Approved:

City of Commerce, California
Human Resources Policy and Procedure Manual

Director of Human Resources

City Administrator

Number: IV-2 Effective Date: 10/19/10

SUBJECT: TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM – FULL TIME EMPLOYEES

PURPOSE:

To encourage employees of the City to take educational courses which shall enhance and broaden the performance of their present duties and prepare them for advancement opportunities.

POLICY:

Efforts shall be made to provide training and educational assistance for all levels in the City, from those requiring a minimum of specialized skills to those requiring higher education preparations. Completion of a training or educational course shall not guarantee promotion or advancement of an employee, but is intended to expand skills and knowledge, thus providing the individual with higher levels of opportunity and performance.

The funds for the Tuition Reimbursement Program shall be budgeted in the Human Resources Department. Reimbursement may only be received for course work and degree programs which are job related, benefits the City, prepares the employee to carry out the duties for which he/she was hired or lead toward possible advancement in the City. Approval shall be limited to courses offered by accredited colleges, technical institutes or universities. Accredited courses offered "on-line" through distance learning are included.

The Human Resources Director or his/her designee shall be responsible for administering the Tuition Reimbursement Program and shall have the authority to approve or deny a request based on funding availability.

When an employee is required by the department to attend a particular course or seminar, normally the expense shall be the responsibility of the respective department and employee.

As a general rule, time spent on approved educational courses should be outside of scheduled working hours and shall not be considered as time worked for the City.

Requests shall be reviewed and approved on an ongoing basis based upon funding availability. In the event of insufficient budgeted funds, approvals shall be tentative, placed on a waiting list, and subject to final approval upon the availability of budgeted funds. The waiting list shall terminate at the end of each fiscal year. Only courses that receive final approval shall be reimbursed. In no event will a course be reimbursed if there are insufficient funds.

City Council members are not eligible for the Educational Assistance benefit.

FULL –TIME EMPLOYEES ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A. To qualify for educational reimbursement benefits, the employee must be employed on a full-time basis, must have satisfactorily completed any applicable training or probationary period, and must have received written approval from the department head and the Director of Human Resources or his/her designee prior to registering for the course.

B. The course work and degree program selected must be of such a nature that it benefits the City and better prepares the employee to carry out the duties for which he/she was hired or better prepare the employee to advance within the city employment system. Employees will be eligible for reimbursement for all required course work leading to a college, university, or technical institute degree approved by the department head and Director of Human Resources.

C. Each employee desiring to qualify must attend the course on his/her own time, complete the course satisfactorily with at least a passing grade of "C" or its numerical equivalent, and a veteran must have exhausted educational benefits under the G.I. Bill and the California Veteran's benefits.

D. If an employee leaves the City service on his/her own volition, the City will deduct from the employee's last pay check the cost of any course for which the employee received tuition reimbursement during the last twelve (12) months prior to the date of employment separation.

PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

A. The tuition reimbursement policy covers courses taken at accredited colleges, universities, and approved correspondence courses.

B. The policy also covers the cost of textbooks and other required course materials.

C. Full-time employees may request either prepayment or post payment of tuition, parking permit fee, testing fee, application fee, binding fee, duplicating fee, other required fees (excluding typing fees), textbooks and materials costs, only if required by the course syllabus.

D. Reimbursements will be limited to the amount equivalent to the cost at the California State University System.

Prepayment

A. If prepayment has been elected, the request must contain an itemized statement of the estimated cost for tuition, books and supplies.

B. If the tuition, and other required fees (excluding typing fees), cost of books and materials has been prepaid by the City, confirmation of the grade received and paid receipts for all requested reimbursements must be submitted to the Human Resources Department within sixty (60) calendar days of completion of the courses(s), with a copy of the course(s) syllabus.

C. Verification of grade received may be either in the form of a transcript, a letter from the class instructor or other responsible member of the school staff, or a certificate of satisfactory completion in the case of correspondence courses.

D. If this information is not received within sixty (60) calendar days, or if the employee fails to complete the course satisfactorily, the amount of the prepayment will be deducted from two successive paychecks.

Post-payment

A. If post-payment has been elected, the pre-approved Education Reimbursement Request For Payment Form requesting payment, accompanied by confirmation of the grade received and paid receipts for the tuition, fees, cost of books and materials must be submitted to the Human Resources Department, with a copy of the course(s) syllabus no later than six (6) months after the completion of the courses(s) taken.

B. Any requests for reimbursement submitted after the six-month deadline will not be honored for payment.

C. The Human Resources Department will advise the Finance Department that the course(s) has been satisfactorily completed and payment is to be made.

Upon completion of the course(s) all textbooks and materials purchased with City funds will remain the property of the employee.

None of the preceding instructions will be construed as applying to training courses which may be taken by employee at the written request of the City or which the City may designate as a required course.

Under extreme and rare circumstances, and when it is in the best interest of the City, the City Administrator may authorize a full-time employee to attend college or university courses during regularly scheduled work hours with regular pay.

Employees are responsible for any income tax liability that may incur under this program.

PROCEDURE:

Responsibility	Action
Employee	1. Completes and submits Education Reimbursement Program Authorization Application to Human Resources Department for pre-approval of funding availability.
Human Resources	2. Approves or denies application based upon eligibility requirements of Full-time Tuition Reimbursement Program.
	3. Approves or denies application based upon estimated funding availability for Full-time Tuition Reimbursement Program.
	4. Notifies employee of the approval or denial of funding and/or eligibility for Full-Time Tuition Reimbursement Program.
	5. Submits approved application to respective Department Director for consideration.
Department Director	6. Approves or denies application to enroll or register in upcoming semester/quarter. Returns original application to employee with signatures with copy to Human Resources.

Employee	7.	For pre-payments, submit Education Reimbursement Request for Payment with verification of grades, and all applicable receipts for expenditures to the Human Resources Department within sixty (60) days of course completion. For post-payments, submit Education Reimbursement Request for Payment with verification of grades, and all applicable receipts for expenditures to the Human Resources Department within six (6) months of course completion.
Human Resources Dept.	8.	Processes approved Claim request for Tuition reimbursement in accordance with program guidelines and submits to Finance Department.
Finance Department	9.	Make reimbursement to the employee.

Attachments:

1. Education Reimbursement Request – Full-time Employees