

# **OXFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT TUITION ASSISTANCE POLICY**

## **PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

Periodically, it is necessary for individual employees or groups of employees to take job-related training courses that are not part of a degree program. This can enhance an employee's value to the City and its organizations or departments, as well as providing a means for training in best practices, technologies, new industry standards and for increased knowledge and skills.

Training and development goals and specific courses are identified in conjunction with the employee's supervisor, as part of an employee's development plan, and can include a variety of courses from an array of sources. The organization will assist or reimburse for related expenses, listed below.

### **Criteria:**

- Employment with the City as a full-time, regular employee.
- Classes must be taken at a community college or state college. Attendance of job-related courses at a private college or university must be reviewed and approved in advance at management's discretion. Attendance at a private college, university will require cost sharing with the employee. The amount of cost sharing will be determined at the time an employee submits a copy of an application to college along with a tuition reimbursement form
- Training may occur any time, even during the probationary period.
- Prior written approval of supervisor is required.
- Employees have an obligation to attend classes and seminars paid for by the City.

### **Reimbursement:**

- Up to 100% of tuition and/or registration fees
- 100% of books and supplies
- 100% of lab fees
- Total reimbursement for any calendar year will be \$1,500 per eligible employee up to maximum of five (5) applicants
- Incidental Costs such as equipment or supplies are the responsibility of the employee

### **Employee Responsibilities:**

- Agree to the terms and conditions of the reimbursement policy and program.
- Complete a tuition reimbursement form, with a letter stating the purpose for taking the course, how it benefits the employee and the City, as well as the employee's intent to pursue further education toward licensure, certification in any related area of study.
- Attend classes per institution or agency guidelines and comply with all academic requirements, including student conduct or performance.
- If the employee/student drops or withdraws from a course after an institution's official drop/withdraw date, he/she is responsible for the full amount of tuition and/or fees.
- Complete all coursework and pass with a 'C' average or better. Failure to obtain a passing grade will result in the employee being responsible for all costs for the course.

- Submit a printed copy of final grade(s) to the Chief of Training for final processing and records retention by the City of Oxford.
- Remain employed with the City of Oxford for a minimum of two (2) years beyond the last day of attendance for the course.
- If the employee resigns or is terminated from employment with the City of Oxford during the above two-year period, the employee must reimburse the City on a pro-rated basis as follows:

Year One – 100% of the cost of the program

Year Two – 50% of the cost of the program

- Maintain certification of licensure as required by the State of MS, institution and the City of Oxford for the duration of employment.

### **COLLEGE DEGREE REIMBURSEMENT**

The City of Oxford and the Fire Department, at management's discretion, will reimburse related expenses for degree programs. Our feeling is that a well-rounded education, even outside of the working environment, can enhance an employee's skill base and make them more valuable to the organization. Determination of reimbursement is based on:

#### **Criteria**

- Type of Degree obtained
  - Potential of continued employment with the organization.
  - Length of service with the City (minimum of one consecutive year not on probationary status).
  - Applicability of the degree to the job and/or future positions in the organization.
  - Statement from the candidate regarding purpose, intentions and personal commitment.
- If reimbursement is approved for a degree program, the following criteria apply:
- Classes should be taken at a community college or state college. Private colleges and universities must be approved in advance and will require cost sharing with the employee (to be determined based on degree program length and cost).
  - With cost sharing, an online university may be an appropriate venue.
  - Employees must meet the residency requirement for in-state tuition. Employees not meeting in-state residency requirements will receive tuition equal to that of in-state fees.
  - Course work must meet requirements for an associate, bachelor's or master's degree or for licensure/certification
  - Completion of course must be verified with a grade of "C" or better.
  - Employment must be for a minimum of one consecutive year and not on probationary status.
  - Classes should be scheduled as is feasible to not interfere with normally scheduled working hours.
  - The degree candidate must assume some financial responsibility. The City of Oxford will reimburse:
    - ✓ Up to a maximum of \$1,200 of tuition and/or registration fees
    - ✓ \$100 of books and supplies
    - ✓ \$25 of lab fees