

57. REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAINING & TUITION EXPENSES

I. PURPOSE:

- A. West Chester Township strives to attract and retain top talent to provide services to its residents. Tuition reimbursement and employer-sponsored job training helps recruit high-quality employees and provides an avenue for high-achieving personnel to grow their skills.

II. SCOPE:

- A. All active full-time Township employees are eligible to participate in the Township Tuition Reimbursement Program. Certification programs for the Police Academy and Fire-fighter/EMT are REQUIRED for those respective positions and while paid by the Township, there are Taxable Fringe requirements for expenditures over \$5,250.
- B. Dependents and independent contractors are excluded.
- C. Tuition reimbursement and job training funding may be considered a taxable fringe benefit pursuant to IRS guidelines.
- D. Tuition Reimbursement is for employee requested class work that results in a grade. Pass/fail is permissible
- E. Ungraded class work is typically employer paid and budgeted under Training.
- F. This policy only provides a summary of the West Chester Township Reimbursement Policy. See Attachment A for the complete policy.

III. POLICY:

A. Tuition Reimbursement

1. The Township may reimburse employees up to \$5,250 per year for continuing education through an accredited program that either offers growth in an area related to his or her current position or that may lead to promotional opportunities. This education may include college credit courses, continuing education unit courses, seminars, certification tests, and other courses as the Department Director or Township Administrator determines to be job-related.
 - a. Tuition reimbursement is limited to the cost of the class/course. Expenses related to fees, books, supplies, etc. are not eligible for reimbursement.
2. To be eligible for tuition reimbursement under this policy an employee must be an active full-time employee and be on payroll when the course is completed.

3. Employees must receive approval for a course from their Department Director or the Township Administrator prior to course enrollment.
4. To receive tuition reimbursement, employees must 1) submit a request to participate in and be approved for the tuition reimbursement program before the class/course begins; and, 2) request reimbursement after the class/course ends.
 - a. Applications must be submitted **and** approved at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the class/course.
 - b. Requests for reimbursement and support documentation must be submitted and approved no later than 60 days after a class/course ends. Reimbursement request received or unapproved after established deadlines will be rejected for payment.
5. An employee must secure a passing grade of "C" or better or obtain a certification to receive any reimbursement.
 - a. Pass, Satisfactory, Mastery, and Credit are also eligible passing grades.
 - b. Grades of Withdraw, Failed, and Incomplete are not eligible to reimburse.
6. Expenses must be validated by receipts and a copy of the final grade or certification received.
7. If employment at the Township ends within one year of the completion of the course for which a tuition reimbursement has been provided, the employee is required to refund the full amount of the tuition reimbursement to the Township. This requirement may be waived in cases of hardship or other appropriate circumstances as determined by the Township Administrator.
8. A part-time Firefighter who has acquired the Firefighter/EMT certification at Township expense would be required to reimburse if employment ends within three years.
9. Employees will not receive reimbursement payments after termination. There are no exceptions for any reason, even if the class/course was completed before termination.
10. The Tuition Reimbursement Program is a reimbursement program. Employees will only be reimbursed for eligible education expenses actually paid by the employee. Education costs paid by other sources (e.g., scholarships, grants, discounts, GI bill, etc.) are not eligible for reimbursement. Tuition funded by students loans which must be repaid, is eligible for reimbursement.

11. Reimbursement opportunity is forfeited 60 days after the end date of a course.

B. Job Training Funding

1. Select employee categories (i.e., Police Officer, Part-time Firefighter, Career Fire Fighter) may be provided employer-sponsored training to meet the minimum requirements for their job position. While the Employer will pay for the total cost of the Training directly to Vendor, The Employee will be responsible for Taxable Fringe on amounts above \$5,250 per IRS guidelines.
2. If an employee fails a class or does not pass/complete the training course, he will be required to reimburse the Township for the cost of the class/course.

C. General provisions

1. Employees will not be provided any cash benefit in lieu of tuition reimbursement or job training funding.
2. Upon approval for tuition reimbursement or job training funding, employees will be required to acknowledge in writing that they understand program requirements.
3. Generally, classes should be arranged around work schedules so as not to interfere with an employee's job duties. However, Department Directors may permit an employee to complete some or all educational programs during work hours, if it is deemed to be in the interest of the Township.
4. The Township will not reimburse or pay for a course more than once. Requests for payment of duplicate courses will be rejected.