

CITY OF BRANSON, MISSOURI
ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

RULE NUMBER 8 REFERENCING ARTICLE 16 OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANUAL
AMENDED 7-13-2011, 7-10-2012, 5-28-2019

A RULE PERTAINING TO **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

Section 1. Purpose

The City of Branson values promoting education and development of its employees; therefore, this policy was created to establish policy and procedures for the administration of the Tuition Reimbursement Program.

Section 2. Responsibilities

- A. The Finance Director is responsible for certifying that monies are available and set aside in the budget for the reimbursement, as established and authorized by the Board during the annual budget approval process.
- B. Directors are responsible for ensuring that all eligible employees follow the policies and procedures outlined in this rule and for approving/disapproving requests for tuition reimbursements.
- C. Upon receipt of the application, the Human Resources Director is responsible for verifying the reimbursable amount, the accreditation of the school, and the availability of budgeted funds. Following completion of the course, the Human Resources Director is responsible for verifying that employees have received a passing grade of “C” or higher, or its equivalent where letter grades are not used, that completion of the appropriate course(s) is documented, and that reimbursement is appropriate.
- D. Employees are responsible for the timely submission of Tuition Reimbursement requests and for ensuring that application forms are completed accurately and prior to the start of the course for which reimbursement is requested.

Section 3. Policies

- A. Any regular full-time employee who has successfully completed her or his initial probationary period and is not currently on corrective probation (note: this does not include promotional probation or probation following a transfer); has had no disciplinary action for one year prior to the request; and has earned a total 3.0 or

greater score on the most recent performance evaluation, is eligible for consideration of tuition reimbursements.

- B. Eligible employees may be reimbursed for courses taken at a fully accredited school, college, or authorized technical trade school while they were employed with the City of Branson. Accreditation must be documented by an institution accrediting association. Courses of education or training must be in areas related to a City career field and must meet the following requirements:
- (1) It must be a City career-related course towards the professional enhancement of the employee in which a grade or its equivalent is given and usually consists of a semester's work of several weeks duration; or
 - (2) It must be a course which is listed on an approved job-related degree plan. Degree plans are required for Associate (2 year), Bachelor (4 year), and Graduate degrees; and
 - (3) It must be a course taken during the employee's off-duty time.
- C. The maximum number of semester hours that may be reimbursed per employee is 6 college credit hours in a fiscal year in which they were considered eligible for tuition reimbursement. Reimbursement will be for the full amount of class credits, unless it exceeds the 6 credit hours per year in total.

Reimbursement will not exceed the hourly rate charged for credit courses at Missouri State University (MSU) in Springfield, plus related books and fees, if supported by an itemized receipt.

Reimbursement rates will be for comparable coursework delivery by MSU and comparable degrees offered by MSU (e.g., Associate's, Bachelor's, or Master's). If the coursework is on-site, the MSU comparable on-site rates will be the maximum tuition reimbursement allowed; if the coursework is online, the MSU comparable online rates will be the maximum tuition reimbursement allowed.

If the educational institution's tuition rates are greater than MSU's comparable rates, the employee will have to pay the difference through her or his own fund sources. If the hourly rate of tuition is less than the comparable rates charged by MSU, the actual tuition costs will be the maximum reimbursement allowed.

- D. The amount of reimbursement shall be reduced by any financial assistance the employee receives from any outside source. When applying for tuition reimbursement, the employee must indicate on the Tuition Reimbursement Application Form any financial assistance received from an outside source which the employee is not required to repay. The following steps will be utilized to calculate the reimbursement amount.

- (1) Net cost of course = cost per credit hour X # of credit hours requesting reimbursement for (If the MSU rate is lower, this is the per credit hour rate that will be used). This amount is then reduced by any financial assistance obtained.
 - (2) The dollar amount for required course books is added to the above amount.
 - (3) The two above amounts are totaled to equal the Total Amount Eligible for Reimbursement.
 - (4) Reimbursement amount will then depend upon the class grade obtained.
- E. Eligible costs, to the amount authorized, may be paid to the employee upon presentation of proof of payment and a passing grade of “C” or higher. Total eligible reimbursement will be at the following schedule:
- Grade of A: 100%
 - Grade of B: 90%
 - Grade of C: 80%
 - Grade of below a C: No reimbursement
- Pass/Fail Class: Reimbursed at 100% if the employee passes
- F. This rule does not provide for reimbursement or direct pay for courses, seminars, workshops or memberships required by a Department. Such training should be directly financed by that Department.
- G. If an employee terminates from City employment for any reason except for illness, disability or a Reduction in Force (RIF), within 12 months of completion of the course, the employee shall return to the City 100% of the reimbursement. If an employee terminates from City employment for any reason except for illness, disability or a RIF, more than 12 months but less than 24 months of completion of the course, the employee shall return to the City 50% of the reimbursement.

Section 4. Procedures

- A. Application for tuition reimbursement must be initiated by completion of a Tuition Reimbursement Application form, and approved prior to the start of the desired course.
- B. The employee must submit the form along with an official copy of the degree plan obtained from the school, or the course description, whichever is applicable, to his immediate supervisor.

- C. After approval has been obtained from the Director, the application shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Director. The Human Resources Director will verify the reimbursable amount; the accreditation of the school; and the availability of funds and shall notify the employee in writing of the approval and the amount that may be reimbursed. Disapproved requests will be returned through the Director to the employee with reasons for disapproval.
- D. When the course has been completed, the employee will forward proof of payment and of the passing grade to the Human Resources Director. The Human Resources Director will request that payment be made.
- E. Approved and subsequently paid tuition reimbursement requests shall be kept in a separate file in the Human Resources department.

The above Administrative Rule is hereby established and adopted in accordance with the Human Resources Manual of the City of Branson, Missouri.

Stanley E. Dobbins, City Administrator

Date