



CITY OF WATAUGA – PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

POLICY TITLE	Tuition Reimbursement
INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE	October 26, 2015
LAST REVISION DATE	Replaces <i>Section 10.3 (partially)</i> of the Personnel, Administration and Financial Policies and Procedures Manual approved on February 24, 2014.
POLICY NUMBER	4.06

OBJECTIVE The City of Watauga’s philosophy is to support employee training, education, and development opportunities which will prepare employees for increased responsibilities and enhance individual growth, promotion, and development. This policy outlines rules and practices for tuition reimbursement.

SCOPE This policy applies to all regular full-time employees of the City of Watauga.

POLICY

The City of Watauga encourages employees to further their education and training in job-related knowledge and skills. Tuition reimbursement is available for both undergraduate and graduate level courses. Tuition reimbursement funds are available within authorized budget limits established by City Council.

A. Eligibility

Employees must meet the three (3) conditions below to be eligible for tuition reimbursement:

1. Be a full time employee who has successfully completed their initial probation period or a part time employee who worked for the City for more than one year and then began working full time.
2. Courses must be job-related or a requirement of an official degree plan related to and useful in a municipal government setting.
3. Courses must be taken in a classroom setting at a traditional college or satellite campus or through internet courses/programs that are regionally or nationally accredited to award bachelor’s, master’s, and/or doctoral degrees.

B. Prior Authorization

Part I of the Tuition Reimbursement Request must be submitted and approved prior to enrollment in any class or training. The Tuition Reimbursement Request must be approved by the Department Director, Human Resources Director, and City Manager.

C. General Guidelines

1. Tuition reimbursement is available if funds have been appropriated through the budget process.
2. An employee may take no more than nine (9) credit hours at a time to be eligible for assistance. The employee must maintain the equivalent of a 2.5 grade point average on a 4.00 point system and will not receive tuition reimbursement for a course with a final grade of less than a "C" nor for any course for which credit was not received.
3. Tuition reimbursement is not intended for college expenses already covered by other types of public assistance or benefits such as veteran's benefits, public safety programs, social security benefits, or any other type of grant, loan or scholarship programs. If other assistance or benefits are already being used by the employee, the City tuition reimbursement policy will not be in effect.
4. The City will reimburse for the cost of tuition charged by Tarrant County College. The tuition reimbursement program does not cover the cost of transportation, books, or parking fees.
5. Employees requesting tuition reimbursement will enter into a written agreement to remain with the City for one (1) year after the date of reimbursement. If an employee separates from City employment for any reason within the one (1) year period, the employee will be charged (required to pay back), at the time of separation from employment, the tuition expenses reimbursed by the City.
6. At the time the employee makes application requesting approval for the tuition reimbursement program, the employee must include with the application a copy of the official degree plan or relevant college catalog which outlines the requirements for a specific degree being sought.
7. Participation in the tuition reimbursement program is voluntary on the part of the employee and unless arrangements are made with the department Head at the approval of the City Manager, the City expects that class attendance will occur after business hours and will not interfere with performance of regular roles, tasks, and accountabilities of the employee. Voluntary enrollment in colleges and universities is considered not compensable time.
8. If classes are only offered during working hours, prior to registration employees need to request permission from their Department Head and the City Manager to attend class during work hours.

E. Reimbursement Amount

The City will reimburse for the cost of tuition charged by Tarrant County College plus \$10.00 per semester hour for each year of service. For example, if the minimum reimbursement rate at TCC is \$55 per semester hour, an employee with 7 years of service with the City could receive \$70 more per semester hour and be reimbursed up to \$125 per semester hour. In no case will the City reimbursement to employee exceed the cost of class(es).

D. Reimbursement Process

Once an employee has been approved for the tuition reimbursement, enrolled, and completed the college course work for the semester, the employee is required to complete Part II of the Tuition Reimbursement Form, request for reimbursement, to Human Resources. The request must include grade report, copies of any receipts showing payment, and any paperwork outlining other monetary assistance or benefits received.

The reimbursement application with appropriate supporting documentation must be submitted to Human Resources within 30 days of course completion, but not later than the start of the next semester. The City reserves the right to decline reimbursement for any semester in which the employee fails to timely submit a request for reimbursement. Once the request has been submitted, Human Resources will forward to the City Manager for approval and then to the finance department for reimbursement. Finance will see that the appropriate reimbursement is received by the employee.