

## City of Winder Personnel Policy Manual

**Title:** Education Assistance

**Date Issued:** 2/2015

**Policy:** 022



Mayor



City Administrator

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### 22.10 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide financial assistance to employees seeking job related degrees and certificates for career advancement.

### 22.11 Employee Eligibility

- A. The employee must be a full-time active employee. Employees on extended leave of absence are not eligible.
- B. The employee must have a minimum one year of full-time service with the City of Winder and be off of probation.

### 22.12 Educational Criteria

- A. Courses shall be offered through a recognized accredited college, university, business or technical school recognized by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The Personnel Officer shall make the final determination for eligibility to schools outside of the State of Georgia's colleges and technical school system.
- B. Classes shall be taken towards accomplishing a degree (i.e. Associates, Bachelors and Masters) or certificate program related to the employee's job or career advancement with the City.
- C. All classes and study time shall be scheduled outside the employee's normal work hours.
- D. The City will not reimburse for recreational elective classes (i.e. golf, bowling, boating, biking, art, tennis, basket weaving, etc.).
- E. Approval for non-accredited classes/programs must be obtained in writing from the City Administrator prior to registering.

### 22.13 Procedures

- A. The employee shall submit an educational preapproval assistance form to his Department Head for review and approval **prior** to registering and/or beginning the class. The form shall include the course title, description and an explanation of the applicability to the employee's current duties and/or

potential career advancements. The HR Department is responsible for tracking and monitoring such requests.

- B. The Personnel Officer along with the employee's Department Head's approval must be obtained prior to any course registration to make sure the employee's educational program meets all requirements.
- C. If there is a change in the course(s) approved on the "Educational Assistance Pre-Approval Form", the employee must inform the Personnel Officer and await written approval before enrolling in the new course.
- D. A copy of any course completion shall be forwarded to Human Resources Department for placement in the employee's personnel file.
- E. The employee shall submit all forms for reimbursement to the HR Department within thirty (30) days of completing the approved course.

#### **22.14 Reimbursement**

- A. The City will provide up to \$2,000 per fiscal year per employee to help defray education expenses for tuition and books/course materials from accredited institutions.
- B. The employee must pay for tuition and other required fees in advance and provide proof of payment along with any other required forms.
- C. Any reimbursement applies to the actual costs incurred by the employee over and above any financial assistance the employee receives from other student aid programs and/or scholarships. The Employee who receives external funding from another entity (e.g., scholarships, grants, stipends, GI Bill, etc.) may only apply for City Education Assistance for tuition and fees not covered by other funding sources.
- D. Expenses for travel, room accommodations, enrollment applications, athletic expenses, parking, associated late fees/fines, computer equipment, internet access, or meals are not covered by this policy.
- E. The employee must complete the course. Incomplete courses are not eligible for reimbursement. Courses where the employee has withdrawn are not eligible for reimbursement.
- F. The employee must provide satisfactory completion of the approved class defined as a grade of "B" or higher. Courses graded as "pass/fail" will be reimbursed only if the course uses the "pass/fail" as a mandatory grading requirement and a "pass" grade is received.

- G. In the event that an employee terminates employment for any reason while enrolled in an approved course, the course will not be reimbursed.
- F. The Finance Department will prepare and forward a check payable to the employee within fifteen (15) business days of receiving all completed documentation.

#### **22.15 Annual Appropriation**

- A. All educational assistance offered by the City is subject to the Mayor and Council approving annual funding. In the event that the Mayor and Council do not approve funding, the City is not obligated to provide educational assistance.
- B. Funding of the Educational Assistance Program is limited. If funding is nearing exhaustion, reimbursement will be given in the order that completed applications are received by the Human Resources Department. If more than one employee is seeking reimbursement and both of the applications are received during the same business week, priority will be given based on full-time seniority with the City.

#### **22.16 Tax Liability**

The employee will assume all tax liability for financial assistance received in accordance with IRS guidelines.