

**Title: Tuition Assistance Program**  
**Effective Date: 05-01-08**

**AR No. 2-04**  
**Supersedes: AR 2-04 dated 05-01-07**

**1.0 PURPOSE:**

To encourage employees to take courses at area educational institutions which will help improve their performance in their current positions and/or which will prepare them to be eligible for promotion to higher level responsibilities in City employment.

**2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:**

All Departments, Divisions and Offices

**3.0 DEFINITIONS:**

- 3.1 Eligible Employee:** Any full-time employee who has successfully completed his/her initial probationary period and has received a rating of "Meets Expectations" on his/her most recent performance review.
- 3.2 Accredited College or University:** The College or University must be accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the federal Department of Education, Office of Post-Secondary Education. Information on accreditation can be found at: <http://www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.asp>
- 3.3 Authorized Technical/Trades Training:** Training programs must be provided by an institution that is authorized by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) to offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs) OR accredited by an organization recognized by the federal Department of Education OR lead to completion of Apprentice or Journeyman level in a skilled trade.
- 3.4 Job Related:** Having to do wholly or in part with a significant portion of an employee's current or reasonably expected future job responsibilities in City employment.
- 3.5 Tuition:** The basic per hour charge for a course of study including facility usage fees. This excludes one-time application fees, lab fees and textbooks.

## 4.0 POLICY

The City is committed to maintaining an educated, skilled and effective work force. It shall be the policy of the City to assist its employees in the continuation of their formal education as it relates to their current job or future career with the City through a system of full or partial reimbursement of employee education expenses.

- 4.1 **Accredited Colleges or Universities:** Expenses for employees seeking degrees will be reimbursed at the following rates:
  - 4.1.1 100% reimbursement of all tuition required for the attainment of an Associate degree at the rate equivalent to the current per hour cost set by Metropolitan Community College system.
  - 4.1.2 75% reimbursement for all tuition required for the attainment of a Bachelor's degree at the rate equivalent to the current per hour cost at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.
  - 4.1.3 75% reimbursement for all tuition required for the attainment of Master's Degree or professional degree at the current cost per graduate hour at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.
  - 4.1.4 No City reimbursement is provided for City employees seeking doctoral degrees or post-doctoral certifications.
- 4.2 **Authorized Technical/Trades Training:**
  - 4.2.1 100% reimbursement of all tuition and fees required for completion of an authorized technical or trades training program capped at the current per hour cost set by the Metropolitan Community College system.
- 4.3 **Maximum Allowable Benefit per Fiscal Year**
  - 4.3.1 The maximum allowable benefit per employee per fiscal year will be capped at \$3500.00 or until this fiscal year's fund is exhausted, whichever comes first.

## 5.0 PROCEDURES

- 5.1 **Application for Tuition Assistance**
  - 5.1.1 Eligible employees who wish to utilize the Educational Assistance Program to pay for coursework must complete Form 1021-004: Tuition Assistance Request. This request must be submitted to the Education and Development Division of Human Resources a minimum of two weeks prior to the start of class(es) for which the employee is requesting tuition assistance. Failure to submit paper work in this time frame could result in a denial of funds. Tuition Requests submitted after a class has started will be denied. This policy and application forms are posted on City Central and on the City's public website: [kcmo.org](http://kcmo.org) in the Departments Section.
  - 5.1.2 The form must be signed by the employee's immediate and second line supervisor, indicating that the employee received a rating of "Meets Expectations" or above on his/her most recent performance review AND is not currently in a Special Rating Period.
  - 5.1.3 Any employee seeking reimbursement for courses associated with obtaining a second master's degree must also obtain the signature of the Department Director.
  - 5.1.4 Applications for Tuition Assistance will be approved on a first come basis up to the maximum allowable benefit per employee per fiscal year of \$3500.00 or until this fiscal year's fund is exhausted, whichever comes first.
  - 5.1.5 Employees will be contacted regarding approval/disapproval of Tuition Assistance no later than two weeks following receipt of application by the Education & Development Division of Human Resources. Such contact will be made through e-mail or the department's HR representative AND in a letter sent to the employee's address of record.

- 5.1.6 Employees whose Tuition Assistance request is disapproved will be provided the reason. All disapprovals are reviewed by the Manager, Education & Development Division and, if necessary, the Director of Human Resources.

## **5.2 Tuition Assistance Program Conditions**

- 5.2.1 The employee is required to pay tuition costs and institutional fees up front.
- 5.2.2 Coursework should be scheduled in an employee's off duty hours. Alternate work schedules, use of annual leave, or use of excused dock time may be arranged if approved by the employee's first and second line supervisor. Approval by Human Resources for Tuition Assistance will not be construed as permission to take classes during an employee's regularly scheduled work hours.
- 5.2.3 To be reimbursed for college or university classes, the employee must receive a grade of "C" or higher (or equivalent numerical grade) for undergraduate work or a grade of "B" or higher (or the equivalent numerical grade) for graduate level work.
- 5.2.4 To be reimbursed for technical/trades training programs, the employee must show evidence that he/she has successfully completed the requirements of the program.
- 5.2.5 Any additional cost other than those specified in the policy incurred by the employee must be borne by the employee.
- 5.2.6 Employees receiving tuition assistance from any other source for a course or courses eligible for reimbursement by the City and who have requested such reimbursement must deduct the total amount applicable to tuition from other scholarships, grants or other funding from the employee's expenses that are eligible for reimbursement by the City. The remaining total will be considered for reimbursement by the City (at the approved per hour rate). If any of these sources allow payment of non-education related expenses (housing, daycare, etc.), the monies for these expenses do not have to be reported.

## **5.3 Process for Receiving Reimbursement:**

- 5.3.1 To receive reimbursement, the employee must submit proof of successful completion of the course of study in one of the following formats: Grade card OR e-mail notification of grade OR printed copy of online notification of grade OR certificate showing completion of training program (for technical/trade training only.) The documentation must include the name of the employee, school, class(es), date of completion and grade received.
- 5.3.3 Proof of successful completion of the course of study must be received by the Education & Development Division office within 60 calendar days of completion of the course for which assistance has been requested. After 60 days, the funds held in reserve for an employee's reimbursement will be released.
- 5.3.4 The request for reimbursement will be processed within two weeks of receipt of completed documents in the Education & Development Division office. Employees will be notified via email or through their department's HR representative when their check has been mailed. Reimbursement checks are mailed to the employee's home address on file with the City and may not be picked up in person.

## **5.4 Required Service for Participation in the Tuition Assistance Benefit**

- 5.4.1 Any employee who leaves City employment while enrolled in a course or courses for which he/she has requested tuition assistance will not be eligible for reimbursement.

- 5.4.2 Any employee who leaves city employment less than one year after completing course work for which the employee received reimbursement must repay the City that amount reimbursed in the previous 12 months. The employee is agreeing to this provision by signing the Tuition Reimbursement Request Form 1021-004.
- 5.4.2 The employee's first and/or second line supervisor is responsible for notifying the Education and Development Division that an employee who has received Tuition Assistance in the past 12 months is leaving City employment.

