

12.02 TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

The County may, within available funds, reimburse up to 100% of the approved tuition cost for regular, full-time employees only, subject to the following guidelines:

- 1.** The course must be taken at an accredited educational institution.
- 2.** The course must be directly related to the employee's work as a County employee, must directly contribute to the improvement of skills or knowledge used in the performance of County duties and must result in a direct benefit or contribute to increased efficiency to the County as determined by the Human Resources department.
- 3.** Eligible employees whose tuition reimbursement request is approved shall be reimbursed upon proof of payment of tuition and copy of grades to the department director/manager in accordance with the following:
- 4.** No employee shall be entitled to reimbursement for textbooks or course materials. Employees will be limited to two (2) courses per semester. No reimbursement shall be made for course materials. Eligible employees whose tuition request is approved shall be entitled to reimbursement upon proof of payment of tuition.
- 5.** As a condition of receiving tuition reimbursement, the employee must receive a grade of "C" or better.
- 6.** If an employee voluntarily resigns employment or is terminated for misconduct within three (3) years after receiving tuition reimbursement, the employee shall refund the County a prorated portion of the reimbursed funds. The refund shall be prorated using a formula of 1/3 for each full year worked after completion of the course(s). The refund will be due at the time of separation. Any refunds due the County and not paid at the time of separation, shall be deducted from the employee's final or remaining pay. In the event there is a balance due after this deduction, the employee will have thirty (30) calendar days to make payment in full unless other arrangements have been made, to the Human Resources Department to avoid legal action recovery.

FLAGLER COUNTY TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE: To provide a policy and procedure for the application and refunding of tuition costs to employees who successfully complete approved courses of instruction.

II. OBJECTIVE: To enhance service to the citizens of Flagler County by providing encouragement and financial assistance to employees who successfully complete courses of instruction which may improve their effectiveness in their current positions or which may enable them to attain promotional advancement within their present career field or other career fields of Flagler County Government.

III. POLICY

A. Eligibility: All regular full-time employees who meet the following criteria are eligible for tuition reimbursement:

- 1.** Employee has completed at least one (1) year of service preceding the commencement of classes.
- 2.** Courses that are a part of the school's core (required) courses for a degree or are elective courses which are required as part of a degree-seeking program, or are prerequisite courses for core or required electives, or are directly related to the employee's current position or higher level position within their career field of Flagler County Government will be approved. Non-degree or adult education courses may also be considered if they are directly related to the employee's current position or higher level position within their career field and could contribute to increased competency in that field. Final determination will be made by the County Administrator or his designee. Some Correspondence courses and Continuing Education Units (CEU) are not considered eligible for the Tuition Reimbursement Program but may be reimbursed at the department level at the discretion of the County Administrator or his designee.
- 3.** Approved application by the department/division head and the Human Resources Director received by the Human Resources Department, at least thirty (30) days prior to the registration for a course(s).
- 4.** Employee is on the payroll at the time the tuition reimbursement is made.
- 5.** Employee has achieved a final grade of an A, B, C, or S. (A satisfactory grade in Pass/Fail courses)

B. Types of Courses Covered: The courses covered by this policy are those given by an accredited college or university, reputable business or vocational school, or other educational institution approved by the Human Resources department. Documentation showing accreditation must be attached to application. Note: Only courses offered by colleges or universities that are accredited by the Association of Colleges and Schools, the official accrediting agency for educational institutions in the South, or comparable accrediting agencies are acceptable. If you are in doubt concerning accreditation, contact the Human Resources Department prior to making a commitment.

C. Attendance at Courses: All course work must be accomplished outside of employee's normal work schedule.

D. Benefits: Employees whose applications are approved will be entitled to tuition reimbursement (not to exceed maximum amount charged by State institutions) for each approved course in accordance with the following schedule:

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Employee submits a Tuition Reimbursement Application (FCTRApp02) to the Human Resources Department via their department/division head and County Administrator or his designee thirty (30) days prior to the registration for a course(s) in order to ensure prior approval or rejection of such applications. Submission of the request after the date of registration does not obligate the County to approve the request. It is recommended that first time enrollees contact the Human Resources Department prior to enrollment to ensure eligibility. For withholding employment tax purposes, the application must state if and how each course is job related. A course that provides the minimum requirements for the job or that is for promotional purposes is not defined as being job related for exemption of Federal taxes. Employee and their supervisor will also sign the agreement for reimbursement form (FCTR02).

B. The Human Resources Department will return the copy of the application to the employee indicating approval or rejection of the course(s) for which reimbursement is requested. The department/division head will also be notified via memorandum.

C. Employee must pay tuition costs directly to the college/school sponsoring the course(s).

D. Official notice of grades and the original tuition receipt must be submitted to the Human Resources Department within thirty (30) days of the date of notice of the grade. If the notice of grades is not dated, the date of course completion will be used to calculate the thirty (30) day period.

E. As revisions are made regarding Tuition Reimbursement, the Human Resources Department will send an updated memorandum highlighting the changes.

V. REPAYMENT A. If an employee separates from the County for any reason within three (3) years of receiving tuition reimbursements the employee will repay the County as follows: **1.** Separation less than one (1) year from reimbursement: employee will repay the County 66% of tuition reimbursed to them.

2. Separation of more than one (1) year but less than two (2) years from reimbursement: employee will repay the County 66% of tuition reimbursed to them.

3. Separation of more than two (2) years but less than three (3) years from reimbursement: employee will repay the County 33% of tuition reimbursed to them.

4. After three (3) years, there is no reimbursement due to the County from employee.

Employees who may be covered by collective bargaining agreements will be covered under these provisions except for specifically pre-empted sections by the collective bargaining agreement, which have been the subject of negotiation and agreement.