

# **TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

## **New Information for FY09**

The City's Tuition Assistance Program (Administrative Regulation 2-04) is managed by the Education & Development Division of the Human Resources Department. This FAQ Sheet includes answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about this benefit for Fiscal Year 2009, which began on May 1, 2008.

**Q: Who qualifies for Tuition Assistance?**

**A:** All full-time employees who have successfully completed their initial probationary period and who were rated as "Meets Expectations" or above on their last performance review are eligible to apply for Tuition Assistance.

**Q: Is there a limit to the amount of Tuition Assistance an individual employee can receive?**

**A:** Yes. Because of the limited funds allocated for this benefit in FY09, the amount of Tuition Assistance an employee may receive in this fiscal year is capped at \$3500 per employee. This change was made in order to make the limited funds available to more employees and to also help employees plan ahead for the eventuality that funds will be exhausted before the end of the fiscal year.

**Q: Can I submit applications for Tuition Assistance for future semesters or sessions?**

**A:** Yes. If you have mapped out your class(es) in advance, you are encouraged to submit applications for Tuition Assistance for each semester/session as soon as possible. You will receive approval for all requests up to the \$3500 cap per employee or until the fund is exhausted for this fiscal year, whichever comes first. You will be reimbursed upon receipt of your grade information in the Education & Development Division.

**Q: Is Tuition Assistance available for any school I choose to attend?**

**A:** The City will provide Tuition Assistance only to those schools, colleges and universities that are accredited by accrediting organizations recognized by the federal Department of Education, Office of Post-Secondary Education. You can research the accreditation status for the school you wish to attend at: <http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html>

**Q: Can I apply for any course or degree program I want to?**

**A:** Course work and programs must be related to an employee's current job duties or related to job duties of a reasonably expected future position in City employment to be eligible for Tuition Assistance. You will be asked on your application for Tuition Assistance to explain how your program of study relates to current or future positions in the City. If the relationship is unclear, you, your manager and/or your department director may be asked to provide more specific information.

**Q: Can I apply for Tuition Assistance for skills or technical training?**

**A:** Yes. Training programs must be provided by an institution that is authorized by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) to grant 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. They are reimbursed at the per hour rate for similar skill training programs available through the Metropolitan Community College-Business and Technology Center. Such skills or technical training must be related to your current job duties or related to job duties of a reasonably expected future position in City employment. You will be asked on the application to provide this information. If the relationship is unclear, you, your manager and/or your department director may be asked to provide more specific information.

**Q: Does an application for Tuition Assistance require approval by my supervisor or Department Director?**

**A:** No. Approval of Tuition Assistance applications is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department. However, both your first and second line supervisor are required to sign your application attesting to the fact that your job performance currently “Meets Expectations.” However, employees seeking a second masters degree must receive written permission from their department director indicating how the masters program will benefit the City.

**Q: Is there a deadline for turning in Tuition Assistance applications?**

**A:** Applications for Tuition Assistance should be received by the Education & Development Division no later than two weeks before the commencement of class sessions. Applications received after the commencement of classes will not be approved.

**Q: How do I know if I have been approved?**

**A:** Employees will receive e-mail notification from the Education & Development Division when a decision has been made. If the employee does not have a City e-mail address, this e-mail will be sent to the e-mail address provided by the employee on the application and this notice will also be sent to the department’s HR representative. In addition, a letter of confirmation will be sent to the employee’s home address on record in Human Resources.

**Q: Is there a service requirement after participation?**

**A:** Employees who leave City employment less than one year after completing course work for which they received reimbursement must repay the City the amount reimbursed in the previous 12 month period.

**Q: What is the rate of reimbursement?**

**A:** This year, employees seeking Associate Degrees are reimbursed at the rate of 100% of the Metropolitan Community College’s hourly fee. Bachelor and Masters Degrees are reimbursed at 75% of UMKC’s undergraduate and graduate hourly fees. The program does not reimburse special class fees or for books. We check for fee changes at these school each term and adjust the reimburse rate accordingly.

**Q: What do I have to do to receive my reimbursement?**

**A:** To be eligible for reimbursement, employees must receive a minimum grade of a “C” for undergraduate classes and a minimum grade of a “B” for graduate classes. Employees must present valid proof of their grade from the school they are attending to the Education and Development Division. A reimbursement check will mailed directly to the employee’s home address approximately two weeks following receipt of valid grade information. Reimbursement checks may not be picked up in person.

**Please Note:** The Education & Development Division considers the Tuition Assistance benefit to be a transaction between an individual employee and the Tuition Assistance program administrator. Employees bear the sole responsibility for completing and submitting all required paperwork by required deadlines and seeking answers to their questions from the program administrator.

**Sources for Tuition Assistance benefit program information and application forms:**

- On the intranet at City Central>Department>Human Resources>Education & Development
- On the Internet at [http://webdev/hr.nsf/web/ed\\_tuitionassist?opendocument](http://webdev/hr.nsf/web/ed_tuitionassist?opendocument)
- You may also contact Sheila Payne, program administrator at: (816) 513-1930 or via e-mail at [sheila\\_payne@kcmo.org](mailto:sheila_payne@kcmo.org)
- Applications and grade information may be FAXed to (816) 513-1395, attention Sheila Payne.