

CHAPTER 85. EMPLOYEE EDUCATION ASSISTANCE POLICY.

85.01. Purpose. The purpose of the City of Ashland formal Education Assistance policy is to provide a framework for formal professional education of city employees. This regulation establishes the city's commitment to a program of employee professional development through the financing of formal education at accredited colleges and universities. These policies are designed to:

- (a) Increase the technical, supervisory and professional knowledge of city employees;
- (b) Improve the employee's ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of his or her job through education and training;
- (c) Improve the quality of leadership and productivity in the City.
- (d) Attract and retain qualified persons for city service.

85.02. Responsibility. All employees are responsible to know and adhere to these policies. Department Heads and other management employees will ensure these policies are carried out by department employees.

85.03. Common Council Review. These policies shall be reviewed by the Common Council during its annual budget deliberations, and from time to time, as deemed necessary by the governing body.

85.04. City Policy. It is the governing body's policy to have a highly-trained, proficient work force delivering municipal services to residents. Formal education attainment is an important component of this policy. The following formal education targets are established by the City:

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| (a) City Administrator | Master's Degree |
| (b) City Clerk & Department Heads | Master's Degree |
| (c) Public Safety Employees | Bachelor's Degree |
| (d) Other employees | Associate's Degree |
| (e) Mid-management Employees | Bachelor's Degree |

85.05. Educational Assistance. The City of Ashland may reimburse up to fifty (50%) percent of the cost of tuition. Employees participating in this program are required to remain with the City for at least five (5) years after the completion of their course.

85.06. Eligibility. To qualify for financial reimbursement, employees must meet the following conditions:

- (a) The employee must have completed his or her probationary period.
- (b) Employee must have completed state-required and other nationally-recognized professional certifications.
- (c) The employee must be a full-time worker, working at least 35 hours a week.
- (d) Course work must relate to the employee's present position or be toward a degree which relates to the employee's present position.
- (e) Course work must be at an accredited college or university.
- (f) Classes must be taken for credit and completed. Audits, incompletes and withdrawals are not eligible for reimbursement.
- (g) No reimbursement shall be made if an employee fails to receive at least a C grade for the classes.
- (h) No educational assistance for degree programs will be provided beyond the city's formal education target for that position unless the Department Head and City Administrator agree specific courses would be beneficial to the person's ability to perform the duties of their position.
- (i) No reimbursement shall be made if an employee is eligible for or receiving educational benefits under the G.I. Bill of Rights and/or any type of scholarship, fellowship or grant unless it is inadequate to reimburse the employee as provided in this chapter. In these cases, reimbursement shall be limited to the difference between the course cost and any financial assistance provided by organizations outside the city.

85.07. Annual Appropriation. All education assistance programs offered by the City of Ashland shall be subject to annual appropriation by the Common Council. In the event that the Common Council chooses to not provide funding for education assistance, the City shall not be considered to be obligated to provide any reimbursement of costs related to tuition for classes. If requests for education assistance exceed funding provided by the Council, the Mayor and City Administrator shall determine program participation based upon a decision of greatest benefit to the City.

85.08. Participation Procedure. The following procedures will govern the city's educational assistance programs:

- (a) Before enrolling, the employee must submit a written request to his or her Department Head at least two months prior to the course commencement. The written request will be accompanied by copies of diplomas, transcripts and degree requirements.
- (b) The Department Head's recommendations will be forwarded to the City Administrator for review. The City Administrator is authorized to approve the course request for non-management employees.

(c) Management employee's (City Administrator, City Clerk and Department Heads) course-work requests will be forwarded to the City Administrator and Mayor for action.

(d) Upon successful completion of the course(s), the employee will submit to the City Administrator a copy of the grade transcript and receipts for tuition and fees. Grade transcripts and tuition receipts presented more than six (6) months after the course completion date may not be considered for reimbursement. The closing date of the quarter or semester will be used to determine the course completion date.

85.09. Attendance. Employees will make arrangements to attend such courses outside their regularly scheduled work hours.

85.10. Termination. If the employee voluntarily terminates his employment or is terminated for cause prior to completing five (5) calendar years of service following reimbursement of tuition and fees, the amount paid by the city will be withheld from the employee's final paycheck. No reimbursement by the employee will be required in the cases of a termination through a reduction of force.

85.11. Records. The City Administrator shall be responsible for maintaining a record of all courses employees take under this program. This record shall become a part of the employee's official personnel file.

85.12. Tax Liability. Employees will assume their own tax liability with regards to any monies received through the City's Educational Assistance Program.

ADOPTED: 85 (1339) 1/25/1995

AMENDMENTS: 85 (1387) 2/11/1997; 85 (1552) 10/8/2002