

**CITY OF CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA**

**NUMBER: 2.24 (22.1)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/01/05**

**SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
TUITION ASSISTANCE PLAN POLICY**

**SUPERSEDES: 03/09/05**

**I. PURPOSE**

The City of Chesapeake values continued education and considers it a vital part of employee development. The Tuition Assistance Plan is designed to encourage employees to improve effectiveness in their job performance and to prepare for potential advancement within the City, which will subsequently improve the quality of leadership in City operations.

**II. ELIGIBILITY**

All regular full-time employees of the City of Chesapeake or any of its constitutional offices whose salaries are administered by the City's compensation plan and have completed one-half of their initial probationary period are eligible to apply for tuition assistance under the provisions of this policy.

**III. REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must submit a completed Tuition Assistance Application in accordance with Section V of this Policy.

All courses must be taken through a nationally accredited educational institution, college, or university.

Each course or degree program must be related to an applicant's present position with the City or a reasonable promotional objective as determined by the employee's supervisor and approved by the Director of Human Resources.

All applicants must obtain a minimum grade of "C" for undergraduate courses, a grade of "B" for graduate courses, and a "passing" declaration for enrollment of classes under a special status.

All courses must be attended outside the employee's scheduled work hours. The City will not consider the time spent taking the course or any associated study/research time as compensable work time, unless otherwise directed by the employee's department head.

**IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Tuition assistance shall not exceed \$1,200 for an associate degree, \$1,500 for an undergraduate degree and \$2,000 for graduate and/or post-graduate degree per fiscal year.

The tuition assistance check shall be payable to and endorsed by both the employee and an official

representative of the educational institution authorized to accept funds on behalf of the college or university and apply those funds to the employee’s account for payment of tuition costs.

**V. PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING TUITION ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS**

- A. The employee must submit a completed Tuition Assistance Application along with proof of registration and the invoice of tuition costs to the Department of Human Resources no later than four (4) calendar weeks prior to the beginning of the course.
- B. Within one (1) calendar week of receiving the completed Tuition Assistance Application, the Tuition Assistance Plan Coordinator will determine the eligibility of the request. If the application is eligible, the employee will receive a copy of their approved form. The original approved form will be forwarded directly to the Department of Finance for processing. If the application is ineligible, the employee will receive the original application, along with a detailed explanation for reasons of ineligibility.
- C. Within two (2) calendar weeks of receiving the completed Tuition Assistance Application, the Department of Finance will forward the processed tuition assistance check to the appropriate employee.
- D. The employee must present the check to the educational institution for tuition payment.
- E. After completion of the course, the employee must submit a copy of grades within thirty (30) calendar days in order to comply with the provisions of this Policy. Failure to obtain the minimum grade requirements and/or submit official documentation of grades shall constitute a violation of this Policy, and warrant repayment of tuition assistance.

**VI. REPAYMENT SCHEDULE**

In the event an employee voluntarily separates from the City for any reason, within one (1) year of receiving tuition assistance, the employee is responsible for the repayment of the assistance amount within thirty (30) calendar days of separation from the City’s employ as outlined in the table below. If repayment is not made to the City within thirty (30) calendar days, the City will pursue collection in the same manner and by the same means that the collection of other City debts is handled and deem the employee ineligible for rehire.

<u>Separation Date</u>	<u>Repayment Amount</u>
1-90 calendar days of receipt of assistance from the City	100%
91-180 calendar days of receipt of assistance from the City	75%
181-270 calendar days of receipt of assistance from the City	50%
271-365 calendar days of receipt of assistance from the City	25%
365 + calendar days of receipt of assistance from the City	0%

## **VII. CHANGES, CANCELLATIONS, OR NONFULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS OF CLASSES**

An employee must notify the Department of Human Resources within seven (7) calendar days of dropping or ceasing to attend a course and will be liable for repayment of any funds advanced by the City.

In the event of a course change, the employee is required to submit a Tuition Assistance Application for the new course along with the official proof of registration and invoice of costs. If an employee fails to notify the Department of Human Resources of the course change, the employee will be responsible for repayment of the full amount of tuition payment advance, regardless of whether there is a tuition refund from the institution.

At such time, as it is determined that the employee (1) will not successfully fulfill the requirements of the course, or (2) fails to provide the proper documentation within thirty (30) calendar days after the “date class end” as documented on the tuition application, the employee will be responsible for repayment of any funds advanced by the City.

If repayment is not made to the City within thirty (30) calendar days, the City will pursue collection in the same manner and by the same means that the collection of other City debts is handled.

Once the employee has become delinquent in the repayment of tuition advancement funds, no other advancement for any purpose will be provided to the employee until the tuition amount advanced is satisfied. Failure to adhere to the terms of this Policy may subject the employee to disciplinary action.

## **VIII. EXCLUSIONS/LIMITATIONS**

Approval for assistance will be on a first-come, first-served, basis contingent upon the availability of funds.

Tuition assistance will not be provided for laboratory fees, internet fees, textbooks, supplies, transportation, or any other expense associated with the course(s).

The maximum allowable tuition assistance amount will be based on the employee’s total cost of tuition excluding any assistance from another government agency, organization or association (i.e. veteran’s benefits, grants, scholarships, etc).

Failure to report any outside financial assistance, grants or scholarships may result in disciplinary action and the employee shall be required to repay all sums expended by the City for the year(s) in which the outside financial assistance, grants or scholarships were received by the employee.

Failure to submit all appropriate paperwork for tuition assistance prior to the start of class shall result in the employee only being eligible to request reimbursement at the conclusion of the class, contingent upon the availability of funds.

**IX. TAXES**

All forms of assistance are subject to income tax laws and regulations as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. Assistance provided up to \$5,200 is not included as taxable income and will not be included as wages, tips or any other compensation. Employees can not use any of the tax-free education expenses paid for by the City as the basis for any other deduction or credit, including the Hope credit and lifetime learning credit.

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Dr. Clarence V. Cuffee, City Manager

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Date