



CITY OF KINSTON

Personnel Policy

Subject: Education Assistance Program	Section: Human Resources		Review Responsibility: Director of Human Resources		
	Policy #:: 2	Effective Date: 12/01/2018	Rev. #: 4	Revision Date: 09/06/2018	Page: 1 of 4
	Supersedes: 12/1/2006	Prepared By: Gloria Blake <i>Gloria Blake</i>		Approved By: Tony Sears <i>Tony Sears</i>	

1.0 Purpose

To establish and communicate the City's tuition reimbursement program and educational bonus plan designed to encourage and financially assist employees to continue their education.

2.0 Organizations Affected

2.1 All full-time City employees working in all departments

3.0 Policy

The City may provide (subject to the availability of funds) financial incentives to encourage an employee to initiate and complete an accredited program to obtain a GED or high school diploma, a certificate, a two-year, four-year and/or graduate degree program in a field directly supportive of the employee's position with the City.

4.0 Procedures

4.1 Employee Eligibility

- 4.1.1 A full-time employee who has successfully completed his or her probationary trainee period and who is not receiving total or equivalent financial assistance from other sources (e.g. fellowships, scholarships, Veteran's Administration Educational Benefits) is eligible to receive tuition reimbursement for approved courses of study in accordance with the provisions of this policy.
- 4.1.2 An employee shall not receive a benefit for Educational Assistance under more than one policy. Should an employee be eligible for a bonus, reimbursement or salary increase under any other city ordinance or policy, the City Manager shall determine under which policy the employee may receive a benefit.
- 4.1.3 If the employee is receiving financial assistance from other sources, the City may participate with tuition reimbursement for the portion not covered by the other source. Loans obtained to pay for educational expenses would not reduce amount of City's participation.
- 4.1.4 Before enrolling in a program of study, the employee shall make a written request for program or degree approval through their Department Head

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using appropriate application forms. See Appendix A, B and C. An employee currently pursuing a program of study shall consult with the Human Resources Department to determine whether the program is eligible. The completed application together with the Department Head's recommendation shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Department for review and processing. The City Manager shall make the final decision to either approve or deny the request.

- 4.1.5 Determinations concerning an employee's eligibility or participation by the City in this plan shall be subject to the approval of the City Manager, which shall be final and conclusive.

4.2 Approved Course of Study

- 4.2.1 The course of study must be directly related to and supportive of the duties of the position currently held by the employee and to his or her logical progression within the same general area of employment.
- 4.2.2 The certificate or degree resulting from the course of study shall not be a requirement for the position held by the employee.
- 4.2.3 The course of study shall be pursued outside regular employment. However, in isolated and rare occasions when attendance during normal working hours is the only option available to an employee, the City Manager may approve arrangements to allow attendance, provided the employee makes up for or otherwise compensates the City for those hours.
- 4.2.4 All eligible programs or courses of study offered at accredited colleges, universities, community colleges, technical institutes or business schools shall be approved in advance by the City Manager upon the recommendation of the employee's Department Head and the Human Resources Director.
- 4.2.5 Correspondence programs or internet courses of study offered by an accredited educational institution must receive prior approval to be eligible for reimbursement.

4.3 Tuition Reimbursement

- 4.3.1 Subject to availability of funds, the City shall reimburse 100% of eligible tuition costs for the course of study up to a maximum of \$1,000 per fiscal year provided the employee earns at least a passing grade of "B". Grades of "C" or "Pass" for certain pass/fail classes shall be reimbursed at a rate of 50% of eligible costs. No reimbursement shall be made for a grade received less than "C" or "Pass" i.e. receiving an "Incomplete" or "Withdrawal".

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4.3.2 Eligible reimbursable costs include tuition, registration fees, laboratory fees and other such eligible fees required by the school. All other items shall be at the discretion of the City Manager.

4.3.3 In order to receive tuition reimbursement, a course completion certificate and an official grade transcript with the necessary receipts from the institution shall be filed with the Department Head or his/her designee showing completion of the course. For graduate work, successful completion shall be that which is required by the graduate school. After review and approval of the Department Head and the Human Resources Director, the City Manager shall make the final decision to approve or deny the tuition reimbursement.

4.3.4 Courses started or completed prior to approval of Educational Assistance are not eligible for reimbursement.

4.4 Educational Bonus

4.4.1 Subject to the availability of funds and after successful completion of an approved program, a one-time educational bonus shall be paid (Reimbursement is made according to Section 127 of the Internal Revenue Code) as follows:

GED	\$ 500 Bonus
One Year Technical Certificate	\$ 250 Bonus
Associate Degree	\$ 500 Bonus
Bachelor's/Master's Degree	\$1,000 Bonus

4.4.2 If a course of study leading to one of the certificates or degree programs specified herein was initiated prior to the adoption of this policy or prior to the employee's date of employment the City shall participate only in the payment of the educational bonus in the amount equal to that proportion of the total required course work of the specific course of study that was approved, initiated and completed in accordance with this policy and program.

4.4.3 An employee shall not receive a bonus for course work more than once. For course work where the employee previously received a bonus, the amount of that bonus shall be deducted from the total eligible bonus for the current course work and or degree program. An education bonus for a GED is exempt from this clause.

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4.5 Reimbursement Agreement

- 4.5.1 In order for the City to realize a benefit from the employee's educational and professional development and as a condition to the acceptance to any tuition reimbursement and/or bonus under this policy, the employee shall remain in the employment of the City for at least one year following the receipt of such tuition reimbursement and/or bonus. Should the employee leave prior to that one year, the employee shall repay the amount proportionate to the unfulfilled period of service specified.
- 4.5.2 Under hardship conditions, as approved by the City Manager, reimbursements to the City may be made within one year after separation if necessary with binding legal instruments submitted by the employee.
- 4.5.3 Death, permanent disability and involuntary termination shall be sufficient cause to void such agreements and obligations.

5.0 Appendix/Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix A- Reimbursement/Bonus Agreement
- 5.2 Appendix B- Educational Assistance Request
- 5.3 Appendix C- Course Work Program Summary



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Appendix A

Reimbursement/Bonus Agreement

I _____ upon completion of my education program, and as a condition of my acceptance of any Education Assistance tuition reimbursement and/or bonus, I agree to continue working for the City of Kinston for a minimum of 12 months or make a monetary repayment in lieu of continued service in the amount of 1/12 of any tuition reimbursement or bonus paid to me for each month remaining of the 12 month period as of the date of my early separation. The repayment obligation shall be for the last Education Assistance reimbursement and/or bonus received and shall not be cumulative. I understand and agree that this Agreement is not intended and shall not be construed as a guarantee of employment for any term or period of time, and my employment with the City of Kinston shall at all times remain AT WILL.

My death, permanent disability or involuntary termination is sufficient cause to void this agreement and obligation. Other arrangements may be made for hardship only upon approval by the City Manager.

Employee Signature

Date

Witness

Date



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Appendix B

Education Assistance Request

Employee Name

Date

Department/Division

Position Title

Course Work/Curriculum

Description of course of study: _____

Objective of course of study: _____

Relationship or applicability to job: _____

Benefit to City: _____

Benefit to Employee: _____

Institution attending: _____

Plan of Study: _____

Schedule for completion: _____

Department Head _____ Date _____

HR Director _____ Date _____

City Manager _____ Date _____



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Appendix C

Course Work Program Summary

Employee Name

Date	Course Title	Grade Rec'd	Semester/ Year	Tuition Paid	Reimbursement Request	Dept. Head Approval	HR Approval	Amount Paid

Please attached official grades, payments, or any other information pertaining to your education and turn in to Human Resources for review.

(office use)

All needed documentation has been received and reviewed by HR Representative
on Date .