

	PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		SUBJECT: Tuition Assistance
	NUMBER: BEN 5-0	REVISIONS: 1	EFFECTIVE DATE: June 3, 2014
	SUPERCEDES: 10/17/2011	APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL:	
	A. Max Bacon, Mayor		Date Eric Taylor, City Administrator

PURPOSE: To develop a better educated and more highly skilled City work force.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the policy of the City of Smyrna to provide tuition assistance benefits to help employees pay for the cost of courses related to their job (upon the availability of funds and in accordance with the guidelines as shown below).

Eligibility – Employees must have completed one (1) year of fulltime service and passed new hire working test period prior to applying for tuition assistance benefits.

The following courses are reimbursable depending upon the availability of City funds and approval by the respective department head, Human Resource Director and City Administrator:

- Courses that are part of a structured program to assist the employee in attaining his or her high school diploma or equivalent (GED);
 Technical or skills courses offered through accredited technical schools if an employee's department head and the Human Resource Director determine that the courses relate to the employee's current work assignments or future advancement opportunities within their current field of employment with the City.
- Undergraduate and graduate courses (including online courses via the Internet) offered through accredited colleges or universities if an employee's department head and the Human Resource Director determine that the courses relate to the employee's current work assignments or future advancement opportunities within their current field of employment with the City.

Scheduling of courses - Employees are expected to attend courses on their own time, unless directed by their supervisors or department head to do otherwise. In such cases, written approval by the City Administrator is required.

Amount of reimbursement - Tuition reimbursement will be provided for no more than two courses per academic term per eligible employee. Total reimbursement for assistance will be limited to a maximum of \$1,500 per eligible employee per fiscal year.

Tuition, registration fees, and required lab fees will be reimbursed according to the following schedule:

<u>Grade Received</u>	<u>Reimbursement Percentage</u>
A or P (for "Pass/Fail" courses)	100%
B	80%
C	60%
D, F, W/F (Withdraw Failing), or Inc. (Incomplete)	0%

Reimbursement applies to tuition, registration fees, and required lab fees (not to exceed \$ 1,500 per employee per calendar year). The City will not reimburse employees for books, activity fees, parking, meals, or other related expenses.

Employees who receive other forms of financial aid, such as private scholarships or grants, assistance from a government agency, and/or veterans' benefits will be reimbursed only for the difference between reimbursable expenses and the aid received from elsewhere (times the applicable percentage above). Employees who receive other assistance must provide evidence of such assistance to the Human Resource Director prior to beginning classes.

To be reimbursed, employees must still be employed by the City when evidence of satisfactory course completion is submitted to the City.

Submission of request - An employee must submit a completed "Request for Tuition Reimbursement" form to his or her immediate supervisor prior to the start of the course. The employee must attach a copy of the course description from the course catalog or other publication. The employee and immediate supervisor will discuss the relevance of the course(s) to the employee's position and/or future goals with the City before submitting the request to the respective department head.

"Request for Tuition Reimbursement" forms are available upon request from the Human Resources Department.

The department head will review the request and either approve or deny the request in writing and sign the "Request for Tuition Reimbursement" form. The form will then be forwarded to the Human Resource Director.

The Human Resource Director will review the request and decide whether or not the course fulfills the requirements of the policy and whether or not adequate funds are available. He or she will either approve or deny the request, sign it, and if approved, forward to the City Administrator for approval and signature. At this point, the original request will be returned to the respective department head who will notify the employee of the decision. Another copy will be kept by the Human Resources Department.

If the application is not approved, the employee will receive an explanation from his or her immediate supervisor. Rejections may be appealed in writing to the Human Resource Director within 5 work days of receiving the decision.

Course completion - Upon the completion of approved course(s), the employee is required to submit certified transcripts of his or her grade(s) and cancelled check(s) or receipts for the approved course(s) to the Human Resource Director. These documents must be attached to the original "Request for Tuition Reimbursement" form and submitted to the Human Resource Director *within 30 days* of completing the course.

The Human Resource Director will review the submitted documents, authorize payment (if warranted) at the appropriate rate, and send the approved request to the Finance Department, which will issue a reimbursement check to the employee.

If a course is not satisfactorily completed in accordance with the criteria outlined in these policies and procedures, no reimbursement will be made.

Reimbursement of Tuition Assistance — In the event an employee changes his/her major to a major which is deemed to provide no benefit to the City, the employee may be required to repay the City for part or all previously paid Tuition Assistance.

If an employee voluntarily leaves the City's employment within one year of receiving educational assistance, he or she will be required to reimburse those fees, costs, and tuition provided by the City during the previous year. The City will be authorized by the employee to collect from him or her, either directly or by payroll deduction, the amount received during the previous year by the employee from the City for educational assistance.