

	TUITION REIMBURSEMENT 2016revb	
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APPROVED BY: <i>Mark Miller</i>	REVISION DATE: May 1, 2019	

Procedure:

Tuition reimbursement programs provide financial assistance and compensation for those full-time benefit eligible employees wishing to enhance their professional and personal development, particularly in the areas of knowledge, skills and abilities through higher education. This policy describes how employees will be compensated and the parameters to follow.

Loveland Fire Rescue Authority (LFRA) values our personnel engaging in the learning environment in order to enhance their skills to better serve our citizens. The tuition reimbursement policy is intended to take this concept to the next level and include higher education and the development of the individual academically to be better equipped for leadership roles within LFRA. A real emphasis is being placed on courses that directly connect to the fire service (i.e., fire science, fire management and fire administrative courses). While other courses may be valuable for our personnel in their growth and development, the real purpose is to assist in the development of fire service professionals in these three primary areas. The intended outcome is for more and better equipped future leaders for LFRA and a more seamless process for succession planning.

LFRA will encourage continued education by assisting in the payment of tuition costs at an accredited academic institution (as recognized by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation, CHEA) to further employee development. Reimbursable higher education expenses include tuition and laboratory fees only; books are not included for reimbursement. This employee benefit is available to full-time employees on a first-come, first-served basis and is contingent upon availability of funds.

Employees must receive a grade of "C" or better (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) in order to be reimbursed. For classes without grade requirements, a certification of successful completion or proof of passing the course (for pass/fail courses) is required. The actual reimbursement will be based on the grade level achieved:

Provision	Detail
Tuition and Fees Reimbursement: Fire Science Degree (Associates, Bachelor's or Masters)	100% coverage for an A or B letter grade; 70% for C letter grade; nothing for a grade less than a C; requires grade report and tuition/receipt
Tuition and Fees Reimbursement: Related Degrees (Associates, Bachelor's or Masters)	80% for A or B letter grade; 60% for a C letter grade; nothing for a grade less than a C; requires grade report and tuition/fees receipt
Tuition and Fees Reimbursement: Unrelated Degrees	No funding
Books Reimbursement	No funding

A "job-related" course is defined as a course which would contribute to the specific knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to satisfactorily perform the employee's present job or possible future LFRA jobs. Whether or not a course is "job-related" is within the discretion of the Fire Chief in consultation with the City's Human Resources Department. The decision of the fire chief is final. If the course work is deemed "job-related" for jobs outside Loveland Fire Rescue Authority but within the City of Loveland, the employee may be eligible for tuition reimbursement within the City of Loveland Tuition Reimbursement Program. In that event, the City Human Resources Department will make the final determination of "job related" within that broader context.

Employees must take courses on their own time, although special arrangements may be made with supervisor approval. Funds for other kinds of education (seminars, workshops, competency-based programs, certifications not taken at an accredited academic institution, etc.) may be available through the normal processes for requesting training courses and/or travel requests through the department.

The maximum amount per employee per budget year is \$1,500. There is a lifetime maximum of \$10,000. Annual budget begins January 1, or start of the winter semester and ends December 31, or the end of the fall semester.

Neither LFRA nor the City of Loveland will pay expenses up-front. This is a reimbursement based program.

An employee receiving other educational assistance (scholarships, Veteran's benefits, grants, etc.) for the amount equal to or greater than her/his cost for tuition and laboratory costs, is ineligible for reimbursement from the City of Loveland and/or the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority. If the amount received from other sources is less than the employee's costs, he or she may apply for the difference under this program.

In the event employment ends before one year has elapsed after completion and reimbursement of tuition/laboratory costs, the employee will be required to repay 100% of reimbursements paid for the courses completed during the previous 12 months. If a reduction-in-force occurs, the employee will not be required to reimburse funds paid and allocated monies will be paid out for courses the employee began prior to the reduction-in-force date as long as all other criteria have been met.

To be eligible to receive reimbursement, all of the following criteria must be met:

1. Classes are taken at an accredited academic institution as recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The CHEA is a private, non-profit national organization that coordinates accreditation activity in the United States. CHEA represents more than 3,000 colleges and universities and 60 national, regional and specialized accreditors.
2. Classes are job-related and pertain to possible future positions at Loveland Fire Rescue Authority.
3. At the time of application, the employee must have been employed for 12 months and have achieved a satisfactory review on his/her most recent performance appraisal with no formal disciplinary action within the previous six months.
4. The employee has submitted his/her application to the City Human Resources Department a minimum of one week before the class begins. Employee must submit application with proper signature(s) from supervisor(s) and the application must be resubmitted each calendar year for the current years' courses.
5. The employee has signed a Statement of Understanding outlining repayment to be made to the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority or the City of Loveland in the event employment is terminated before one year has elapsed after completion of the course.
6. Employee received a grade of "C" or better (2.0 on a 4.0 scale). For courses without grade requirements, a certification of successful completion is required.

Revision History

- Change in Item Number 2 to reflect Loveland Fire Rescue Authority (4/26/2016)
- Change to new LFRA logo (4/26/2016)

References

City of Loveland (2014). *AR-00055, Tuition Reimbursement*. Retrieved April 26, 2016 from <http://sharepoint/Regulations/Master%20Library/TuitionReimbursementAR00055.pdf>

City of Loveland (2016). *Frequently Used Forms*. Retrieved April 26, 2016 from <http://sharepoint/HR/SitePages/Forms.aspx?WikiPageMode=Edit&InitialTabId=Ribbon.EditingTools.CPEditTab&VisibilityContext=WSSWikiPage>