

CITY OF COLUMBUS

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR NON-UNIFORMED PERSONNEL Revised September 2009 RULES

ELIGIBILITY:

Any full-time, non-uniformed employee subject to the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Contract between the City of Columbus and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Ohio Council 8, Locals 1632 and 2191; Columbus Municipal Association of Government Employees/Communications Workers of America, Local 4502 (CMAGE/CWA); Fraternal Order of Police, Ohio Labor Council (OLC); or the Management Compensation Plan (MCP) and who has completed one (1) or more years of continuous active service prior to the start of the course(s) shall be eligible for tuition reimbursement in courses of instruction voluntarily undertaken.

No employee on an unpaid leave of absence, unauthorized leave of absence, disability leave, or injury leave may apply for tuition reimbursement.

COURSEWORK ELIGIBILITY:

There must be a correlation between the employee's duties and responsibilities and the courses taken or the degree program pursued (for AFSCME employees, there must be a correlation between the employee's duties and responsibilities or courses that may lead to career advancement within the City and the courses taken or the degree program pursued). Conformity of an employee's application to this provision shall be certified by the Appointing Authority. An employee seeking approval of a degree program (as opposed to individual courses) must present certification from the educational institution of acceptance to the specific degree program for which approval is sought. The employee may be required to submit additional certification to demonstrate that an individual course is approved by the educational institution as a part of the degree program previously approved. Coursework must be taken at accredited colleges, universities, technical and business institutes or at their established extension centers. Institutions must be located or course instruction must be given in Franklin County or adjoining counties. Certain seminars, conferences and workshops are covered as continuing education classes for employees who are members of the CMAGE/CWA and OLC bargaining units. **Otherwise, the tuition reimbursement program does not cover such educational and training activities.** Courses taken via the Internet may be approved by the Department of Human Resources on a case-by-case basis.

All courses must be scheduled outside the employee's regularly scheduled work hours. All scheduled hours for courses of instruction must be filed on a tuition reimbursement application with the Appointing Authority or designee who will forward the application to the Department of Human Resources. All courses are subject to approval by the Department of Human Resources. All scheduled times must be approved by the Appointing Authority or designee. Any situation that, in the discretion of the Appointing Authority or designee, would require an employee's presence on the job, shall take complete and final precedence over any times scheduled for courses.

NON-UNIFORMED EMPLOYEES TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

PROCEDURES

1. The employee completes a tuition reimbursement application, which may be obtained in the department/division business office or at the City's Internet web site:
<http://hr.ci.columbus.oh.us/labor.htm>
2. The completed application is then submitted to the department/division business office for approval by the Appointing Authority or designee and by a process established by the Appointing Authority. Courses for which application is made must be the same courses for which reimbursement is ultimately sought; the employee cannot switch classes without prior approval of the Appointing Authority or designee who will notify the Department of Human Resources.
3. Applications for approval of institutions and courses must be filed with the Appointing Authority not more than thirty (30) calendar days (60 calendar days for AFSCME employees) or less than ten (10) calendar days prior to the start of the course(s) and forwarded to the Department of Human Resources. Employees must notify the Appointing Authority or designee when canceling a class after the application has been approved; the Appointing Authority or designee will notify the Department of Human Resources.
4. Reimbursement for the approved course(s) will be based upon successful completion of the course(s). Successful completion shall mean performance sufficient to satisfy the standards of the educational institution. If a course is passed, then the City will pay tuition as outlined in paragraph 7 herein. If the course is failed, the City will not pay any tuition. If an employee is separated from City employment during the duration of the course(s), the City will not pay reimbursement for tuition.
5. Applications that are disapproved by the Department of Human Resources will be returned to the department/division with an explanation for the denial, prior to the course start, if possible. The reason for denial will be communicated to the employee and a department/division representative.
6. Reimbursement for tuition will be made when the employee presents to the Appointing Authority or designee the following documents from the institution: a) an official certificate or a grade report confirming satisfactory completion of the approved course; b) an itemized statement of account. These documents must come from the institution. Submission of these documents should be done within four (4) weeks of course completion. The department/division business office will forward this information to the Department of Human Resources, which will verify the information and return it to the department/division with a form indicating approval for payment processing. The approval form must accompany the payment paperwork through the payroll process.

7. Reimbursement for instructional fees will be based upon successful completion of the course(s) in conjunction with the respective collective bargaining contract or MCP guidelines. The maximum reimbursable amounts for instructional fees are as follows:

Bargaining Unit	Undergraduate	Graduate	Continuing Education	Comments
AFSCME	\$3000	\$3600	N/A	See Note (a)
CMAGE/CWA	\$3000	\$3600	\$1500	See Note (b)
OLC	\$2000	\$2200	\$1500	See Note (c)
MCP	\$3000	\$3800	N/A	

Notes:

- (a) Effective January 1, 2009, the reimbursement levels were increased.
- (b) Tuition for CMAGE employees includes reimbursement for course fees for continuing education required as a condition of maintaining a license or certification which the employee is required to maintain as a condition of employment as provided in the Civil Service Commission classification specification.
- (c) OLC employees may apply for reimbursement for continuing education (seminars, conferences and workshops) voluntarily undertaken by the employee that is directly related to the employee's job duties.

No reimbursement will be granted for books, paper, supplies of any nature, transportation, meals or any other expense connected with any course. Reimbursement shall be for the cost of instructional and lab fees only.

8. The benefit year for tuition reimbursement is based on a calendar year. Reimbursement is made based on completed quarters/semesters, etc. The yearly reimbursement amount is determined based upon when the school term is completed, not when an employee receives the reimbursement. As an example, an employee is eligible for yearly reimbursement of \$2,000. Winter Quarter ends on December 18th. The employee has received his/her grades and submits documentation for reimbursement. The employee has received \$1,500 in reimbursement for that calendar year. The total amount of tuition for the quarter was \$800. The employee will be reimbursed \$500 from the City's Tuition Reimbursement Program. The balance of \$300 owed for the Winter Quarter is the responsibility of the employee.
9. If an employee is eligible to receive financial assistance from any governmental or private agency, whether or not applied for and regardless of when such assistance may be received, that amount shall be deducted in the entire amount from the full tuition reimbursement the employee is eligible to receive from the City. If an employee's tuition is fully covered by another governmental or private agency, then the employee is not entitled to any payment from the City.

10. Any employee participating in the tuition reimbursement program who resigns or retires or is discharged for cause must repay the City the tuition reimbursement paid by the City for courses completed less than two (2) or three (3) years prior to the date of termination or discharge. This amount will be deducted from the employee's terminal leave pay or final paycheck. If the employee's terminal leave pay is not sufficient to cover the charge of reimbursement, the employee will be billed the difference (see the following table for further information on repayment obligations).

Bargaining Unit	2 year Standard	3 year Standard
AFSCME	Any program	Not Applicable
CMAGE/CWA	Undergraduate/Graduate	J.D./Ph. D. studies
OLC	Continuing Education/ Undergraduate/Graduate	J.D./Ph. D. studies
MCP	Undergraduate	Graduate

Questions should be directed to the department/division tuition reimbursement coordinator.