



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SUBJECT:

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

DATE: DECEMBER 16, 2020

NUMBER: HR 20-05

I. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

To provide financial assistance to regular employees of the City for educational or academic course work they take to improve their performance in current positions or which will prepare them for promotion to related higher level City responsibilities. For the purposes of this policy, regular employees are City employees who are not members of a collective bargaining unit, are *not* probationary, and have completed at least twelve (12) months of continuous employment with the City at the time of Tuition Advance/Reimbursement Application.

The Tuition Reimbursement Program is not intended to provide assistance for staff development training or continuing professional education.

II. APPLICABILITY OF POLICY

Regular employees who have enrolled in and completed educational or academic courses (including online courses), on or after July 1, 2020, at a community college, college or university, accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools, or an accrediting agency or association that is recognized by the database created and maintained by the United States Department of Education.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

- A. A regular employee may receive tuition reimbursement, in an amount not to exceed \$2,500 per fiscal year, for educational or academic courses (including online courses) satisfactorily completed while attending a community college, college or university, provided that:
1. The employee's Department Director, Human Resources Director and the City Manager, or designee, have approved the tuition reimbursement request;
 2. Adequate funds (i.e., not less than \$2,500 per person, per fiscal year) are available in the budget of the employee's department for such educational assistance reimbursement;
 3. The completion of such educational courses will generally improve the employee's skills, knowledge and/or ability to carry out the employee's job assignments, and/or will prepare the employee for promotions to higher level responsibilities with the City; and
 4. The employee presents the required evidence/proof of satisfactory completion of his or her educational or academic course(s) for the semester.
- B. Tuition reimbursement will be based upon the rate that the Florida public universities and/or state colleges would charge a student with Florida resident status for a similar course. Tuition reimbursement shall not cover the cost of matters such as: elective fees, books, course materials, supplies, late fees, deposits, parking fees, or travel.



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- C. The employee must remain at the City after he or she completes the educational or academic courses covered by the tuition reimbursement application and agreement for a period of two (2) years. If the employee voluntarily leaves the City, or be fired for cause, within the covered two-year period, he or she forfeits all rights to reimbursement under this policy and will be required to pay the City an amount equal to the amount of tuition reimbursed to the employee, as provided in the Waiver Clause of the Tuition Advance/Reimbursement Application.

IV. ONE TIME TUITION ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

An employee in good standing is eligible to receive up to \$2,500 as a tuition advancement to assist with defraying the costs associated with starting his or her academic career. The purpose of the tuition advancement program is to assist an employee in beginning his or her academic career. An employee is in good standing if the employee has not received any disciplinary action within the twelve-month period immediately prior to the employee's application from the tuition advancement. The employee's department director and HR will determine if the employee is in good standing at the time of application.

Starting an academic career is defined as the initial first semester of attendance at educational institution.

Repayment is required if the employee does not complete or fails the course(s). If repayment is required, monies will be deducted per pay period until the amount provided is returned. Otherwise, an employee must remain at the City for a period of two (2) years after the receipt of the tuition advancement. If the employee voluntarily leaves the City, or is fired for cause, within the two- year period, the employee will be required to pay the City an amount equal to the amount of tuition advanced to the employee.

V. REQUESTING TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

- A. An employee should submit the Tuition Advance/Reimbursement Application, attached and incorporated hereto as **Exhibit 1**, as far in advance as possible, but no later than 20 working days before the educational or academic course(s) is scheduled to begin.
- B. Upon completion of the educational or academic course work, the employee shall submit the following to Human Resources within 60 days of the completion of the course(s).
1. Proof of payment of tuition charges (i.e. student account statement of tuition charges, copy of a canceled check, credit card receipt, etc.).
 2. Proof of satisfactory course completion (i.e., the original transcript notification, a grade slip, or certificate of satisfactory completion).



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- C. For each semester of educational or academic courses, an employee must submit a new application for tuition reimbursement and a signed tuition reimbursement agreement.
- D. Upon satisfactory completion of the educational or academic course(s) provided in the employee’s Tuition Reimbursement/Advancement Application, an employee may be reimbursed upon providing proof of satisfactory course completion. Such proof shall be provided within 45 days of the completion of the course(s). Satisfactory course completion must be documented by an official grade slip or transcript that shows either:
 - A final grade of: "C" or above for undergraduate work, or "B" or above for graduate work; or
 - a "pass" grade (only for school/classes with a pass/fail system).
- E. Upon receipt of satisfactory completion of the educational or academic course to the Human Resources Department, the Human Resources Department will submit the documents to the Finance Department to process the reimbursement. The employee will be copied on that correspondence. Reimbursement should occur within 45 days of Human Resources submitting the request to the Finance Department.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Human Resources Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs overall Tuition Reimbursement Program. • Identifies an HR employee to serve as Tuition Reimbursement Program Coordinator. • Administers the Tuition Reimbursement Program. • Provides final approval or denial of all applications for tuition reimbursement. • Submits check request for fee reimbursement upon course completion and receipt of required documentation from employee.
Department/Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides initial approval or denial of employee’s request for tuition reimbursement based upon employee eligibility and course eligibility to meet the needs of the department or the City. • If required, includes Tuition Reimbursement in annual budget requests
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes application and forwards to department head for approval, • Forwards signed application to Human Resources Tuition Reimbursement Program by specified deadlines. • Forwards final grade report and paid fee receipt to HR Tuition Reimbursement Program prior to deadline. • Confirms receipt by HR Tuition Reimbursement Program of application, approval, final grade report, and paid fee receipts. • Confirms approval of course for reimbursement prior to the start of class.



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Departmental Sponsor: HUMAN RESOURCES DEPT.

Policy Review Date:

References:

Departments Affected: ALL REGULAR EMPLOYEES

Approved By:



City Manager

12-17-2020
Date



Interim Human Resources Director

12/17/2020
Date

Related Forms: Tuition Reimbursement/Advancement Application