



CITY OF HAMILTON, OHIO

No. 206

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE

Effective Date: 1-1-17

Supersedes No. 206 dated 5/21/99

Approved by: Joshua A. Smith,
City Manager

SUBJECT: TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

PURPOSE: The City of Hamilton is committed to the educational development of City employees. The tuition reimbursement program has been designed to promote continuing education by offering financial assistance to employees for job-related courses/degrees.

1. Policy.

- a. **Employees must submit a new Employee Eligibility Form for each course.**
- b. The City may reimburse employees a percentage based on a grade achieved, up to two (2) courses per term (quarter or semester). Payment will not be made for travel to and from the course, time spent in class, or study materials purchased for the class.
- c. The annual maximum benefit is \$2,400.00 per employee.
- d. Percent Reimbursement

Undergraduate		Graduate	
Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A	90%	A	90%
B	75%	B	75%
C	50%		

A pass/fail course will be reimbursed at 50% if passed

- e. Eligible expenses:
 - i. Tuition
 - ii. General Lab Fees

2. Eligibility.

- a. **Employee Eligibility.** To qualify for tuition reimbursement benefits, employees must meet the following criteria:
 - i. Successful completion of the initial probationary period for your position.
 - ii. One (1) year or more of continuous, permanent, full-time service and at the time of reimbursement a permanent, full-time employee.
 - 1. If the employee is a full-time employee and changes to any status other than permanent full-time, they will no longer be eligible for the program.
 - iii. Satisfactory job performance
 - iv. Working for the City at the time of enrollment; and, except in special situations in which a leave of absence is granted, continued to work for the duration of the course.
 - v. Workers on sick leave, injury leave, workers compensation, or similar paid or unpaid leave are not eligible for this program.
 - vi. Employees may continue a course which began before the leave commenced, but may not enroll in a course while on leave.
- b. **Funding Selection Criteria.** Available funds will be allocated on a first come first serve basis.

- i. Applications will be accepted beginning on the dates listed in the following schedule:
 1. Fall – June 1
 2. Winter – October 1
 3. Spring – January 1
 4. Summer – March 1
- ii. The application date determines the order of consideration for funding.
- iii. All eligible funds will be budgeted for the Fiscal Year through the budget process.

3. Eligibility.

- a. **Job-Relatedness.** The course/degree must be job related or related to the employee's current position or to future City development and promotion. To be considered job-related, a course/degree must meet the following requirements:
 - i. The course or degree must improve or maintain job-related skills. (Example: Accounting Assistant taking an accounting course.)
 - ii. The course is a core or an elective required to complete an approved degree. (Exception: Courses that are extensions of games, hobbies, or other leisure activities are not eligible for tuition reimbursement even if they would otherwise qualify as core or elective courses.)
 - iii. The Tuition Reimbursement Program will not be available to provide a degree needed to qualify a person for a profession outside a career path with the City of Hamilton
 - iv. Courses are to be taken during non-working hours when possible.
- b. **Eligible Institutions.** Courses taken in pursuit of degrees must be taken from an accredited institution (that has been accredited by an agency approved by the US Department of Education).

4. Duplication of Benefits.

- a. Duplication of benefits is prohibited. The City will not reimburse fees for a program of study for which the employee has received a scholarship, grant or subsidy to the extent of such aid. The total received by the employee from all sources cannot exceed the cost of the course.
- b. If an employee takes a course costing \$1,000.00 and receives an "A", the City would reimburse the employee \$900.00. If the employee obtained grants or scholarships for this same course in the amount of \$500.00, the City would reimburse the employee \$500.00. The employee can reduce his or her cost, as well as the City's cost, by obtaining grants and scholarships.
- c. Violation of this provision is a serious offense and may result in termination of the employee from City service.

5. Recovery.

- a. If employment with the City is voluntarily, or involuntarily, terminated (except through a Reduction in Force [RIF]) within two (2) calendar years from completion of a course for which reimbursement was received, the employee must repay the City all the payments made to the employee during the two (2) year period prior to the termination date.
- b. In order to recover the amount due, the City may deduct wages, vacation pay, or any other moneys owed to the employee by reason of employment from the employee's final paycheck. If the amount deducted by the City is less than the total amount due, the

employee will pay the remaining balance in a lump sum within ninety (90) days of the termination date.

6. Tax Consideration.

- a. The City of Hamilton will observe current Federal and State tax laws relative to the taxability of tuition reimbursement. If the tuition reimbursement is taxable income, the City is required to withhold taxes from the reimbursement.

7. Procedure.

- a. The employee must complete **the Tuition Reimbursement Employee Eligibility Form** and forward to his or her supervisor. The supervisor may approve that the employee is eligible for the tuition reimbursement program and recommend approval or disapproval of the application.
- b. The **Tuition Reimbursement Employee Eligibility Form** is sent to the Appointing Authority for approval.
- c. Monies to be used for tuition reimbursement purposes will be budgeted and accounted for, using the City's HR/Payroll system.
- d. The **Tuition Reimbursement Employee Eligibility Form** is then sent to the City Manager, or designee, for final approval.
- e. The **Tuition Reimbursement Employee Eligibility Form** is returned to the employee and uploaded to their profile on the HRIS system.
- f. Following successful completion of the course, the employee completes the **Tuition Reimbursement Request Form**, attaches the appropriate documentation for grade and receipt verification, and forwards to his or her supervisor. **This must be done within ninety (90) days of the end of the term.**
- g. The supervisor reviews the **Tuition Reimbursement Request Form** for completeness and appropriate documentation, then forwards to the Appointing Authority for signing. The Appointing Authority forwards the **Tuition Reimbursement Request Form**, the purchase order, and appropriate documentation to the finance department for issuance of payment to the employee. **Payment should be made within thirty (30) days of receipt of the completed documents.**

8. Employee Responsibilities.

- a. An employee shall advise his or her supervisor of an intention to seek Employee Educational Assistance.
- b. Each employee shall ensure that the course/degree in which enrollment is sought is job-related and is applicable to positions reasonably attainable within the City of Hamilton.
- c. Each employee shall assure that the number of credits or courses requested will not negatively affect work performance.
- d. An employee shall complete the **Tuition Reimbursement Employee Eligibility Form** and submit the form to their supervisor for initial review prior to beginning classes. **If the employee does not receive approval before beginning their classes, they will not receive reimbursement.**
- e. The employee shall complete the **Tuition Reimbursement Request Form** and submit the form to the supervisor for payment processing. Copies of the bills for tuition and required textbooks and a copy of the employee's report card or transcript must be attached to the **Tuition Reimbursement Request Form.**
- f. The employee will also verify that the requested courses are scheduled during non-working hours or that he or she can be released from work to attend the course and has sufficient accumulated leave to cover such absences.

- g. The employee must contact his or her supervisor if any of the following occurs:
 - i. The employee is withdrawing from a course.
 - ii. The employee has received a grade of Incomplete or no grade.
- h. All information and/or forms submitted by the employee, in order to secure tuition reimbursement, will be true and accurate. Any misrepresentation contained on the form shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal.

9. Supervisor Responsibilities.

- a. The supervisor shall confirm that the employee is eligible to apply for tuition reimbursement.
- b. Each supervisor shall forward the **Tuition Reimbursement Employee Eligibility Form** to the employee's appointing authority.
- c. After signing the application, the appointing authority shall forward that application to the Office of the City Manager for final approval.
- d. A supervisor shall maintain a record of employee's use of tuition reimbursement sufficient to determine employee's liability upon termination.
- e. A supervisor shall contact the finance department, in writing, to arrange for recovery of reimbursements if the employee has terminated employment with the City of Hamilton within two (2) years of receiving moneys from the tuition reimbursement program.