



City of Saginaw

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January 13, 2020

To: Gabe Reaume, City Manager

From: Melanie McManus

Re: Personnel Policies Manual - Addition
Tuition Reimbursement Policy

Addition has been added to the following chapter:

Chapter 10 Employee Benefits
Section 10.15 Tuition Reimbursement Policy

Attached: Personnel Policy Manual - Addition
Tuition Reimbursement Policy
Tuition Reimbursement Application
Tuition Reimbursement Form

Please call me if you have any questions.

CHAPTER 10 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

10.1 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS - OVERVIEW

Benefit eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification and length of service. Generally, however, regular full-time employees are eligible for most benefits, and regular part-time employees are eligible for certain benefits on a pro-rata basis. Temporary/Seasonal employees are generally not eligible for City benefits. Employees should contact the Human Resource Manager to obtain information regarding the benefits for which employees may be eligible.

Benefits available to eligible employees include, but are not limited to:

- Holidays
- Civic Duty Leave
- Sick Leave
- Disability Leave
- Vacation Leave
- Funeral Leave
- Military Leave
- Group Health, Dental and Life/Accident Insurance
- TMRS Contributions
- Professional Development Leave
- Workers' Compensation Benefits
- Family and Medical Leave Act

While the City pays the full cost of most of these benefits, some of the benefit programs require contributions from participating employees.

10.2 BENEVOLENT FUND

The City provides a benevolent fund which is a supplement to the life insurance benefits. This fund applies to all regular City employees and part time City employees while on or off duty. This applies to reserve police officers and school crossing guards who die while on duty for the City. A total of \$1,500.00 will be paid directly to the family of the employee in the event of an employee death. The family will receive these funds within 24 hours of the death.

10.3 PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

The City will participate in the cost of professional memberships and subscriptions for employees applicable to their positions; provided the necessary funds are available. Requests for memberships and subscriptions must be submitted on forms provided by the City and approved by the Department Head prior to participation.

10.4 LUNCH PERIODS

The scheduling of employee lunch periods will be determined by the Department Head to facilitate serving the public and permitting efficient department operations. Lunch periods shall be no more than one (1) hour in length and may be less when required for efficient service to the public.

10.5 FIRE, POLICE, PUBLIC WORKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT UNIFORMS

The City will supply all fire, police, public works and recreation department personnel with appropriate uniforms. Replacement cost of uniforms will be provided by the City as required. All uniforms must be returned upon termination.

10.6 WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE AND INJURY WAGE CONTINUATION BENEFITS

The City has workers' compensation insurance coverage to protect all employees. Upon employment, a notice shall be given to the employee informing him/her about the insurance. This notice will be signed by the employee and placed in his/her permanent personnel file.

In most cases, a City employee injured as a result of duties performed in the course of his or her job shall be eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits from the City's insurance carrier at no expense to the employee. In addition, the City will supplement the employee's workers compensation pay in an amount, necessary, to make up the difference between such payments and the employee's full regular pay. No pay is to exceed one hundred percent (100%) of the employee's regular salary. Employees pay is based on a forty (40) hour work week while on disability.

An employee with a worker's compensation injury who is able as determined by the treating physician, to perform light duty may be required by the Department Head to do so for his or her original department or another department.

An employee who is physically able and who fails to report an on-the-job injury within twenty-four (24) hours after it occurred to his or her supervisor and take such first aid treatment as may be necessary may not receive or be eligible for injury benefits. When an employee is injured on the job, the Department Head will immediately submit a written accident report to the Human Resource Manager. In addition, an Accident Investigation Form must be completed by the employee and their supervisor and submitted to the Human Resource Manager for every accident regardless of the severity or nature.

The Department Head will be responsible for any subsequent reports that are to be filed, including "Employer's First Report of Injury." All reports required by Section 5.7 must be submitted to the Human Resource Manager within three (3) days after knowledge of the accident.

10.7 SOCIAL SECURITY

All employees of the City are covered under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA). This type of government insurance, known as "Federal Old Age and Survivor's Insurance" (OASDI), provides for benefits for retirement and disability. This insurance is financed by social security taxes which are paid through payroll deductions by the employee. The City contributes a matching amount toward financing this insurance.

10.8 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

All employees of the City are covered under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Insurance program and the City pays this tax. This program provides payments for unemployed workers in certain circumstances as provided by law.

10.9 RETIREMENT

The City is a participant of the Texas Municipal Retirement System. The City establishes the percentage to be deducted from each employee's earnings and the City doubles the contribution for each employee. A participant may retire with a combination of a minimum total of five (5) years of service and age sixty, or twenty years of service at any age.

The Texas Municipal Retirement System was established in 1948 as a retirement and disability pension system for municipal employees in the State of Texas. It is administered in accordance with the Texas Municipal Retirement System Act (Texas Government Code, Title 8, and Subtitle G). As such, TMRS is a public trust fund which has the responsibility of administering the system in accordance with the TMRS Act and bears a fiduciary obligation to the State of Texas, the TMRS member cities and the public employees who are its beneficiaries.

Any employee (regular and part time employees who work at least twenty (20) hours per week) is automatically a member of this system regardless of your age at the time of employment. A percentage of employee earnings will be deducted from each paycheck and set aside, along with money contributed by the City, to guarantee a retirement income for life. Participation begins on the date of employment.

The City has a five year vesting plan. Under this plan, if an employee has credit for five years of service, and later terminates employment with the City (without withdrawing their deposits), the employee becomes eligible for service retirement at age 60 (that would include the City's funds on deposits and accumulated interest).

Please refer to the TMRS Benefits Guide which is published by the Texas Municipal Retirement System and given to each employee. Copies of these handbooks are available in the human resource office. Information is also available at the TMRS website.

10.9.1 RETIREE MEDICAL COVERAGE BENEFIT THROUGH COBRA

The definition of a retired employee would be any employee of the City of Saginaw with insurance benefits that has worked for the City of a total of 10 years and is at least 60 years old or an employee that has worked for the City for 25 years and is any age.

If the retired employee chooses to continue medical coverage through Cobra they will be allowed an amount of \$100.00 per month to be applied toward medical coverage for 18 months or whenever the retiree turns 65, whichever may occur first. The maximum premium the City would contribute would be \$100.00 per month for a maximum of 18 months or \$1,800.00.

10.10 LONGEVITY PAY

GOALS:

To increase employee morale and develop a special pay period to reward employees with continued length of service with the City.

QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications are as follows

- (a) regular full time employees;
- (b) part time employees who work continuously at least twenty (20) hours per week year round;
- (c) employees with twelve (12) or more completed months of service on December 1 of each year shall be eligible to receive longevity pay.

GUIDELINES:

The guidelines are as follows

- (a) eligible employees will be paid \$6.00 of longevity for each completed month of service with the City;
- (b) employees with less than twelve (12) months of service on December 1 shall not be eligible to receive longevity pay for that year;
- (c) longevity will be paid to all eligible employees on the first Friday of December each year;

- (d) longevity pay will be considered a special payroll for the longevity pay only, less taxes;
- (e) eligible employees will be paid a pro rata amount based on completed years of service and number of completed months since their last longevity check plus \$6.00 per month for each complete month which was not calculated in their first longevity check upon their separation from the City's employ.

10.11 MANDATORY DIRECT DEPOSIT

Effective October 15, 2011, direct deposit of pay is mandatory for all current, hired (or rehired) employees. Direct deposit allows you to receive payments in a safe, secure and efficient manner by having your funds deposited directly into the bank account of your choice.

10.12 TRAVEL EXPENSE

The Department Head, with the approval of the City Manager, may authorize official travel by employees, if such travel is essential to the conduct or planning of activities of the City. Travel costs should be submitted to the Department Head after they have occurred. The cost for travel shall be reimbursed at the current IRS rate if a personal or private vehicle is used. Other travel expenses will be reimbursed on an actual cost basis upon the furnishing of a voucher for the cost. The Mayor, Council and Department Heads shall receive \$50.00 per day as per diem. If an employee who receives a car allowance travels more than 75 miles (one-way) from the employee's regularly assigned work location, the employee may be eligible for mileage reimbursement when traveling for business related purposes.

10.13 CERTIFICATION PAY

In order to receive compensation, the license or certificate must be deemed beneficial to the City as a part of the employee's required work responsibilities. To qualify for certification pay, licenses and certificates must be obtained from the appropriate State certification or licensing agencies and/or recognized professional associations performing similar certification or licensing functions. Licenses and certificates must be directly related to the employee's present position, and current job duties and/or job requirements. The licenses and certificates must be maintained in an active status in order to receive compensation. It is the sole responsibility of the employee to provide current copies of licenses or certifications in order for compensation to be considered. If a license or certification has expired, the related compensation will stop. In no event will retroactive certification pay be awarded for changes in policy or an employee's failure to provide or maintain proof of current licenses and certifications in his/her personnel file.

All requests for license or certification pay must be done through a payroll status change form. The Human Resources Department will not initiate an employee's certification pay until the first pay period of the month following the date of the certificate. Certification pay will be paid on the first pay check of each month (12 times per year).

10.14 Bad Weather

If weather conditions are such as to make travel conditions hazardous, the City Manager will make a determination whether City offices shall open late or be closed. The City Manager shall advise the dispatch office of this determination. This determination affects only nonessential personnel. For purposes of this section, all fire and police personnel are deemed essential personnel. Essential Personnel shall also include all employees designated as "essential" by the Director of Public Works. In lieu of such emergency declaration, any staff member not reporting or reporting late to work may be charged with vacation leave, sick leave, or if such is not available, leave without pay.

10.15 Tuition Reimbursement Policy

The Tuition Reimbursement Program provides an opportunity and an incentive to encourage employees in pursue higher education and expertise in their related job duties and/or to provide avenues for career development. The City believe this investment will result in higher performance, better service and efficiency throughout the organization, and the expectation that the employee is committed to continue employment with the City.

This program is subject to availability of funds in the City budget. The Tuition Reimbursement Program may be suspended at any time with or without notice by the City Manager or the City Council.

Participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Program is a privilege of employment, not a right. Therefore, participation in the program is subject to approval and is not guaranteed for any employee.

Eligibility to Participate

In order to be eligible to participate in the Tuition Reimbursement Program, an Employee:

- Must be a regular, full-time employee.
- Must have a least one-year full-time employment with the City.
- Must be meeting the performance expectations of the Employee's current position.
- Must not have any formal disciplinary actions within the previous 24 months. Formal disciplinary actions include verbal reprimand, written reprimand, demotions, or suspensions.
- Must not currently be on a Performance Improvement Plan.

- Must be proposing coursework or a degree program that has been approved by the Department Head and City Manager as being beneficial to the city and applicable to the employee's related job duties and/or to provide avenue for career development.
- Must attend a "fully-accredited" college, community college, or university.
- Must earn a passing grade of "C" or higher in any approved coursework to be eligible for reimbursement.

Application Process

Employees requesting tuition reimbursement must be enrolled in a fully-accredited college or university. Employee must complete coursework that is related to their current City employment or to a position that the employee could reasonably progress to or transfer to within the City. Prior to participating in the program, employees must submit an application, degree plan, and a summary statement that explains how the degree/course will assist the employee in the employee's current role and/or how the degree/course could help prepare the employee for a position that the employee aspires to transfer to within the City. The Application for Tuition Reimbursement must be submitted to the Department Head no earlier than two months prior to the start of class, but no later than fifteen (15) days before the start of the class/program. The Department Head will review the employee's application materials and make a recommendation to the City Manager as to whether or not the degree/course is eligible for reimbursement. The City Manager will have final approval as to the eligibility of degree plan/course for reimbursement.

Limits on Tuition Reimbursement

- Expenses Excluded: Textbooks, course supplies, testing, parking, late fees, penalties, orientation fees, applications for graduation, installment fees, costs related to acquiring official transcripts or certificates, travel, student ID cards, costs for computers, internet connections required for on-line coursework and other miscellaneous expenses.
- It is expected that time needed for completing the educational requirements of the employee's coursework will be limited to the employee's personal time off, vacation or other paid leave. Occasional time allowances may be made between the supervisor and employee to participate in required activities such as examinations, registrations, etc.
- Employees will not be reimbursed for tuition already covered by other types of assistance or benefits, such as scholarships, tuition waivers, grants, financial aid, or other programs.

Reimbursement

- All reimbursement request must be received within 45 calendar days of the course end date.
- All request for reimbursement must include proper documentation as listed on the Tuition Reimbursement Form.
- Reimbursement will be issued through Payroll.
- Please allow a minimum of 30 business days for reimbursement processing.
- If the employee fails to submit a Tuition Reimbursement Form within 45 calendar days of the course end date, the employee forfeits the tuition reimbursement benefit.
- Reimbursement is subject to the availability of funds in the City budget. The Tuition Reimbursement Program may be suspended at any time with or without notice by the City Manager or the City Council.

Maximum Benefit

The maximum amount available through tuition reimbursement to any employee is \$5,000 per calendar year. The City of Saginaw has chosen to cap the annual amount an employee may receive in tuition reimbursement under this plan at this dollar amount. The city will only reimburse actual tuition and fee expenses. At no time shall the city be required to reimburse more than what the student actually paid for tuition and fees.

Service Requirement

As a condition of participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Program, employees must agree to remain employed with the City for two years for every one year of tuition reimbursement. If the employee fails to remain employed by the City for this time period, for any reason, the City will deduct the dollar amount of any tuition reimbursement provided the employee during the twenty-four (24) month period before the employee's termination/resignation date from the employee's accrued, unused leave balances normally payable upon separation. In the even the employee's accrued, unused leave balances are insufficient to pay the amount owed, the employee agrees that the balance must be repaid to the City of Saginaw. NOTHING HEREIN WILL ALTER THE EMPLOYEE'S AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT STATUS.

Approval Requirement

An Employee Tuition Reimbursement Application Form must be completed and approved prior to registration for courses.

The Department Head will recommend approval or disapproval for the tuition reimbursement. If the Department head approves course(s) for possible reimbursement, he/she must indicate the reason the course is directly related to the duties of the employee's position. Similarly, if the Department Head recommends disapproval for the tuition reimbursement, the reason for such disapproval should be indicated. The Department Head will then forward the application with his/her recommendation to the City Manager for final review and/or approval.

CITY OF SAGINAW TUITION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

The Tuition Reimbursement Program provides an opportunity and an incentive to encourage employees in pursue higher education and expertise in their related job duties and/or to provide avenues for career development. The City believe this investment will result in higher performance, better service and efficiency throughout the organization, and the expectation that the employee is committed to continue employment with the City.

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- Must attend a "fully-accredited" college, community college, or university.
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Employees requesting tuition reimbursement must be enrolled in a fully-accredited college or university. Employee must complete coursework that is related to their current City employment or to a position that the employee could reasonably progress to or transfer to within the City. Prior to participating in the program, employees must submit an application, degree plan, and a summary statement that explains how the degree/course will assist the employee in the employee's current role and/or how the degree/course could help prepare the employee for a position that the employee aspires to transfer to within the City. The Application for Tuition Reimbursement must be submitted to the Department Head no earlier than two months prior to the start of class, but no later than fifteen (15) days before the start of the class/program. The Department Head will review the employee's application materials and make a recommendation to the City Manager as to whether or not the degree/course is eligible for reimbursement. The City Manager will have final approval as to the eligibility of degree plan/course for reimbursement.

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- Employees will not be reimbursed for tuition already covered by other types of assistance or benefits, such as scholarships, tuition waivers, grants, financial aid, or other programs.

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- Reimbursement will be issued through Payroll.
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- If the employee fails to submit a Tuition Reimbursement Form within 45 calendar days of the course end date, the employee forfeits the tuition reimbursement benefit.
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Service Requirement

As a condition of participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Program, employees must agree to remain employed with the City for two years for every one year of tuition reimbursement. If the employee fails to remain employed by the City for this time period, for any reason, the City will deduct the dollar amount of any tuition reimbursement provided the employee during the twenty-four (24) month period before the employee's termination/resignation date from the employee's accrued, unused leave balances normally payable upon separation. In the even the employee's accrued, unused leave balances are insufficient to pay the amount owed, the employee agrees that the balance must be repaid to the City of Saginaw. NOTHING HEREIN WILL ALTER THE EMPLOYEE'S AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT STATUS.

Approval Requirement

An Employee Tuition Reimbursement Application Form must be completed and approved prior to registration for courses.

The Department Head will recommend approval or disapproval for the tuition reimbursement. If the Department head approves course(s) for possible reimbursement, he/she must indicate the reason the course is directly related to the duties of the employee's position. Similarly, if the Department Head recommends disapproval for the tuition reimbursement, the reason for such disapproval should be indicated. The Department Head will then forward the application with his/her recommendation to the City Manager for final review and/or approval.

**CITY OF SAGINAW
TUITION REIMBURSEMENT APPLICATION**

Application for Tuition Reimbursement must be submitted to the Department Head no earlier than two months prior to the start of class, but no later than fifteen (15) days before the start of the class/program.

Date: _____

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date of Hire: _____ Department: _____

Current Job Title: _____

Degree program: _____ Associate Degree _____ Bachelor Degree _____ Master Degree
 _____ Individual Course(s)-College/University (must be on your degree plan)

Type of Degree (attach degree plan): _____

Summary Statement

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SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

(Proof of school accreditation must be attached.)

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Start Date: _____ Course End Date: _____

Type of Course: _____ In Class _____ Online

Course Information	Course #	Credit Hours	Tuition Cost

Total Reimbursement Request: \$ _____ (Proof of tuition costs must be attached)

I hereby certify that the information provide is this application is accurate. I understand that reimbursement is subject to the terms and conditions of the City of Saginaw Tuition Reimbursement Program Policy. Failure to follow any of the City's policy requirements may result in no reimbursement.

I understand that if this request is approved, reimbursement will be contingent upon successful completion (a passing grade of "C" or higher) of each course and the submission of the Tuition Reimbursement Form within 45 calendar days of course end date to the Human Resources Department for approval. Failure to submit a Tuition Reimbursement Form within 45 calendar days of the course end date, will forfeit the tuition reimbursement benefit.

Employee's Signature

Date

DEPARTMENT

_____ Tuition Request Approved _____ Tuition Request Denied

Reason for denial: _____

Department Head's Signature

Date

CITY MANAGER

_____ Tuition Request Approved _____ Tuition Request Denied

Reason for denial: _____

City Manager's Signature

Date

Tuition Reimbursement Form must be submitted within 45 calendar days from the course end date to the Human Resources Department for approval.

School: _____

COURSE INFORMATION			
Course Title	Credit Hours	Course Grade	Course End Date

- Attach a copy of the approved Tuition Reimbursement Application.
- Attach a copy of your course registration.
- Attach proof of official school grade report or transcript.
- Attach a copy of your itemized tuition receipt, showing all payments made with all financial aid, scholarships, grants, tuition waivers, or other assistance applied.

I hereby certify that the information provided in this request is accurate. I understand that reimbursement is subject to the terms and conditions of the City of Saginaw Tuition Reimbursement Policy. Failure to follow any of the city's policy requirements may result in no reimbursement.

I understand and agree that as a condition of my participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Program, I agree to remain employed with the City for two years for every one year of tuition reimbursement. If I fail to remain employed by the City for this time period, for any reason, I agree to permit the City to deduct the dollar amount of any tuition reimbursement provided during the twenty-four (24) month period before the date of termination or resignation from my accrued, unused leave balances normally payable upon separation. I further acknowledge and agree that in the event my accrued unused leave balances are insufficient to pay the amount owed, I will be responsible for repaying the City of Saginaw the balance owed. I acknowledge that NOTHING HEREIN WILL ALTER MY AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT STATUS.

Employee's Signature

Date

_____ Approved _____ Denied

Reason for denial:_____

Department Head

Date

City Manager

Date