

# ADMINISTRATIVE RULES – CITY OF KNOXVILLE

## 4 – Training and Development

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### **4.01**      **POLICY**

The City of Knoxville is committed to the philosophy of providing the highest quality of services to the people of the City in the most efficient and economical way. Converting this philosophy into practice is dependent upon the availability of competent personnel to carry out the many complex and changing functions performed by City government.

The City of Knoxville recognizes the necessity of developing its personnel by providing training programs and opportunities for employees so as to meet the skills and knowledge requirements needed to carry out their responsibilities. Such training is to be accomplished without regard to, non-merit factors such as race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, creed, and disability, or any other factor which cannot be lawfully used as a basis for such action.

Effective training should secure the following results:

- Increased efficiency
- Improved services
- Lower operating costs
- Maximum safety
- More satisfied employees
- Increased promotability of employees to higher level positions

To accomplish these ends, cooperative arrangements with other public agencies, including educational institutions, may be made.

It shall be the responsibility of the various Department Heads and supervisors to identify the training needs of their employees and to convey such information to the Director of Human Resources who shall be responsible for the coordination of in-service training. However, the technical training of the uniformed bodies to meet state and/or federal certification standards shall be the exclusive responsibility of the Police and Fire Departments.

It shall be the responsibility of the Mayor, Department Heads, and supervisory personnel to promote programs for training of City employees for the purposes of improving the quality of services rendered to the citizens of Knoxville and of improving employees' capabilities for advancement.

### **4.02**      **INITIAL EMPLOYMENT ORIENTATION**

The orientation of a new employee is the final step in the hiring process. A well-organized, thorough orientation training program enables new employees to be sure they are receiving all of the facts first hand, increases morale, and contributes to a more positive attitude toward the City.

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The Orientation Program for all new employees consists of two (2) phases:

- Phase I: Human Resources Department
- Phase II: Immediate Supervisor

It is important that each phase of the Orientation Program be completed. The Human Resources Department and the immediate supervisor shall document each phase of the orientation on appropriate forms which shall be placed in the employee's permanent personnel file.

The orientation of new employees is very important and should be carried out conscientiously. Every effort should be made to make new employees feel comfortable.

### **4.03 TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

Tuition reimbursement for employees is a plan which offers financial assistance to an employee who takes courses directly related to his/her work or to a position the employee might conceivably be considered for in the future and which is likely to increase his/her value to the City. This program is not specifically intended to support a full-time course of study, but is designed to enhance the quality of work that the individual brings to the job. It is provided to those employees classified as regular full-time or regular part-time who have satisfactorily completed their initial employment probationary period, with the exception of individuals who are classified as Police Cadets as described in Section 4.03.01.

For receiving reimbursement under this policy, an employee must agree to continue in employment with the City for at least two years from the date of completion of the course(s) being reimbursed and to return the reimbursement if the employee does not continue in City employment for at least two years. Police Cadets who leave the City's employment will not be required to return reimbursements.

Tuition Reimbursement is available when the following requirements have been met:

A. Courses are taken to:

1. Pursue an undergraduate or graduate degree taken at an institution that is accredited by a regional accrediting organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. The course must be a requirement for an Associate's level or higher degree program in which the employee is enrolled or must be directly job relevant. Tuition reimbursement is also available to employees enrolled in a post-

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graduate professional degree-awarding program when the degree sought is job relevant and would qualify the employee to be licensed by the applicable state professional licensing authority for that profession. **[EXAMPLE: Nashville School of Law]** Courses taken from these institutions must be on a for-grade basis; courses taken on an audit basis are not eligible for tuition reimbursement; or

2. Gain a certification or license in a field relevant to a position in the City's classification listing. These occupational courses must be taken at technical schools located in the State of Tennessee accredited by the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education and must be approved by the Department Head and Human Resources prior to enrollment.
- B. Employee is regular full-time or regular part-time (regular part-time employees are eligible for financial reimbursement in amounts directly proportional to the number of hours actually worked). Employees serving their initial probationary period are ineligible.
- C. Employee has submitted a Tuition Reimbursement Form for pre-approval to his/her immediate supervisor and the Department Head prior to enrollment in the course. Human Resources will review the pre-approved form to determine whether or not the course is eligible for reimbursement. Tuition Reimbursement Forms are available from the Human Resources Department. Failure to obtain pre-approval prior to enrollment of the course will result in denial of the tuition reimbursement request.
- D. During the months of May and December, the employee must submit all pre-approved reimbursements for the fiscal year for final reimbursement. The employee must submit proof of grade or successful completion of the course (pass/fail). The employee must also submit the itemized tuition receipt verifying cost and payment of tuition. This receipt must show a listing of all costs by item (e.g., maintenance/tuition, activity fee, athletics fee, etc.), must show the dates the charges were assessed and paid, must show payment amount(s) and method of payment (e.g., check, credit card, financial aid, etc.), and must indicate a zero balance on the account. Employees seeking reimbursement for books or e-books must also provide all receipts, documentation of which course the book is required for, and receipts must show the item name and the method of payment.
- E. The employee affirms that he/she has not been totally reimbursed for this approved educational training by some other funding source. Persons being supplemented under any other program(s) (e.g., state supplements, G.I. Bill, scholarships including the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship program, grants, government funding, etc.) are only eligible for benefits under the City's reimbursement program for the difference

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between the cost of the approved tuition and any other funding source(s) up to the City's maximum reimbursement cap per fiscal year.

- F. Technology fees are not eligible for reimbursement as computers, iPads, and tablets which may be included in technology fees are not eligible for tax exempt employer's tuition assistance.
- G. Employees may be reimbursed for tuition, books, and the following fees: specific course fees, student government fee, sustainable campus/green fee, facility/campus access fee, library fee, online course fee, and graduation fee. No other fees are eligible for reimbursement. Fees charged to convert non-college level courses to college credit are not eligible for tuition reimbursement.

Reimbursement amounts shall be as follows:

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>% REIMBURSEMENT</b>
A or B in a graduate course	100%
Below B in a graduate course	No Reimbursement
A, B, or C in an undergraduate or occupational course	100%
Below C in an undergraduate or occupational course	No Reimbursement
Pass in a pass/fail course	100%
Fail in a pass/fail course or any course taken on an audit basis	No Reimbursement

- H. Employees will be limited to a reimbursement of three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) per fiscal year for any class taken towards a degree program. Occupational courses taken for certifications or licenses in a job related field will be eligible for one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per fiscal year.

Tuition reimbursements will be processed annually on the fiscal year calendar. From July 1 – April 30, employees may submit pre-approval forms to their Department Heads and Human Resources for consideration of reimbursement. Courses must be pre-approved prior to obtaining final reimbursement and are only eligible for reimbursement during the fiscal year in which they are pre-approved. All pre-approved courses must be submitted to Human Resources for final reimbursement in May or December. Reimbursement payments will be processed in June or January.

Each individual department will be responsible for allocating funds within their departmental budgets to cover the Tuition Reimbursement Program for their employees.

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### **4.03.01 Tuition Reimbursement for Police Cadets**

Tuition reimbursement for Police Cadets shall follow the same rules for other city employees found in 4.03 of these rules with the following exceptions:

- A. Upon enrollment in college, a Police Cadet may request a one time cash advancement from the City for 100% of his/her tuition during his/her first year of employment. Documentation must be submitted showing the cost of tuition and number of courses, and the appropriate Tuition Reimbursement Forms must be completed prior to the cash advance. Once the course is completed, the Cadet must submit a copy of transcript and tuition receipts. The cash advance loan will be forgiven if the appropriate grades are obtained; however, should the Cadet not meet the grades required to receive 100% tuition reimbursement, the difference must be returned to the City.
- B. For employees classified as Police Cadets, ancillary expenses for books, school fees, and on-campus housing will be eligible for reimbursement, as well as tuition.
- C. Police Cadets shall be limited to a reimbursement of three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) per fiscal year.
- D. A Police Cadet who becomes a Police Officer Recruit without a break in service with the City shall remain eligible for the Tuition Reimbursement Program while serving their initial employment probationary period as a Police Officer Recruit.