

Should an employee seek to enter a multi-year degree program for which tuition reimbursement under subsection (a) of this section be impractical, upon recommendation of the Mayor, the Council may, by ordinance, authorize the Mayor to enter into a contract with the employee. The contract shall, at minimum, include the following terms:

- (1) The length of time the employee has to complete the degree program;
- (2) The expenses for which the Village will provide reimbursement and the conditions under which reimbursement will be paid;
- (3) The work schedule of the employee during the degree program;
- (4) A specific benefit which the employee will provide to the Village in exchange for the Village providing full or partial reimbursement to the employee for completing the degree program, which may be a requirement that the employee must work for the Village for a specified period of time after completing the degree program or be liable to reimburse the Village for tuition refund payments made.

(b) The following requirements shall apply to all employees participating in the Tuition Refund Program:

- (1) The number of individuals who may participate in the Tuition Refund

Program is hereby limited as follows: In any given year, no more than three employees in the Fire Department, three employees in the Police Department and one employee in each of the following departments: Recreation, Service and Administration. In the event that more employees in an applicable department are interested in pursuing the Tuition Refund Program, those individuals with the most seniority shall be eligible first. To the extent that at the time of the adoption of this section more than the specified number of employees in any department are participating in the program, no new employees in that department may participate until the number of existing participants have completed their studies necessary to bring the department below the specified number of maximum participants;

(2) Employees who already hold a Bachelor Degree are ineligible for the Tuition Refund Program, except as provided below. Employees who have already received an Associate Degree may only take courses working toward a Bachelor Degree;

(3) Employees pursuing a Master's Degree or any degree above a Bachelor Degree, shall be limited to those who are already in supervisory positions (sergeants, lieutenants and captains in Police and Fire, the Recreation Director, Service Director, Director of Administrative Services). Persons already holding a Master's Degree or other advanced degree are ineligible for the Tuition Refund Program;

(4) Refunds shall be made on a course basis. Employees who are taking part in the Tuition Refund Program consistent with the provisions contained in the preceding subsections shall be entitled to an 80% reimbursement of tuition payments and mandatory fees for each course, only if they receive an A or B. An employee shall be

entitled to a 50% reimbursement for a C. Employees with a grade below a C, are not eligible for any tuition refund. Passing a pass/fail course shall be regarded as a B;

(5) Prior to each fall semester or fall quarter the cumulative grade average earned by the employee participating in the tuition reimbursement program shall be submitted to the department head and mayor. If the cumulative grade point average falls below a 2.75, the employee is ineligible for reimbursement until the cumulative grade point average rises above 2.75;

(6) The maximum total lifetime reimbursement for each Village employee may not exceed \$30,000 over the course of his/her career as an employee of the Village;

(7) Employees who effective as of the date of this section had a contract to participate in a multi-year degree program may continue to do so pursuant to the provisions contained in Section 258.075 as it existed prior to the adoption of this section, provided they remain in compliance with the terms of the previously existing code and their specific contract with the Village;

(8) Only courses which are a part of the employee's approved degree or certificate program or have been specifically approved as provided in subsection (a) hereof shall be eligible for tuition refund;

(9) Only courses taken at schools fully accredited by a nationally recognized regional accrediting body are eligible for our tuition reimbursement. Accrediting associations are listed below:

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges

(c) In addition, to comply with the foregoing requirements, uniformed personnel in the Police and Fire Departments must also comply with the following:

(1) Police officers, sergeants and lieutenants are only eligible for tuition reimbursement for courses taken either in the classroom or online at the following public or private college or universities located in the Tri-State area:

- Bowling Green State University
- Kent State University
- Northern Kentucky University
- Wright State University

- Indiana University
- Eastern Kentucky University
- Ashland University
- Penn State University
- Xavier University
- College of Mt. St. Joseph
- University of Cincinnati

Under special circumstances, at the recommendation of the Police Chief, the Mayor may approve other schools.

(2) Uniformed personnel in the Fire Department are only eligible for tuition reimbursement for Bachelor Degree programs approved by the U.S. Fire Administration. Currently, such programs exist at:

- Bowling Green State University
- Eastern Kentucky University
- Hocking College
- University of Cincinnati
- Oklahoma State University
- Wright State University
- Cuyahoga Community College
- Lake Superior State University
- Michigan State University
- SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
- Hampton University

Master's Degrees should be evaluated by the Fire Chief as the U.S. Fire Administration has not created an approved list of programs. Programs that add value to the employees, their job function and Village operations of the Fire Department may be considered for approval.

(3) The Fire Chief may also approve participation in Associate Degree Programs or specific fire related courses at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College or other schools listed in paragraph (c)(1) hereof.

(Ord. 97-40. Passed 4-2-98; Ord. 10-48. Passed 9-9-10; Ord. 14-04. Passed 3-11-14; Ord. 18-15. Passed 2-13-18.)

