict between an employee's class attendance and job responsibilities, job responsibilities prevail and must come first. If operations permit, supervisors may make a reasonable effort to accommodate an employee's class schedule.

The following documentation must be submitted by the employee within ninety (90) days of the course or certification completion date in order to be considered for reimbursement:

- Official grade/certification verification;
- Itemized receipt(s) with name of class, student name, university or certification organization name, and costs of tuition/certification paid by the employee; and
- Executed request for reimbursement form.

The employee should retain copies of all approved tuition and certification reimbursement forms and documentation. If it is determined that an employee has falsified forms and/or documentation, the employee shall forfeit the privilege to further participate in the Tuition and Certification Reimbursement Program and shall be

required to reimburse the City for the full tuition amount reimbursed. In addition, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees must attain a course grade equivalent to a “C” or better (or successfully complete the requirements for certification) to be eligible for reimbursement. Employees approved for assistance will be reimbursed:

- 100% of actual per credit tuition costs up to a maximum of \$200.00 per credit hour; or,
- 100% of actual certification costs up to \$1,500 per certification.

Costs for books, parking, and other items related to classes and/or certifications will not be reimbursed.

If the employee separates from the City within one (1) year of receiving reimbursement(s) for a class and/or certification(s), the employee will be responsible for reimbursing the City any reimbursement they received in the preceding year.

III. APPROVAL

APPROVED BY:

Richard Derrick, City Manager/CEO

REVIEWED BY:

Nicholas Vaskov, City Attorney

Jennifer Fennema, Director of Human Resources

Record of approved document can be obtained through the Human Resources Department.

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