

# Ordinance No. 00169

[\(Council Minutes 98/05/18\)](#)

ORDINANCE NO. 169

AN ORDINANCE of the City Council of the City of Lakewood, Washington establishing a tuition reimbursement program as a part of the compensation and benefits plan for City employees

WHEREAS, the City Council has expressed its interest in supporting the City's need to hire trained and qualified individuals to serve as employees of the City in the City's various departments, and to establish a compensation and benefits plan for City employees so that the City may recruit and retain qualified, highly trained employees; and,

WHEREAS, The City Council of the City of Lakewood recognizes the importance of continuing education to fully develop knowledge, skills and abilities which will increase job performance and effectiveness, and endorses the concept of providing an opportunity for City employees to obtain additional education or training that increases competencies and develops new skills; and,

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WHEREAS, in connection with that objective, it is appropriate to establish a program of tuition reimbursement that will promote and encourage further and continued training of City employees.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAKEWOOD, WASHINGTON DO ORDAIN as follows:

1. That there is hereby established a Tuition Reimbursement program to be implemented by the City Manager with policies consistent herewith, as a part of the compensation and benefits plan for regular, full-time employees of the City, as follows:

## A. TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM:

1. Tuition reimbursement for eligible courses may be available to all regular full-time City employees provided appropriate funding has been budgeted and courses approved in accordance with policies developed and approved by the City Manager, provided that the City retains the right to amend or terminate the provision of a tuition reimbursement program at any time, for budget, practical or other reasons as it deems appropriate.

2. Participation in the tuition reimbursement program is voluntary and in no case is to be made a condition of employment. There is no guarantee or promise of promotion or new assignment as a result of any courses taken. Course attendance and preparation must be on the employee=s own time and MUST NOT interfere with the employee=s job. Employees applying for tuition reimbursement shall expect either approval or denial within ten working days of submittal of the Tuition Reimbursement Form. Tuition reimbursement may be considered additional compensation by the Internal Revenue Service and subject to taxation.

## B. ELIGIBLE COURSES

1. The City will reimburse employees for only those courses identified within the guidelines set forth hereinbelow.

2. Eligibility for tuition reimbursement applies to graded, credit courses, or technical college clock hour courses, sponsored by an accredited educational institution (technical college, community college, four-year college or university). Correspondence courses must meet the criteria of the City's policy. Courses taken on an audit basis are not eligible for tuition reimbursement.

3. Each course must be pre-approved in writing in advance of the starting date of the course by the Department Head and City Manager. Blanket approval can not be given for all courses required for a degree or certificate. In approving applications for tuition reimbursement, the following factors shall be considered:

a. Job-relatedness of the course and the City's need for the course of study to be pursued by the employee.

b. Recommendation by the employee's supervisor.

4. Tuition reimbursement is limited to not more than 15 credit hours per school quarter or 10 credit hours per semester, per employee, or an equivalent amount of clock hours, where appropriate.

5. Reimbursement Costs - Upon successful completion of any approved courses, employees shall be reimbursed for the costs of tuition and registration, up to the maximum amounts provided herein below, provided that receipts for such costs shall be provided to the City. No reimbursement shall be provided for any other costs or expenses involved with such approved courses.

#### C. EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY

1. Tuition reimbursement is available to any regular full-time City employee. Tuition is not available to first hire probationary employees, temporary or part-time employees.

2. An employee must be on the active payroll at the time of application for tuition reimbursement through the date listed by the school as the closing date of the quarter or semester for which the reimbursement is requested.

3. If an employee who has been approved for tuition reimbursement, transfers to another City department during the academic semester/quarter, the employee will be eligible to continue for that semester or quarter and reimbursement costs, will be charged to the department that approved the course.

4. An employee taking an extended leave of absence (in excess of four weeks) for any purpose any time during the course is not eligible for tuition reimbursement.

#### D. APPROVAL PROCESS

1. Application for tuition reimbursement requires approval by the employee's Department Head. The Department Head must review each course to ensure compliance with the City's policy, and sign the request so indicating. Upon approval by the Department Head, the tuition reimbursement request shall be submitted to the Human Resources & Services Director for review and forwarded to the City Manager for approval.

2. To establish eligibility for tuition reimbursement, an employee must obtain management approval (Department Head and City Manager) and complete the necessary paperwork for the course prior to the beginning of each quarter or semester. Receipts for tuition must be presented with requests for reimbursement.

3. Approval for reimbursement is dependent on the availability of funds. Funds are appropriated on a first-come, first-serve basis.

## E. REIMBURSEMENT

1. A grade slip, completion certificate or grade transcript must be presented to obtain reimbursement. Any fees or costs associated with obtaining a transcript or grade certification are the responsibility of the employee. To be eligible for tuition reimbursement, applicants must achieve grades that meet the following criteria:

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b. A AB@ or 3.0 grade on a 4.0 scale is required for graduate level courses.

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4. In the case where an employee enrolled in a course approved for reimbursement and where the employee was forced to withdraw due to City action beyond the employee=s control, the City will reimburse the employee 100% of actual tuition costs which cannot be recovered by the employee from the school.

5. The City Manager is authorized to develop, implement and amend policies for this tuition reimbursement program, so long as any such policies or amendments are not inconsistent with the purposes hereof, and the City Manager is further authorized to make determinations on the applications and exceptions to such policies.

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3. Approval for reimbursement is dependent on the availability of funds. Funds are appropriated on a first-come, first-serve basis.

#### E. REIMBURSEMENT

1. A grade slip, completion certificate or grade transcript must be presented to obtain reimbursement. Any fees or costs associated with obtaining a transcript or grade certification are the responsibility of the employee. To be eligible for tuition reimbursement, applicants must achieve grades that meet the following criteria:

a. Technical, undergraduate college courses - AC@ or 2.0 grade on a 4.0 scale. A APass@ grade in a Pass/Fail grading system is acceptable if the school equates APass@ to a grade of AC@ (2.0 on a 4.0 scale).

b. A AB@ or 3.0 grade on a 4.0 scale is required for graduate level courses.

2. Upon receipt of required documentation at the end of the quarter or semester, including receipts of all costs for tuition and

registration and documentation showing any other tuition reimbursement payments received by the employee to cover or contribute to the costs of tuition or registration, the employee will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket tuition and registration costs as follows:

a. Technical Colleges - 100% of Washington state resident tuition plus lab fees.

b Community College - 100% of Washington state resident tuition.

c. Four Year Colleges and Universities - 100% of the University of Washington or Washington State University resident tuition for undergraduate courses. Resident tuition less than the University of Washington or Washington State University rate will be reimbursed at 100% of the lesser rate.

d. Graduate Level Courses - 100% of the University of Washington or Washington State University resident tuition for graduate and post-graduate courses. Resident tuition less than the University of Washington or Washington State University rate will be reimbursed at 100% of the lesser rate.

3. Employees receiving education expense reimbursement from other agencies or sources (e.g., veteran=s aid, scholarships, fellowships, grant-in-aid, etc.) will receive 100% tuition reimbursement from the City reduced by the amount of reimbursement to the employee from these other funding sources.

4. In the case where an employee enrolled in a course approved for reimbursement and where the employee was forced to withdraw due to City action beyond the employee=s control, the City will reimburse the employee 100% of actual tuition costs which cannot be recovered by the employee from the school.

5. The City Manager is authorized to develop, implement and amend policies for this tuition reimbursement program, so long as any such policies or amendments are not inconsistent with the purposes hereof, and the City Manager is further authorized to make determinations on the applications and exceptions to such policies.

#### F. DEFINITIONS:

1. "Job relatedness": specifically having to do with an employees current position.

2.

2. Upon receipt of required documentation at the end of the quarter or semester, including receipts of all costs for tuition and registration and documentation showing any other tuition reimbursement payments received by the employee to cover or contribute to the costs of tuition or registration, the employee will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket tuition and registration costs as follows:

=s policy. Courses taken on an audit basis are not eligible for tuition reimbursement.

3. Each course must be pre-approved in writing in advance of the starting date of the course by the Department Head and City Manager. Blanket approval can not be given for all courses required for a degree or certificate. In approving applications for tuition reimbursement, the following factors shall be considered:

a. Job-relatedness of the course and the City=s need for the course of study to be pursued by the employee.

b. Recommendation by the employee=s supervisor.

4. Tuition reimbursement is limited to not more than 15 credit hours per school quarter or 10 credit hours per semester, per employee, or an equivalent amount of clock hours, where appropriate.

5. Reimbursement Costs - Upon successful completion of any approved courses, employees shall be reimbursed for the costs of tuition and registration, up to the maximum amounts provided herein below, provided that receipts for such costs shall be provided to the City. No reimbursement shall be provided for any other costs or expenses involved with such approved courses.

#### C. EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY

1. Tuition reimbursement is available to any regular full-time City employee. Tuition is not available to first hire probationary employees, temporary or part-time employees.

2. An employee must be on the active payroll at the time of application for tuition reimbursement through the date listed by the school as the closing date of the quarter or semester for which the reimbursement is requested.

3. If an employee who has been approved for tuition reimbursement, transfers to another City department during the academic semester/quarter, the employee will be eligible to continue for that semester or quarter and reimbursement costs, will be charged to the department that approved the course.

4. An employee taking an extended leave of absence (in excess of four weeks) for any purpose any time during the course is not eligible for tuition reimbursement.

#### D. APPROVAL PROCESS

1. Application for tuition reimbursement requires approval by the employee=s Department Head. The Department Head must review each course to ensure compliance with the City=s policy, and sign the request so indicating. Upon approval by the Department Head, the tuition reimbursement request shall be submitted to the Human Resources & Services Director for review and forwarded to the City Manager for approval.

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5. The City Manager is authorized to develop, implement and amend policies for this tuition reimbursement program, so long

as any such policies or amendments are not inconsistent with the purposes hereof, and the City Manager is further authorized to make determinations on the applications and exceptions to such policies.

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#### F. DEFINITIONS:

1. "Job relatedness": specifically having to do with an employees current position.

2. AEmployee=s own time@: hours outside of the employees scheduled work shift.

#### G. REIMBURSEMENT FORM:

A City of Lakewood Tuition Reimbursement Form must be completed by the employee, signed by the Department Head and submitted to the Human Resources Department, along with materials describing the course, at least ten working days prior to the beginning of the course.

#### H. REIMBURSEMENT FOLLOWING COMPLETION:

The City will not pre-pay for any course. The employee must pay for the course and receive reimbursement following successful completion of the course as outlined herein.

2. That if any provision of this Ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this Ordinance or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected.

3. That this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect five (5) days after publication of the Ordinance Summary.

ADOPTED by the City Council this 18th day of May, 1998.

CITY OF LAKEWOOD

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Harrison, Mayor

Alice M. Bush , CMC, City Clerk

Approved as to Form:

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Daniel B. Heid, City Attorney

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