


ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY & PROCEDURES

Subject: Tuition Reimbursement Policy	APP No. 12.7
Issued by: Human Resources	Approved by:  Alex D. McIntyre, City Manager
Date Issued: January 9, 2002	Expiration Date: Indefinite
Review/Update Frequency: Periodically, as necessary	Review/Update Responsibility: Human Resources
Date of this Revision: May 13, 2019	Dates of Previous Revisions: January 9, 2002; July 1, 2015
Departments/Divisions Affected by Policy/Procedure: All City Offices and Departments	Authority: City Council Resolution 2001-79; Setting Forth Additional Compensation and Benefits for Employees in Unrepresented Units; MOU's for Represented Units

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

1. PURPOSE

It is the policy of the City of San Buenaventura (Ventura) to encourage employment development and excellence of performance by sharing in the cost of university, college and vocational educational programs, which are related to the employee's assigned responsibilities or professional growth.

Although education assistance provided to employees pursuant to this policy is expected to enhance employee performance and professional abilities, the City does not guarantee that completion of courses will lead to promotion, a different job assignment, pay increase, or other employment-related benefit except as may be required by Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The purpose of this Administrative Policy is to set forth the conditions and procedures under which tuition reimbursement for approved courses will be made to the employees of the City.

2. ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible for approval of coursework, all regular full-time and part-time employees must have passed their initial probationary period with the City of Ventura and must be in an active work status. A pro-rated tuition reimbursement benefit will be calculated for regular, part-time employees.

Employees are expected to schedule class attendance and the completion of study assignments outside of their regular working hours, on their own time. Educational activities should not interfere with the employee's work. With prior Department Head approval, course attendance under this program may occur during an employee's work hours, but paid leave time must be taken using annual leave, vacation, optional holidays, personal leave, administrative leave, or compensatory time off.

3. COURSES FOR WHICH REIMBURSEMENT MAY BE MADE

- A. The City will participate in the cost of those courses for which a course grade or credit (in the case of credit/no credit classes) is received and which are either necessary to fulfill degree requirements or are determined to be directly related to the duties of the position held by the employee applying for reimbursement. Short-term extension courses put on by academic institutions, as well as one-day seminars, workshops, or computer classes, are not eligible for tuition reimbursement but may be funded from each department's own training budget.
- B. Tuition reimbursement will be paid only for coursework received from an accredited institution that is recognized by the US Department of Education (www.ed.gov).
- C. The City will reimburse the cost of tuition or registration, the full cost of textbooks (including online access fees for e-textbooks) and required health fees up to \$2,500 per fiscal year for courses approved for reimbursement for all eligible employees. A pro-rated amount will be calculated for regular, part-time employees. Parking fees, applications for graduation, or any other fees not specifically listed above, are not eligible for reimbursement.
- D. The City will not pay the cost of tuition or registration fees which may have been advanced from other sources such as scholarships, grants, veteran's education benefits, or other subsidies. In the event of a partial scholarship or grant, reimbursement will be based upon the actual expense to the employee. The Tuition Reimbursement Policy applies only to an initial

degree at each level (associates, bachelors, masters) and related to a career with the City of Ventura. Multiple degrees obtained in different subject areas are not eligible. Doctorate degrees are not eligible.

- E. The date of course completion will determine in which fiscal year the reimbursement will apply. For example: If a course ends in July of 2019, reimbursement will be paid out of FY 19/20 funds.
- F. An employee must receive a grade of "C" or better (when "C" is considered passing and earning credit) in any approved university or college to be eligible for reimbursement. For a credit/no credit course offering, the employee must receive credit for the coursework completed to be eligible for reimbursement.
- G. Employees in the Police Management Unit who attend Command College and subsequently receive either a masters or doctorate degree, shall be reimbursed through Tuition Reimbursement for the cost of converting Command College attendance to college units.

Such reimbursement shall not be made until the degree has been officially received by the employee.

Such reimbursement shall be made only to the maximum yearly reimbursement amount then in effect.

Such reimbursement shall continue each subsequent year at the maximum yearly reimbursement amount or to the total requested by the employee, whichever is appropriate, until the cost of converting has been fully reimbursed.

Under no circumstances shall the maximum yearly reimbursement amount be exceeded.

4. METHOD OF APPLYING FOR APPROVAL OF COURSES

- A. Request for reimbursement of tuition shall be made on the City's Tuition Reimbursement Request Form (Attachment A). The information on the form to be completed by the employee shall indicate the college, university or organization which sponsors the course, the degree being pursued, the dates the course(s) is/are to be taken, any catalog number for the course, the title of the course, the number of academic credits, the estimated cost, financial aid information, and anticipated date of course completion. A brief statement of how the course will be applicable to the work of the employee and of benefit to the performance of the employee's duties with the City shall be completed, together with other such information as may be required on the form.

- B. The Tuition Reimbursement Request Form shall be completed by the employee and forwarded to the employee's department head for approval or disapproval. The Form will then be forwarded to Human Resources for final approval and processing.
- C. Upon receipt of the form from the department head, Human Resources shall review, indicate approval or disapproval, based on the considerations set forth in Sections 2 and 3 of this Policy. It is the responsibility of the employee to retain the approved copy of the request form until completion of the course, as it must be submitted to Human Resources upon completion, with the appropriate documentation attached, to receive reimbursement.

5. METHOD OF PAYMENT

To be reimbursed upon successful completion of pre-approved coursework, the employee shall submit the approved Tuition Reimbursement Request Form, along with necessary receipts, and verification of course completion (i.e., grade card issued by the school attended) to Human Resources for processing of the reimbursement. If a grade card is not available, an authorized representative of the college or university may provide certification of completion and grade documentation on letterhead, inclusive of the authorized representative's signature.

Reimbursement requests must be received within 45 calendar days of completing the course and preferably within the fiscal year in which the course was completed. Requests received within the 45-day deadline, but after the fiscal year ends will be reimbursed in the following fiscal year. Unused funds may not be carried over from one fiscal year to the next.

6. REPAYMENT UPON SEPARATION

Employees terminating employment with the City, within one year of receiving payment for tuition reimbursement, will be required to repay the City the full amount of the tuition benefit received (exceptions will be made for layoffs).

7. EXCEPTIONS

There shall be no exceptions to this Policy, except as authorized by the City Manager.