City Personnel Policy

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

POLICY: 502

Council approval: # Pages: 3

POLICY:

It is the policy of the City to encourage for self-development by providing educational assistance to its employees in accordance with the guidelines established below.

APPLICABILITY:

All regular full-time employees.

PROCEDURE:

1. **Tuition Reimbursement.** (Does not apply to Police sworn personnel below the rank of Chief and Fire Sworn Personnel receiving College Incentive Pay under section 2 below.)

   A. To be eligible for educational assistance, employees must have regular full-time status and at least one year of service.

   B. Eligible employees may be reimbursed only for courses of study which the Department Head determines are related to the employee's present job; or, which will enhance the employee's potential for advancement to a position within the City and, to which the individual has a reasonable expectation of advancing. In addition, courses or programs to be eligible for reimbursement must be offered by accredited institutions of learning.

   C. Employees who want educational assistance are strongly encouraged to have prior written approval of the Mayor 30 days before enrollment. Such approval will not be granted without a positive recommendation by the employee's Department Head. Department Heads must identify funding for the assistance before making a positive recommendation. Approval for tuition assistance must be requested for each course to be taken. Approval for one or more courses should in no way be considered a guarantee of continuing assistance.

   D. The Mayor and Department Heads will normally consider the following factors in evaluating requests for educational assistance:

      (1) The nature and purpose of the course of study;

(2) The benefits to be derived by the employee and the City;

(3) The employee's level of responsibility and length of service;

(4) The estimated cost and availability of funds;

(5) Any potential lost time or productivity while the employee attends the program.

E. Employees may be reimbursed for qualified education expenses as defined by the Internal Revenue Service regulations at the time of repayment.

F. Employees will be reimbursed the maximum of $5,250.00 or the Internal Revenue Service tax-free benefit limitation, whichever is less, for the calendar year.

G. Employee reimbursement for eligible educational assistance will normally be based upon the grade received for the course, as follows: For a grade of 'A', 'B', or 'C' 50% of reimbursable costs qualified educational expenses. Courses will also be reimbursed at 50% for passing a 'pass-fail' course.

No reimbursement will be made for a grade lower than 'C'.

Employees receiving reimbursement from any outside sources, such as the Veteran's Administration or scholarships, must deduct the amount of these rewards and then subsequently use the above formula.

G. Employees seeking reimbursement for qualified educational expenses must submit to the Human Resources Department a certified transcript or grade slip and receipt for the expenses incurred within 60 days of the completion of the course. The City will then reimburse to the employee the applicable percentage of the cost of tuition. However, employees who take courses at the specific request or direction of management may be reimbursed for applicable costs in advance.

H. Employees who are terminated during enrollment because of a reduction in force or elimination of their job will be reimbursed for the applicable amountof the costs incurred up to the date of termination or transfer. Employees who, prior to completing the approved course, voluntarily leave the City or are terminated for reasons other than those listed above will not be reimbursed for the expenses associated with the course.

I. Employees seeking reimbursement for educational expenses must agree in writing to repay the City if they leave the City voluntarily or are terminated within three years from the date of reimbursement. Repayment will be in accordance with the following schedule:

Within one (1) year of reimbursement	100%
Within two (2) years of reimbursement	75%
Within three (3) years of reimbursement	50%
After three (3) years of reimbursement	0%

J. Employees are expected under normal circumstances to schedule class

attendance and the completion of study assignments outside of their regular work hours and is considered non compensable time. It is expected that educational activities will not interfere with the employee's work, and unsatisfactory job performance during enrollment may result in forfeiture of educational assistance and termination of employment.

2. **College Incentive Pay.** (Applies to Police sworn personnel below the rank of Chief and Fire sworn personnel below the rank of Chief who were hired before July 1, 1999 and have not applied and been granted any benefit described in section 1 of this policy).

   The City will pay $1.00 per semester credit hour per month for all satisfactorily completed credit grades of 'C' and above and in excess of 12 semester credits to a maximum payment of $110 per month. The City will pay for courses only within City approved programs. All individuals having between 13 and 18 semester credits shall relinquish the educational incentive program assistance after two (2) years if they have not continued satisfactorily in an approved program and completed in excess of 18 semester credits. Quarter credits shall be converted to semester credits according to the following formula: one quarter credit equals two-thirds of a semester credit. The City shall not pay for any of the basic 12 minimum credits.