

TO: ALL COUNTY PERSONNEL
FROM: VERDENIA BAKER
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
PREPARED BY: HUMAN RESOURCES
SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM
PPM #: CW-P-008

ISSUE DATE
July 08, 2022

EFFECTIVE DATE
October 01, 2022

PURPOSE:

To promote a program encouraging Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioner (hereinafter “County”) employees to improve their efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out their job duties through additional education and training.

UPDATES:

Future updates to this PPM are the responsibility of the Director of Human Resources.

AUTHORITY:

1. Florida Statue 112.063 Reimbursement of County Employees for Educational Expenses
2. Palm Beach County Ordinance 2000-020 (P.O.P 710119) Adopted 7-25-2000

POLICY:

All part-time (20 hours or more) and full-time permanent-status employees (i.e., those who have successfully completed their initial probation period prior to the course completion date) who satisfactorily complete approved training related to, or coursework leading to a degree related to, their job, career advancement or redirection within the County organization, may be entitled to a reimbursement of their paid tuition costs. The reimbursement of educational expenses in no way obligates the County to grant time off or leave for the taking or completion of such course or program of instruction. An employee shall not be permitted to utilize any space, personnel, equipment, or supplies of the office by which he or she is employed in the process of fulfilling any of the requirements imposed by the coursework for which he or she is being reimbursed. Employee tuition reimbursement for Fire Rescue Bargaining Unit employees shall be in compliance with Fire Rescue’s Operational Procedure.

Qualified Expenditures and Reimbursement Amounts: “Tuition” is defined as the cost per credit hour. Costs for books, registration fees, online fees, lab fees, and other special fees beyond cost per credit hour are not covered. Correspondence course charges that do not differentiate between tuition

and material costs will be treated as tuition. The maximum annual reimbursement per employee is **\$3,600** per fiscal year for undergraduate courses or **\$4,400** per fiscal year for graduate level courses.

Employees who qualify for similar benefits from another funding source are not eligible for full reimbursement from the County. Such funding sources include the G.I. Bill, other tuition reimbursement/refund programs, grants or scholarships, and any other award that is not subject to employee repayment.

Satisfactory Completion: Tuition is reimbursed upon satisfactory completion of the course. Satisfactory completion is a grade of “C” or above in graded undergraduate courses and a grade of “B” or above for graded graduate courses. For ungraded courses, such as correspondence courses, pass/fail courses, etc., employees receiving a certificate of completion or similar document will be considered to have satisfactorily completed the course.

Coursework: Coursework is defined as any course of study, training, or education given by a pre-approved accredited educational institution which in the judgment of the Director, Human Resources, or his/her designee relates to the employee’s career field, career advancement, or redirection within the County organization. Certification training, seminars, conferences or conventions related to or required to perform in the employees’ job classification are reimbursed under the Travel PPM #CW-F-009.

Employee Obligations: Employees receiving tuition reimbursement up to \$850 per fiscal year under this program will be obligated to continue working for the County for a **minimum of one year** following satisfactory completion of the course work. Employees receiving \$850 or more in tuition reimbursement within a fiscal year will be obligated to continue working for the County for a **minimum of two years** following satisfactory completion of the course work.

Employees who are over reimbursed, resign, or are discharged from the County prior to the expiration of the required obligation period shall reimburse the County for any tuition reimbursements received. The County may recoup the funds through deductions from the employee’s paycheck(s) and/or through such other collection means as the County elects to use. Employees will be notified at the time of separation regarding their outstanding obligation. Any uncollected funds not returned within 120 days will be reported on the employee’s Form W-2, although collection efforts will continue.

Employees who are discharged due to reduction in force or layoff or who receive a waiver as specified below will not be required to reimburse the County for tuition refunds reimbursements received, and will not have any associated tax reporting. The Director, Human Resources, may grant a waiver of such obligation at his/her discretion, based upon employee hardship, upon written request and documentation of hardship by the employee.

As a condition of eligibility to participate in the Tuition Reimbursement Program, all employees must enter into a contract with the County agreeing to the above repayment provisions.

Budgeting: Beginning each fiscal year, Human Resources will budget a General Fund line item used exclusively to accommodate tuition reimbursements for all County Departments. However, all amounts expended on behalf of employees in departments that received revenue outside ad valorem

taxes or provide revenue-generating services will be charged directly to the same exclusive line item in said departments' budgets.

PROCEDURES:

1. Employees electing to participate in the Tuition Reimbursement Program will submit a completed "Application for Tuition Reimbursement" to their Department Head no later than five (5) days following the close of course registration. Each course must be submitted on a separate application.
2. Department Heads will affix their recommendation to the application and forward it to the Human Resources Department. Applications must be submitted through the online tuition reimbursement process.
3. All applications, whether or not they are recommended by the Department Head, will be reviewed by the Director, Human Resources, or his/her designee(s), who will coordinate the program, make final determination of approval, and notify all applicants of the action taken, and authorize payments.
4. To request reimbursement, approved applicants must submit their tuition payment documentation packet (including account detail of any financial aid received and official grade or completion notification, as applicable) to the Director, Human Resources, no later than forty-five (45) calendar days from the course ending date.

The tuition documentation packet must include the following: the course schedule (showing the beginning and ending dates of the course), the final grade report, a student account detail for the term dated after the ending date of the course (showing all charges for the term and any grants, scholarships, or financial aid that is not subject to employee repayment), and a per credit hour fee schedule from the institution. Failure to provide a complete packet may delay reimbursement or disqualify the course for reimbursement.



**VERDENIA BAKER
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Supersession History

1. Administrative Order 7-6, dated 5/87
2. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 7/1/88
3. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 2/1/91
4. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 1/29/96
5. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 1/15/99
6. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 11/2/00
7. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 1/17/01
8. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 10/1/02
9. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 10/01/08
10. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 6/1/09
11. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 10/2/2012
12. PPM# CW-P-008, dated 10/16/2014