



Human Resources Board

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HUMAN RESOURCES BOARD **DATE: MARCH 3, 2025**

FROM: HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM (IV-3)

ISSUE:

Approve revisions to the Education Reimbursement Program Policy (IV-3).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Human Resources Board approve revisions to the Education Reimbursement Policy (IV-3).

BACKGROUND:

The Education Reimbursement Policy (IV-3) was last revised in February 2018. As part of the Human Resources Department's practice of regularly reviewing and updating policies and procedures, this policy was reviewed and refined.

DISCUSSION

The Education Reimbursement Policy (IV-3) includes revisions to support employee career development, engagement and retention by encouraging City employees to pursue educational courses.

The revisions to the Education Reimbursement Program Policy include changes to inform employees that the funding for the program is contingent upon the annual appropriation of funds and can change at any time. In addition, the types of expenses eligible for reimbursement have been broadened. Employees can now seek reimbursement not only for tuition but also for registration, books, course fees, and exam fees associated with their education programs.

The policy was changed to clarify that when an employee is required to obtain a license or attend a course as a requirement of their job, the expense will be paid by the department rather than the Education Reimbursement Program.

Additionally, adjustments were made to the eligibility criteria to clarify that employees must be in “good standing” and cannot have an overall rating of unsatisfactory (2 or below) in the last twelve months to qualify for the program.

The policy explicitly states that employees cannot combine City reimbursement with other educational benefits (e.g., GI Bill, grants, scholarships) for the same course, though the City may reimburse the remaining balance after those funds are applied. The policy was revised to clarify that there are reimbursement restrictions for extended course completion fees, conference attendance, and equipment purchases such as laptops and computers that are not deemed as reimbursable items.

Other changes to the policy include a streamlined request and approval process including that the pre-approval application must be submitted at least three (3) days prior to class beginning, reimbursements are now on a first-come, first-served basis, and employees who do not register or complete a course must notify the Human Resources Department within thirty days of their change in registration status. In addition, employees cannot transfer unused funds to another course without reapplying.

The request for reimbursement section was revised to explicitly state that reimbursement amounts are subject to City Manager authority and annual budget availability. In addition, all reimbursements will be allocated to the fiscal year in which they are paid and employees covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement (MOU) will follow MOU-specific reimbursement terms. Employees who leave the City for any reason other than layoffs lose eligibility to claim reimbursement even if there was an approved application on file previously.

Furthermore, this policy also includes administrative changes to reflect process changes and to conform to a citywide format.

This policy was reviewed by City Management, the City Attorney’s Office, a City-Wide Policy Committee, and if applicable sent to the respective Union for their concurrence with all policy changes.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to Strategic Priority No. 5 High Performing Government and Goal No. 5.3 – Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.

This item aligns with EACH of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The policy contained within this report has been reviewed and approved by the City Attorney’s Office, will be reviewed by the Human Resources Board, and a Public Hearing will be held to receive public input and build community trust.
2. **Equity** – Policies and procedures reflect the City’s vision, values and culture and ensures equality for all employees.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – There is no funding associated with this report. However, updated policies and procedures ensure that quality services are provided to all.

4. **Innovation** – A collaborative and innovative approach was used to revise this policy to meet the City’s current and changing needs while ensuring compliance with various rules and regulations.

5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – To maintain a sustainable and resilient workforce it is important to keep all policies and procedures up-to-date to ensure equitable applicability of personnel rules.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Colene Torres, Deputy Human Resources Director

Attachments:

Education Reimbursement Program (IV-3)