

**SALT LAKE COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY & PROCEDURE****TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM****REFERENCE**

Deputy Sheriff's Merit Service Commission Policy & Procedure:

Tuition Reimbursement Programs

Human Resources Policy and Procedure:

Termination of Employment

General Definitions

**POLICY**

To provide financial reimbursement to employees who pursue and complete mutually advantageous college level degrees or courses.

**PROCEDURE**

- 1.0 Provision. The County recognizes the importance of employee educational growth to maintain and advance professional, technical, and managerial competence and to prepare employees for promotional or career change opportunities within County service. Through the Tuition Reimbursement Program, the County may provide assistance to employees who comply with the provisions of this policy.
- 2.0 Program Administration. The County Human Resources Division shall administer the program and shall be responsible for developing and producing applications, instruction sheets, approved field of study lists, and other documents as well as internal operating procedures to ensure the efficient operation of the program. Application forms and information may be obtained from the Human Resources Division.
  - 2.1 The Auditor's Office shall be responsible for verifying entitlement to payment prior to issuing the payment.
- 3.0 Eligibility
  - 3.1 To be eligible for participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Program an employee must meet all the requirements stipulated in the following sections:
    - 3.1.1 (1) Be a merit employee eligible for benefits, scheduled to work a minimum of 30 hours per week, and have successfully completed probation at the beginning of the quarter/semester/course for which tuition reimbursement is requested; or (2) be an appointed exempt employee eligible for benefits;
      - 3.1.1.1 Employees on leave-without-pay status are not eligible to participate in the Tuition Reimbursement Program.
    - 3.1.2 Be enrolled in an educational institution accredited by one of the Regional Accreditation Councils for the U.S. Department of Education;
    - 3.1.3 (1) Take course work that relates to the employees job, if such a course is unavailable through a County-sponsored training program; or (2) Be

seeking an associates, bachelors, masters, or doctorate degree related to a field in which the County normally recruits employees;

3.1.3.1 Requests for tuition reimbursement for a doctorate degree will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and must have the endorsement of the Department Administrator or Elected Official. After receipt of the endorsement letter and the application, Human Resources will review the information according to the program acceptance criteria outlined in section 4.1. Application approval/denial will be made by the County Human Resources Division.

3.1.4 Submit the Tuition Reimbursement application to the Human Resources Division no sooner than 30 days prior to the beginning of the quarter/semester/course work or no later than 30 days after classes have begun for the quarter/semester/course work for which tuition reimbursement is requested. A tuition reimbursement application shall be submitted for each quarter/semester/course for which tuition reimbursement is requested.

3.1.4.1 It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that his or her application is received by the Human Resources Division on time. It is also the applicant's responsibility to establish program eligibility prior to the add/drop period for the quarter/semester/course for which reimbursement is requested or the full tuition costs may be the applicant's responsibility.

4.0 Acceptance

4.1 The Human Resources Division will review all applications received and approve or deny the application based on:

4.1.1 eligibility of the employee to participate in the Tuition Reimbursement Program,

4.1.2 eligibility of the educational institution,

4.1.3 timeliness of the application,

4.1.4 eligibility of field of study,

4.1.5 likelihood that the employee's degree will qualify the employee for a County position in which the degree will be used,

4.1.6 availability of County-sponsored training alternatives,

4.1.7 applicant's past abuse of the Tuition Reimbursement Program.

4.2 All applicants will be notified by the Human Resources Division of their acceptance or rejection within three weeks of receipt of the application.

4.3 Employees whose application for tuition reimbursement has been denied may, within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of notification, request reconsideration of the denial to the Human Resources Division Director. The request must be in writing and state the reasons it should be approved. The

Human Resources Division Director shall make the final determination regarding the applicants' eligibility to participate in the Tuition Reimbursement Program. Denials based upon the employee's ineligibility to participate in the Tuition Reimbursement Program, the ineligibility of an educational institution, and timeliness of the application, are not eligible for reconsideration or further appeal.

5.0 Payment

- 5.1 Employees will be eligible to receive no more than \$3,000 tuition reimbursement per calendar year.
- 5.2 Employees who have been accepted into the program are eligible to receive 75% of tuition and mandatory fees actually paid.
  - 5.2.1 CLEP test fees will be treated the same as tuition. Other educational costs, including tests (other than CLEP), activity fees, books and supplies, transportation, and room and board are the responsibility of the employee.
- 5.3 To receive payment, an employee accepted for participation in the tuition reimbursement program must:
  - 5.3.1 Submit a grade report or evidence of satisfactory completion and proof of payment to the Human Resources Division after the completion of each quarter/semester/course in which he/she is enrolled.
    - 5.3.1.1 Extensions may be granted by the Human Resources Division Director or designee to allow for the completion of course work in such cases as an incomplete or thesis/dissertation research. Thesis/dissertation research can be continued for as long as the educational institution allows. An incomplete is to be made-up within one year.
  - 5.3.2 Complete each course with a grade of "C" or higher, or present evidence of satisfactory completion.
  - 5.3.3 Whether the payment will be taxable depends on current tax law and payment of the tax is the employee's responsibility.

6.0 Employee Responsibilities

- 6.1 It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that for each quarter/semester/course enrolled, Human Resources receives an application no later than 30 days after classes have begun for the quarter/semester/course work, proof of payment and proof that each course was completed with a grade of "C" or higher or satisfactorily completed.
- 6.2 Employees accepted under this program will be required to sign an agreement that upon termination they will refund to the County any monies received under the program during the preceding two (2) year period, unless said termination is due to a RIF or privatization of their division or unit, or, in the case of appointed exempt employees, if they are not retained by their elected official. The amount owed the County will be pro-rated based upon quarterly increments. The termination date will be the date used to determine the two (2) year period. The

two year payback period will be counted from the date the funds were received by the employee on payroll to the date of termination. Installment re-payment plans which do not exceed six months can be approved by the Human Resources Division Director or designee. Terminated employees who do not repay the funds or do not enter into and abide by an approved installment re-payment plan will be turned over to the District Attorney's Office for collection proceedings.

6.2.1 Appeals regarding re-payment or re-payment plans based upon financial hardship can be made in writing to the County Mayor within 15 calendar days from the date of re-payment notification or date the funds were withheld from the employee's final paycheck.

7.0 Supervisor Responsibilities. Each supervisor shall:

7.1 Inform each eligible employee supervised of the availability of the Tuition Reimbursement Program.

7.2 Consider the employee's work schedule adjustment request and approve it when feasible.

8.0 Irregular work schedule

8.1 Participants in the Tuition Reimbursement Program will attend classes on their own time and are not to receive a salary for time spent in attendance at course work authorized under the program.

8.2 Irregular work schedules may be authorized by the supervisor upon review of the employee's written request.

8.3 When authorizing an irregular work schedule for non-supervisory or professional employees, the supervisor shall provide adequate supervision to cover the irregular hours worked.

APPROVED AND PASSED THIS 15<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JULY, 2008.