

Introduction

Permanent full-time employees of the City of Taft are eligible to receive financial assistance for approved instructional courses completed at an accredited educational institution provided such courses are satisfactorily completed.

Financial assistance, however, is limited to those courses of instruction, which will enable employees to perform their present duties more effectively or prepare them for future opportunities into which they may reasonably expect promotion or transfer while employed by the City of Taft.

POLICY

1. For purposes of this policy, an accredited educational institution shall be defined as any college, university, technical, vocational, business, or high school which has been accredited by a recognized governmental or professional accrediting body and approved by the City's Personnel Department.
2. For purposes of this policy, an approved course of instruction shall be defined as any formal course of study offered by an accredited educational institution which meets one or more of the following criteria:
 - a. A course of study directly related to the position duties currently assigned to an employee, the completion of which will demonstrably improve the effectiveness of employee performance.
 - b. Any course of study required in a degree program provided the degree objective is related to the type of position for which an employee might expect to develop within the City.
 - c. Any course study, the completion of which will prepare an employee for broader responsibility provided the employee has demonstrated aptitude, interest and potential necessary for promotion and that such promotion is reasonably possible.
3. Employees wishing to participate in the Tuition Reimbursement program shall submit a Tuition Reimbursement Application, and a receipt for the cost of tuition, fees and textbooks to their immediate supervisor, for approval of the desired course of instruction.
 - 3a. The employee's immediate supervisor may approve courses for tuition reimbursement in accordance with approval authorities delegated by the department head.
4. The Tuition Reimbursement Application will be forwarded to the Personnel Department.

5. The Personnel Department shall review departmentally approved reimbursement applications to assure compliance with City policy and consistency with reimbursement appropriations in the current operating budget. After approval the Personnel Department shall encumber the budget funds on behalf of the employee and return one copy of the approved application to the employee.
6. The Personnel Department shall maintain records of those employees participating in the Tuition Reimbursement Program, of the academic performance of participating employees and of total expenditures in the Tuition Reimbursement Program.
7. Employees eligible for educational assistance from sources outside the City shall be restricted to limited participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Program. Financial assistance from outside sources shall include scholarships, fellowships, educational grants and benefits payable through federal, state and local government programs.
8. Employees participating in the Tuition Reimbursement Program shall enroll only in those courses which meet outside assigned working hours.
9. Tuition reimbursement shall generally be limited to a maximum of six credits or two courses each semester.
10. Tuition reimbursement shall be contingent upon an employee's being on the active payroll at the time the course is satisfactorily completed.
11. Cost of tuition, registration fees, laboratory fees, textbooks, and incidental costs related to an approved course of instruction shall be reimbursed at the rate of 100% or that rate charged by the University of California, whichever is less.
12. Cost of registration penalties, transportation, parking privileges or interest charges on deferred registration payments shall not be considered reimbursable expenses.
13. A report shall be provided to City Council on a quarterly basis detailing current status of tuition reimbursement program, including a list of participants.

REIMBURSEMENT

1. Employees completing an approved course of instruction with a grade C or higher shall present a copy of the pre-approved Tuition Reimbursement Application accompanied by a copy of the student's grade report indicating satisfactory completion of each course to the Personnel Department.
2. The Personnel Department shall verify that all information is complete (receipts and grades), approved disbursement of the funds and forward one copy to the Accounting Department for processing.
3. The Accounting Department shall prepare a reimbursement check payable to the employee and shall return such check to the Personnel Department for distribution to the employee.

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SECTION 413

4. Employees eligible to receive educational assistance from sources outside City shall be reimbursed the difference between the City's allowable rate less the amount of outside reimbursement received.
5. As part of the Tuition Reimbursement Program Application, the employee shall agree that upon voluntary termination of employment within thirty-six months following receipt of tuition reimbursement, there shall be a deduction from their final check, an amount equal to the tuition reimbursement, prorated over the thirty-six month period.