

SUBJECT: TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Designation: The Human Resources Director, or designee, is charged with the administration and coordination of the City's Tuition Assistance Program. To the greatest extent possible, all permanent employees who meet the program qualifications will be afforded access to the program, however, the decisions of the Human Resources Director, or designee, will be final on all matters relating to the program, including the allocation of available program funds.

Background: Both the City and its employees will benefit if the workforce is competent and properly trained, there is an internal pool of qualified applicants for critical and/or hard-to-fill positions, career ladders are identified and utilized for a variety of City positions, and continuous job and career-related education is encouraged. Since the attainment of such objectives often requires that individual employees complete formal course work such as that offered by universities, colleges, vocational and trade schools and other types of educational institutions, the Tuition Assistance Program has been established to provide some financial assistance to employees attending courses which will be of direct benefit to the City as an employer.

Policy: The Human Resources Director, or designee, shall establish procedures necessary to implement this program including, but not limited to: establishing participation qualifications, standards for qualifying coursework, guidelines for reimbursable costs, and a reimbursement schedule.

Participation Qualifications: The criteria used to establish if a City employee may qualify for financial reimbursement through the Tuition Assistance Program are as follows:

1. The employee is in a permanent full- or part-time position and has completed at least six (6) months of an original probationary period when the application is submitted;
2. The employee is recommended for participation in the program by his/her appointing authority based on work performance and other job-related factors;
3. Participation in the requested coursework will not interfere with the employee's ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of his/her position;
4. The employee is not receiving financial support/contributions for the course/s in question, from any other source (e.g., State or Federal G.I. benefits for education and training purposes, etc.);
5. The employee does not receive any salary-related credit for taking the course (e.g., incentive pay) (NOTE: Tuition reimbursement for the Madison Police and Fire Departments are covered separately by Bargaining Unit Agreements within those agencies.)
6. The course/s being submitted for reimbursement is/are to be taken on the employee's own time. (NOTE: Any flextime arrangements necessary to allow attendance must be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor.)

Qualifying Coursework: The course/s for which financial assistance may be available under this program must be formal coursework (not short seminars or workshops) and must be shown to be of direct benefit to the City. In order to be eligible for reimbursement, a course must be successfully completed, which means that a grade of “C” or better or its equivalent has been attained for each course for which reimbursement is being requested.

Only those specific courses that have been approved by the Human Resources Director, or designee, will be eligible for coverage under the Tuition Assistance Program. Approval must be obtained in writing prior to beginning the course/s. Employees should not assume that courses will be covered. Questions regarding approval for a specific course may be directed to the Human Resources Department.

The following types of courses will not be covered under the Tuition Assistance Program:

1. Those courses in a degree program which are not of benefit to the City. (NOTE: Specific prerequisites to courses in the degree program may be covered, but unrelated courses required to meet a degree requirement will not be covered.)
2. Courses that are not sponsored by or presented through a recognized educational institution such as a university, vocational or trade school, correspondence school, or other type of established educational institutions.
3. Courses that have not been approved in writing by the Human Resources Director, or designee, prior to beginning the course/s.

Reimbursable Costs: Because of the wide variance in course costs, depending on the nature and source of a course, the following guidelines will be applied when determining “reimbursable costs:”

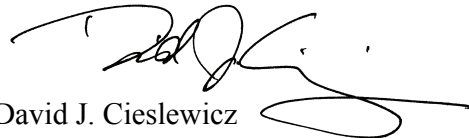
1. Only that portion of tuition costs which does not exceed the current cost for an equivalent number of undergraduate credits at the University of Wisconsin-Madison or the equivalent number of Associate Degree credits at Madison Area Technical College, whichever is most pertinent to the course/s in question, will be used as a basis for reimbursement calculations. Reimbursement for graduate or advanced degree courses will also be based on the undergraduate credit rate.
2. Only direct tuition costs will be covered by this program. Expenses such as books, laboratory fees, or equipment purchase or rental costs are not “reimbursable costs.”
3. An individual employee may not be reimbursed for more than 12 credits during a calendar year.
4. Employees will be reimbursed for 50% of approved costs.

Forms and Reimbursement: Prior to beginning a course, the employee must submit a completed copy of the Tuition Assistance Request Form to the Human Resources Department, Organizational Development & Training Office. This form must be signed by both the employee and his/her appointing authority. A separate form must be submitted and approved prior to beginning each course.

After the employee has successfully completed the course (see the note on page 2), s/he must submit a grade report and a reimbursement claim, including a receipt for and explanation of the costs for which reimbursement is being requested.

In order to receive reimbursement, claimants must be permanent City employees at the time of payment.

Tuition Assistance Funding: Funds for the Tuition Assistance Program are appropriated by the Common Council as part of the Human Resources Department budget. In submitting requests for the program each year, the Human Resources Director reviews requests for reimbursement for the preceding year and submits a budget request consistent with those requests. Continuing liabilities from the previous year's Program, other budgetary limitations, an employee's work record, or other related factors may result in curtailment of the Program and/or curtailment of an individual's participation in the Program at any time.



David J. Cieslewicz
Mayor

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