

Mobile County Tuition Reimbursement Policy & Procedures

Policy # 200-09

Effective 01/01/2010

1.0 Purpose:

To enhance services to the citizens of Mobile County by providing financial assistance to employees who successfully complete courses of instruction related to the employee's job responsibilities in their current positions.

2.0 Employee Eligibility:

Full-time employees under the appointing authority of the Mobile County Commission, or other elected officials, who receive all of their compensation through the Mobile County payroll, may be eligible to participate in the tuition reimbursement program if the following conditions are met:

- Employee is a full-time employee in active pay status (defined as not being on partial or full-time disability leave, workers' compensation leave, administrative leave or other leave of absence) on the first day of class and when final reimbursement paperwork is submitted. Employees who separate employment due to a layoff and who were pre-approved to receive reimbursement will be reimbursed if all other requirements are met.
- Employee has completed applicable new hire probationary period.

3.0 Assistance Amount:

- Tuition reimbursement amount will be 50% of tuition costs per class up to a maximum of \$2,000.00 per fiscal year.

4.0 Eligible Courses:

In order to qualify for tuition reimbursement, courses must meet the following criteria:

- Courses must provide knowledge and/or skills that can reasonably be expected to relate to the employee's current position and job responsibilities and provide academic college credit for Associate, Bachelor's, or Graduate degree program.
- Electives and prerequisites that are part of a degree program are not eligible for reimbursement unless they relate directly to the employee's current position and job responsibilities.
- Courses must be provided by an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. A list of accrediting agencies is available on the U.S. Department of Education website, www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation.
- Online education courses which provide college credit through an approved accredited institution are covered.

Note: Attendance at a pre-approved class is not part of an employee's job duties. Employees must attend class during their off duty hours, and must provide their own transportation. Employees may not use County cars to commute to classes and will not receive reimbursement for travel expenses.

5.0 Course Pre-Approval:

A completed Course Pre-Approval Application must be filed with the Mobile County Human Resources Department.

The application must be signed by the employee's department head or the elected official who is the employee's appointing authority.

Applications will not be accepted after the first day of class; it is recommended that they be filed at least two weeks prior to the beginning of classes.

Applications must include a copy of the official course description from the school's catalog or bulletin, an explanation of how each course relates to the employee's current job responsibilities, and a fee schedule reflecting course cost per credit hour.

Incomplete applications will not be considered and will be returned to the employee.

Applicants will be notified of approval or disapproval within fifteen (15) days after the application is filed.

Employees who begin a class without pre-approval must assume reimbursement will not be made.

6.0 Reimbursement

Reimbursement is available only for partial tuition costs. The cost of books, application fees, registration fees, graduation fees, parking fees, travel or other incidental expenses are not eligible for reimbursement.

Reimbursement is based upon the grade earned for each pre-approved course, as follows:

- Undergraduate courses: 50% for grade of A, B or C
- Graduate courses: 50% for grade of A or B

A completed Request for Reimbursement must be submitted to the Human Resources Department within sixty (60) days following completion of a pre-approved course.

Requests must be accompanied by a copy of an official invoice or statement bearing the school's name and address and reflecting tuition costs and payment in full of such costs. **Copies of canceled checks or credit card receipts are not sufficient.** Requests must also include documentation reflecting the employee's name, school term, course name and grade for the term corresponding to the invoice or statement. Electronic grade documentation is sufficient if from the school registrar.

Requests submitted more than sixty (60) days after completion of the class or incomplete requests will be denied.

7.0 Other Training:

The tuition reimbursement program is designed to assist employees pursuing a degree. It is not intended for those interested in only one course, non-degree college training, workshops, seminars, etc.

All questions related to the Mobile County Tuition Reimbursement Policy should be directed to the Mobile County Human Resources Department.