POLICY STATEMENT

It is the purpose of the City of Denton to provide quality services for its citizens by encouraging upward mobility, employee development, and excellence of performance by sharing the expense of approved courses and educational programs. Tuition reimbursement assists employees in broadening their knowledge of their current position or preparing them for possible assumption of new job responsibilities within the City.

The availability of tuition reimbursement is subject to City Council approved funding levels. The percentage of potential tuition reimbursement will be established annually as part of the City’s budget process based upon anticipated participation and available funding.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

I. EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY

A. To be considered for participation in the tuition reimbursement program, an individual must be a regular full-time employee and have completed at least six months service with the City prior to application approval.

B. Supervisors, upon consultation with the Director of Human Resources or designee, have the discretion to not authorize participation in tuition reimbursement due to documented discipline or performance concerns.

II. COURSE ELIGIBILITY

A. Classroom and on-line courses offered by accredited colleges, universities, or trade schools are eligible for tuition reimbursement if they are:
   1. Required by a degree plan which is related to a City career field,
   2. Required by a trade school course of study which is related to a City career field; or,
   3. Related to a City career field as determined by the Director of the Human Resources Department or designee.
B. Courses taken to obtain a professional license or certification, unless offered through a trade school as outlined in “A” above, are not eligible for tuition reimbursement. Reimbursement for courses taken to obtain a professional license or certification could be covered by the employee’s department, contingent upon approval of the supervisor(s) and Department Head or designee.

C. Seminars, conferences, and courses unrelated to a City career field are ineligible for tuition reimbursement. Reimbursement for seminars and conferences is subject to departmental budgets and approval by the supervisor(s).

D. Non-credit continuing education courses containing the same or similar information as received in previous courses (repeat courses) as well as credit obtained under the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) are not eligible for tuition reimbursement.

III. GUIDELINES

A. Reimbursement is limited to eight courses per fiscal year.

B. As a condition of reimbursement, participants must earn a grade of “C” or above in undergraduate level courses, “B” or above in graduate level courses, and “Pass” in Pass/Fail courses. For those courses for which grades are not assigned, a certificate of completion will serve as proof of course completion.

C. Reimbursement for thesis or dissertation will be paid when the participant submits a final grade report or transcript that records a passing grade. The City will reimburse a maximum of six credit hours for thesis and 12 credit hours for dissertation, regardless of the actual number of hours taken.

D. For advanced degrees requiring Internships as part of the degree plan, the City will reimburse a maximum of 12 credit hours, regardless of the actual number of hours worked as an intern. In the event the internship is paid, the employee must adhere to the Secondary Employment guidelines outlined in the Ethics policy (#10.00).

E. All courses must be approved by the Human Resources Department prior to registration. Participants wishing to receive reimbursement for such must provide official scholastic accreditation documentation and an official description of the course(s) or training to the Human Resources Department prior to registration.

IV. EXPENSES INELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT
A. Parking, books, supplies, or other expenses in connection with courses to be taken, which are not included in the mandatory fees, are not eligible for reimbursement.

B. Tuition reimbursement will be paid only once for each approved course. The City will not pay tuition reimbursement for courses for which tuition reimbursement has already been received by the employee.

C. The City will not pay the cost of tuition which has been or shall be paid from other sources such as scholarships, grants, Veterans’ benefits, or other subsidies. However, student loans may qualify for reimbursement. In the event of partial scholarship or grant, reimbursement will be calculated based on the actual expense to the employee.

D. Tuition reimbursement will not be granted for audited courses.

V. APPLICATION AND REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

A. To begin participation in the Tuition Reimbursement program, employees must meet with the Director of Human Resources or designee to obtain a Tuition Reimbursement Agreement Form and Tuition Reimbursement Policy. Employees must complete and submit the Tuition Reimbursement Agreement to the Human Resources Department prior to the start of the course. At least 30 days in advance is suggested.

B. To request reimbursement for a specific semester, participants must obtain a “Tuition Reimbursement Semester Registration Form” from the Human Resources Department. The completed Registration Form will document the course titles and number of credit hours for which the participant intends to register. The completed Tuition Reimbursement Semester Registration Form must be submitted to the Human Resources Department prior to the start of the semester. Participants will only be reimbursed for the number of hours they have specifically completed under Section IV of this policy. If courses change from the initial registration form, the Human Resources Department must be contacted.

C. Participants will pay all costs according to the parameters of their educational institution. Within 21 days of the end of the school term, participants will submit copies of the following to the Human Resources Department for reimbursement approval:

1. An itemized statement of tuition and fees,
2. Proof of payment which shall consist of an itemized receipt from the school indicating the amount paid by the student employee, and
3. A final grade report or transcript provided by the college, university, or trade school.

D. Participants will be reimbursed based upon the actual fee schedule of the school they attend.
unless the fee schedule exceeds that of the University of North Texas (UNT) or Texas Woman’s University (TWU), in which case the reimbursement will be calculated at the equivalent rate of UNT or TWU (whichever is greater). Tuition reimbursement will be processed through Human Resources at the end of each semester. Reimbursement requests submitted after the deadline will be denied unless prior permission is granted by the Director of Human Resources or designee.

E. Mandatory fees shall be reimbursed as part of the tuition rate charges.

F. The Director of Human Resources or designee may, on behalf of the City Manager, approve and authorize reimbursement.

VI. TERMINATION

A. If an employee resigns or is terminated for any reason prior to course completion, the City shall not be obligated to reimburse any part of the expense.

B. An employee who resigns or is terminated less than two years after completion of a reimbursed course must return the monies to the City upon termination, using the following guidelines:

- If an employee resigns or is terminated within 0-12 months after receiving reimbursement, they must repay monies at 100%.

- If an employee resigns or is terminated after 12 months but prior to 24 months after receiving reimbursement, they must repay monies at 50%.

C. Employees separated from employment due to a reduction in force or reorganization shall not be required to reimburse the monies.
Effective April 10, 2020, this Addendum shall apply during the term of the declared local emergency originally dated March 13, 2020 until rescinded by the City Manager. This Addendum applies to all City employees who are or would have been eligible for tuition reimbursement as a benefit under this policy (No. 107.09).

The City of Denton (the “City”) is facing an unprecedented economic disruption due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). As a result, the City must take steps to sustain the continuity of City services and its essential functions.

The City’s Tuition Reimbursement Program (the “program”) shall be suspended temporarily, from the effective date of this Addendum until the program is reinstated by the City Manager or his designee or City Council.

No new applications or requests for tuition reimbursement will be accepted or approved from the effective date of this Addendum.

Employees who have been approved by the Human Resources Department to participate in the program prior to April 10, 2020, will be eligible for tuition reimbursement, up to the number of courses and the tuition amount approved by the Human Resources Department before April 10, 2020, if they satisfy all the requirements of the program in accordance with this policy (No. 107.09).

Notwithstanding the above, eligible employees who voluntarily terminate their employment with the City or who are involuntarily terminated from their employment with City, due in part to their own actions resulting in a City policy, procedure, or law violation, and who have received tuition reimbursement under the program shall remain obligated to repay the tuition reimbursement dollars that they received within the last twenty-four (24) months of their employment termination date in accordance with the schedule in this policy (No. 107.09), Section VI of this policy, and the terms of their Tuition Reimbursement Agreement with the City.

Employees separated from their employment with the City due to furlough, reduction in force or reorganization shall not be required to repay the City for tuition reimbursement they received under the program within the last twenty-four (24) months of their employment separation.