

## POLICY/ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE/ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE

SECTION: HUMAN RESOURCES	REFERENCE NUMBER: 107.09
SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND SERVICES	INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/16/85
TITLE: TUITION REIMBURSEMENT	LAST REVISION DATE: 09/29/20

### 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 program 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 online 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 directly related to the employee's City job or City career field; or,
  - 2. Required by a trade school course of study which is related to the employee's City job or City career field; or,
  - 3. Related to a City career field as determined by the Director of the Human Resources Department or designee.

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- B. Courses taken to obtain a professional license or certification, unless offered through a trade school as outlined in Section II. (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), testing, or placing out of actual coursework, are not eligible for tuition reimbursement.

**III. GUIDELINES**

- A. Reimbursement is limited to a maximum of \$5,250 per calendar year.
- B. Approved degree programs and coursework are defined as Certificate (only when offered through a trade school as outlined in Section II (A) above), Associates, Bachelors, and Master's degree programs.
- C. 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.
- D. Reimbursement for the thesis 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 the thesis, regardless of the actual number of hours taken.
- E. For 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 outlines in the Ethics Policy (#10.00).
- F. 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

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Resources Department prior to registration. The following forms and/or documentation must be submitted in order to complete the tuition reimbursement application and request:

- a. Tuition Reimbursement Agreement submitted annually in February, during the budget process, for classes starting October 1 through September 30 of the upcoming Fiscal Year;
- b. Tuition Repayment Agreement on file, with associated college accreditation information;
- c. Tuition Reimbursement Course Registration signed by the employee's Director and the Human Resources Director or designee submitted each semester (must have semester dates to be considered); and
- d. Request for Reimbursement form with official school transcript showing grades received, schedule of fees, and proof of payment (itemized receipt).

**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, public safety programs, social security benefits, or other subsidies. However, student loans may qualify for reimbursement. In the event of a 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 the Tuition Reimbursement Agreement and a copy of the Tuition Reimbursement Policy. Employees must complete and submit the Tuition Repayment 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 Course Registration Form from the Human Resources Department prior to the

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start of the semester. The completed Course Registration Form will document the course titles, description, course/semester dates, degree-seeking, and the number of credit hours for which the participant intends to register. The completed Tuition Reimbursement Course Registration Form must be submitted to the Human Resources Department prior to the start of the semester. Participants will only be reimbursed for the courses they have completed under Section II of this policy. If courses change from the initial registration form, the Human Resources Department must be contacted immediately; failure to do so may result in termination of the Tuition Reimbursement Agreement.

- C. Participants will pay all costs according to the parameters of their educational institution. Within 21 days of the end of the course/semester, participants will submit the Reimbursement Request Form accompanied by 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, up to a maximum of \$5,250 per calendar year. 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 the course completion, the City shall not be obligated to reimburse any part of the expense.
- B. Upon resigning or being terminated for any reason within two years of receiving reimbursement for an approved course, the employee must return the monies to the City, using the following guidelines:
- a. If an employee resigns or is terminated within 0-12 months after receiving reimbursement, they must repay monies at 100%.
  - b. If an employee resigns or is terminated after 12 months but prior to 24 months after

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receiving reimbursement, they must repay monies at 50%.

- C. As a result of an employee having an obligation to return reimbursed monies to the City for tuition reimbursement due to their employment being terminated or the employee resigning for any reason, the employee's remaining paychecks may be subject to voluntary deductions.
- D. Employees separated from employment due to a reduction in force or reorganization shall not be required to reimburse the monies.