



TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

PM-58-03

Section: 58-00, SERVICE AND AWARDS

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Pursuant to the Mayor and the Board of Commissioners' Resolution passed on October 19, 1965, City of Memphis Government established a Tuition Reimbursement Program to assist City employees with the cost of college tuition. This policy is applicable to any regular, full-time City of Memphis employee who has completed his/her required initial probationary period.

POLICY

Beginning with the Fall Semester of Class schedules beginning in 2014, the City of Memphis will consider applications for assistance with tuition and book expenses for Associate, Bachelor and select Masters degree programs only. The City will also consider approving applications for Master degrees associated with Library Sciences or approved Masters degree programs that fall within a Division's yearly funding cap. To the extent any employee submitted and received approval for a Master or Doctorate degree program in an area other than Library Sciences prior to July 1, 2013, the employee may continue to participate in this program for the approved degree curriculum.

The City will also consider applications for assistance with fees, including course fees, book expenses and other costs, related to a formal program leading to a certificate, diploma or credential in any technical program which strengthens job skills and improve effectiveness of the employee's job skills or which will enhance the employee's potential for advancement to other jobs within the City. Participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Program is based on the following guidelines:

- A. Before beginning a course of study, an employee must complete a City of Memphis Tuition Reimbursement and Repayment Agreement, a City of Memphis Government Tuition Reimbursement Program Educational Goals and Objectives Form and submit a degree curriculum or curriculum documentation relating to the certificate, diploma or credential sought to his/her Division Director and the Human Resources Division for review and approval. If an employee wishes to change his/her degree program or change school at any time, a new Educational Goals and Objectives Form and degree curriculum must be submitted to the Division Director and the Human Resources Division for review and approval.
- B. An employee may be reimbursed only for courses of study which the City of Memphis determines are directly related to the employee's present job



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or which will enhance the employee's potential for advancement to other jobs within the City.

C. Employees enrolled in the Tuition Reimbursement Program who are seeking an Associates, Bachelor or Master's degree may be entitled up to \$2,500 for tuition, books and experiential learning credit per fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and employees seeking technical certifications, diplomas or credentials may be entitled up to \$1,500 for tuition, fees, books per fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014.

- Fees for experiential learning credit will be eligible for reimbursement if approved by the employee's Division Director and the City of Memphis Chief Learning Officer. Reimbursement will be considered after the employee has successfully completed all requirements of the attending college or university's experiential learning requirements and the credits have been verified by the college accepting the credit. A final letter of confirmation from the university detailing the credits and fees is required for confirmation of reimbursement amounts.
- Experiential learning credit funds are not separate tuition reimbursement dollars. Funds used for experiential learning credits for employees approved under the tuition reimbursement policy will be deducted from their starting available fund balance of \$2,500.00 for the fiscal year.

D. These funds are processed on a first come first serve basis with caps placed on Divisions to ensure a prorated distribution of available funds to all Divisions. For purposes of this distribution all Divisions other than Police and Fire shall be combined as one Division for this calculation which shall be done on an annual basis based upon the number of full time employees within the Divisions on July 1.

- These caps are imposed in order to ensure that all employees are given an equal opportunity to participate in the program without one Division or Divisions receiving an excess amount of funding. If a Division does not use all of its funding in any fiscal year, those funds shall be redistributed to other Divisions proportionate to the number of individuals within those Divisions.



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- E. Eligible schools must have a physical presence in Shelby County; must be accredited by one of the six regional organizations recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and must hold classes at facilities within Shelby County. Colleges and Universities eligible for tuition reimbursement are listed on Page 6 of this policy. This list is subject to be amended by the Human Resources Director based on changes in affiliations, locations, and new additions. Eligible technical schools are also listed on Page 6 of this policy. If the course work for any credentials, certificates or diplomas for any technical training is not offered within Shelby County, the applicant may make a request in writing to the Office of Talent Development for an exception to the list. Any such request should include information on where the program is offered.
- F. On-line and competency based degree courses are permitted if offered through an eligible school and reviewed and approved through the regular tuition reimbursement application process.
- G. Tuition reimbursement applications for each term must be approved by the employee's Division Director and by the Human Resources Division, at least ten (10) business days prior to the first day of class. Employees must notify the Human Resources Division if there is a course title change or withdrawal from a course which has already been approved.
- H. All employees approved for tuition reimbursement must submit proof of enrollment within 60 days of approval for tuition reimbursement. If the employee fails to provide the necessary documentation that employee's approval for tuition reimbursement will be considered revoked for that fiscal year.
- I. Except for technical courses, all documentation regarding tuition reimbursement must be submitted for reimbursement within thirty (30) calendar days of the completion of the final class or payment will not be rendered.
- J. Reimbursement will only be considered for courses that are successfully completed with a grade of "C" or better for undergraduate courses or with a grade of "B" or better for graduate-level courses. If an incomplete grade ("I") is received at the end of the term, the class must be successfully completed and documentation submitted for reimbursement within thirty (30) calendar days after completion. The date that the incomplete grade



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is officially replaced with another grade is the date that will govern with respect to tuition repayment. For technical courses which require an examination to receive certification, the employee must pass the necessary exam within three months after completion of the course to be considered for tuition reimbursement unless an extension is granted. Extensions will be considered if the exam cannot be completed within the requisite three month period. Any such request for an extension must be submitted in writing to the Office of Talent Development before the expiration of such three month period and shall contain an explanation with supporting documentation detailing why the extension is necessary.

K. Some courses, programs, fees, materials and expenses are ineligible for tuition reimbursement. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Computers, calculators, supplies or special equipment;
2. Class changes that have not had prior approval from the Human Resources Division Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator;
3. Fees for late registration, course changes, class withdrawal, incomplete grades, technology access, student activity, campus access, or textbook shipping & handling;
4. Financing and installment service charges;
5. Seminars, conferences, workshops, lectures, forums;
6. Exam fees and review courses (e.g., CPA, CPM, LAW);
7. Private pilot instruction or certification;
8. For employees seeking an Associates, Bachelor or Master's degree, the cost associated with obtaining Professional certification courses or exams;
9. Continuing Education classes;
10. Mandatory employee training;
11. Food, travel, and parking expenses.



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L. The Tuition Reimbursement Policy will not duplicate other financial aid programs such as Pell Grants, Veteran's Administration Benefits, Scholarships, etc. It is the employee's responsibility to obtain necessary documentation from the school regarding VA benefits, grants, scholarships, etc. and submit such documentation to the Human Resources Division with each tuition reimbursement application. Any financial aid received will be deducted from the tuition and book fees reimbursed by the City.

*For example, if an employee's tuition amount is \$500.00 and he/she receives a \$100.00 Pell Grant, VA Benefit or Scholarship, the City will reimburse \$400.00.

M. Exam fees for college credit will be eligible for reimbursement if approved by the employee's Division Director and the Director of Human Resources. Reimbursement will be considered after the employee has successfully passed the exam and credit hours have been verified by the college accepting the credit.

TIME OFF FOR CLASS ATTENDANCE AND STUDY ASSIGNMENTS

Employees are expected to schedule class attendance and the completion of study assignments outside of their regular working hours. Employees will not be given paid time off, other than vacation, bonus days or OJI, to attend educational classes or to complete study assignments. In cases where productivity and proper supervision of employees are not adversely affected, management may approve changes in the work schedule to accommodate the pursuit of educational opportunities, however it is expected that educational activities will not interfere with employees' work. Any unsatisfactory job performance during class enrollment may result in forfeiture of educational assistance and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

TERMINATION OF CITY EMPLOYMENT

An employee who receives reimbursement under the provisions of the Tuition Reimbursement Policy is expected to remain in regular, full-time employment with the City of Memphis Government for a minimum of two (2) years following course or degree completion. If an employee voluntarily terminates employment, is separated, is not reappointed or if employment is terminated for cause, the employee must reimburse the City for all funds expended according to the following schedule:



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- Employee remains employed less than 12 months after course / degree completion = 100% repayment of all tuition and book fees received while in the program
- Employee remains employed 13 - 24 months after course / degree completion = 50% repayment of all tuition and book fees received while in the program

Arrangements for repayment must be made with the Human Resources Director or Designee. Any balance owed the City must be paid within one (1) year of termination of employment unless an alternative arrangement is approved by the Human Resources Director, the Finance Director and the City Attorney.



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CITY OF MEMPHIS TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ELIGIBLE FOR TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

The following are the colleges and universities that are currently eligible for tuition reimbursement under the City of Memphis Government Tuition Reimbursement Program.

This list is subject to be amended based on changes in accreditation affiliations, locations, and new additions and is only approved as it relates to:

- **Classes taken at Shelby County branches**
- **Online classes must be offered through local facility.**

Non-Deferred Payment Schools

Baptist College of Health Sciences
Belhaven College
Central Michigan University
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Freed Hardeman University
Harding University
Memphis College of Art
Rhodes College
Southwest Tennessee Community College (degree track only)
Strayer University
Union University
University of Memphis
University of Phoenix
University of Tennessee - Health Services Center at Memphis
Webster University

Deferred Payment Schools

Bethel College	Christian Brothers University
LeMoyné-Owen College	Park University
Victory University	University of Arkansas