

**TOWN OF PRESCOTT VALLEY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Subject:

**EDUCATION, TRAINING
AND DEVELOPMENT**

File Under Section:

PERSONNEL

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Approved By:


**Larry Tarkowski
Town Manager**

Date: **9.17.07** /S

1.0 POLICY

- 1.1 The Town of Prescott Valley is committed to providing training and development opportunities to its employees and regards the personal and professional development of its employees as an important part of its organizational mission. To promote and facilitate training and career education, the Town will provide financial assistance to employees who seek to improve their ability to carry out their responsibilities within the organization.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the reimbursement of educational expenses to employees for courses taken at accredited institutions.
- 2.2 This policy also establishes the procedure for attendance at conferences, seminars, meetings and conventions that would be of direct benefit to the Town.

3.0 APPLICABILITY

- 3.1 All Town of Prescott Valley full-time employees.

4.0 REFERENCE

- 4.1 IRS Regulations governing taxability of benefits.

5.0 EDUCATIONAL / TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

- 5.1 Employees are encouraged to take courses that are directly related to their current positions or those that will prepare them for positions of increasing responsibility in their chosen career area with the Town.

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Approval for tuition reimbursement may be allowed for non-graduate and graduate level courses offered by accredited colleges, universities or vocational training institutes located throughout the United States. Schools must have academic accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) or the Council for Higher Education (CHEA).

- 5.2 Courses selected must be taken on the employee's own time and not interfere with regularly-scheduled working hours unless prior arrangements have been made with the immediate supervisor.
- 5.3 Employees must have successfully completed their initial introductory period to be eligible for tuition reimbursement. One year of continuous employment is required for degree program eligibility. Employees must have regular, active pay status at the time of course completion.
- 5.4 Employees must submit and obtain approval of an Application for Educational Assistance before the start of classes. A course syllabus must be attached. The Town Manager shall be the final judge of course acceptability and availability of funds for this purpose.
- 5.5 Tuition reimbursement is for the course only. No reimbursement will be allowed for books, lab fees, travel/parking expenses, insurance, infirmary costs, material costs or fees paid for student activity, health, or athletic events.
- 5.6 Any reimbursement shall only be after successful completion of the course/program and continued employment at time of completion. Successful completion constitutes a passing grade for the class taken.
- 5.7 The Town will reimburse employees up to a maximum number of credit hours taken.

<u>Course Level</u>	<u>Maximum Credits Per Year</u>	<u>School Rate</u>
Associates degree or individual courses (100 or 200 level)	15 credit hours	Yavapai College
Bachelor's Degree (300 or 400 level)	12 credit hours	Arizona State University
Master's Degree	9 credit hours	Arizona State University

- 5.7.1 Reimbursement will be compensated up to the actual credit hour rate for the comparable semester at the corresponding school.
- 5.7.2 The Town recognizes the benefits of online and distance learning classes for employees. Online classes are eligible for reimbursement under the same guidelines.

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5.8 Request for reimbursement must be made within thirty (30) days following the completion of the course of study.

5.9 Degree Programs

5.9.1 An employee who pursues a degree (associate or bachelor's) makes a major investment of his or her time. Likewise, the Town's commitment to offer financial assistance for a degree is also major. Therefore, the degree sought by the employee must be one which can reasonably be expected to contribute to the career progress of the employee at the Town and one who's major can be directly related to the career path the employee is presently pursuing with the Town.

5.9.2 Examples of degrees specifically related to career paths within the Town include: Accounting, Business Administration, Finance, Civil Engineering, Criminal Justice, Human Resources, Information Systems, Planning, and Public Administration.

5.9.3 An employee seeking reimbursement for a degree must have a minimum of one year of continuous employment with the Town.

5.9.4 Courses required for the degree program, but which are not directly related to the degree (e.g. Psychology 101 for an Accounting degree), will be evaluated on an individual basis for reimbursement eligibility.

5.9.5 Graduate level courses must be submitted to the Town Manager for approval.

5.9.6 Funds available for reimbursement in any calendar year will be established annually during the budget process.

6.0 PROFESSIONAL REVIEW COURSES

6.1 Education expense of a professional review course (such as for a CPA) or the cost of taking a professional examination (such as a state license for a Professional Engineer) is eligible for pre-payment. Approval will be based upon the relevance to the employee's career with the Town.

6.2 To be eligible, the employee must,

6.2.1 Obtain prior written approval using the Application for Educational Assistance;

6.2.2 Begin the review course or sit for the examination after completion of his/her introductory period (unless required for the position);

6.2.3 Have regular, active pay status at the time of the certification; and

6.2.4 Pass all parts of the examination.

6.3 Travel, meal, and lodging expenses will not be reimbursed.

- 6.4 Time off to participate in review courses during normal work hours will be charged to authorized leave time. However, paid work time to sit for the examination may be authorized by the Town Manager.
- 6.5 Employees who receive approval and meet the other requirements are eligible for payment at 100% to a maximum total of \$1,000 per review course expenses. Study manuals or like materials are eligible expenses for certifications. Testing fees are paid at 100% of cost.
- 6.6 Employees receiving pre-payment and who do not pass all parts of the certification exam must retake the test at their expense. The test must be re-taken and successfully completed within six (6) months or at the next available testing date, whichever is sooner. Employees who receive pre-payment and do not obtain their certification will have the amount of the class and/or testing fee deducted from their paycheck until the amount is reimbursed in full to the Town. Fees will not be deducted for more than thirteen (13) pay periods.
- 6.7 Employees may choose to pay for the expenses associated with certification and request reimbursement upon successful completion.

7.0 JOB-RELATED TRAINING

- 7.1 Job-related training is any training that aids the employee in acquiring, improving, or updating a skill, which is needed in the employee's current position and is necessary for acceptable job performance.
- 7.2 Job-related training is also any training that prepares an employee for progression through his/her current classification series or a series identified by the Town as being closely related for career progression purposes.
- 7.3 The division in which the employee is currently employed will be responsible for providing the appropriate release time and expense reimbursement when an employee in one division is involved in training related to a classification progression series utilized in another division.
- 7.4 Activities in this area include professional meetings, conventions, seminars, and workshops. Qualified activities shall be subject to available resources and operational need.
- 7.5 Attendance will be with pay whether this type of training is initially directed by management or formally requested by an employee and approved by the Town Manager. The Training Attendance Requisition and Authorization Form will be used to obtain proper authorization to attend training and will also serve as the purchase requisition to initiate procurement and payment processes.
- 7.6 Attendance at training activities outside of the employee's normal work hours may require the employee to be compensated at up to time and one-half for all hours in excess of forty (40) during the workweek in which the training is held. (Refer to Overtime Policy.)

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- 7.7 Attendance at a training program involving out-of-state travel by an employee requires a memo of justification from the department head and approval by the Town Manager.
- 7.8 Supervisors are to ensure the employee attends the training as scheduled. If the employee does not attend the approved training, the department head and finance division must be notified.
- 7.9 Depending on the content of the training program, employees may be asked to develop a lesson plan or outline to share the information with an appropriate audience.
- 7.10 Approval for Arizona POST course work for uniformed police officers shall be at the discretion of the Police Chief. Records of such training shall be maintained in the employee's training file and/or personnel file.

8.0 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 8.1 Personal development includes training or educational activities that are of personal interest to the employee but unrelated to the employee's career plan or job needs.
- 8.2 The Town will not pay for costs associated with this type of training activity. Attendance shall be on the employee's own time. A formal leave request may be granted to employees where it is determined that the department will receive some benefit.
- 8.3 Employees who acquire training on their own time and at their own expense are encouraged to notify human resources so the information can be noted in the employee's personnel file.

9.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 9.1 Human resources is responsible for administering this policy.