

## Chapter 8: Training and Development

### ***Section 8-1: Training and Education Program – General Policy***

a. Policy. The County encourages the development and utilization of training and education programs that enhance the employees' ability to perform their work more effectively and/or to qualify for promotion within the employee's career field. Additionally, the County encourages employee development to meet future workforce needs. Such programs shall be planned, coordinated, and conducted so as to maximize the effectiveness of training and education funds available within centralized funds and within departments. Where subject matter and available resources do not permit the use of in-service training, specialized training or education courses by outside resources may be approved. The policy set forth in this section refers to various education and training programs including: skill development, certificate, licensure, and degree programs.

All training and education courses must be for the purpose of meeting County needs for scientific, technical, professional, and management skills that shall:

(1) Be of necessary and direct value to the County.

(2) Be limited to knowledge and skills that cannot be acquired by on-the-job or other provided in-service training.

(3) Cover subject matter not sufficiently or recently encompassed in the employee's previous education and experience, or which the employee normally would not be expected to know prior to appointment.

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b. Rules for Approval for County Sponsorship. The following rules determine when requests for attending training, education courses or degree programs are approved for County sponsorship:

1. Job Required. The County will reimburse both full-time and part-time employees for training or education expenses when the subject matter is required by the employee's assigned position and the employee was not expected to have completed the training or education prior to appointment.

(a) Attendance in skill development programs (those leading to licensure, certification, or updating of current skills) may be authorized during working hours.

(b) Undergraduate or graduate education courses (or certification courses that lead to a degree) that fall into this category shall be approved for tuition and/or fee reimbursement when employees volunteer to attend classes on their own time and agree to the grade requirements for reimbursement contained in this chapter.

(c) EMT-Intermediate and EMT-Paramedic courses shall be approved for pre-payment when Fire and Life Safety employees agree to the requirements contained in the EMT-Intermediate and EMT-Paramedic Tuition Grant Agreement.

2. Job Related. The County may reimburse for expenses when the subject matter is job related and in the view of the County Administrator, Deputy County Administrator, or Department Director should lead to improved performance on the job. This type of training is available to all full-time regular employees. Part-time regular employees are eligible for this type of training on a pro-rated basis.

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(a) Attendance in skill development programs (those leading to licensure, certification, or updating of current skills) may be authorized during working hours.

(b) Undergraduate or graduate education courses (or certification courses that lead to a degree) that fall into this category shall be approved for tuition and/or fee reimbursement when employees volunteer to attend classes on their own time and agree to the grade requirements for reimbursement contained in this chapter.

(c) The course of study may also be considered if it is related to a logical promotional objective within the County.

(d) EMT-Intermediate and EMT-Paramedic courses shall be approved for pre-payment when Fire and Life Safety employees agree to the requirements contained in the EMT-Intermediate and EMT-Paramedic Tuition Grant Agreement.

3. Other. Reimbursement for any training or education program that does not meet the conditions set forth in the preceding two subparagraphs is not authorized.

c. Payments. All payments are contingent upon successful completion of the enrolled course or program. The enrolled employee must provide proof of satisfactory completion, in order to receive any payment. The County reserves the right to require, as a condition of approval for any training that the employee signs, a Training Payment Reimbursement Agreement. Such agreements will normally be used when the training payments and associated costs are expected to exceed \$1,000 or, in the opinion of the County, the training will improve the employee's marketability. These situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by Human Resources to

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ensure County-wide consistency. Reimbursement is requested through the Request for Check process

d. Repayment of Funds. Payments made by the County in advance as well as those reimbursed to the employee are subject to repayment by the employee.

1. All advance payments must be returned when the conditions for completion of the course are not met or the employee voluntarily separates from County employment prior to the completion of the training.

2. If an employee voluntarily separates from County employment within one year following the completion of a training or education program, payments and associated costs, whether or not made in advance, may be subject to repayment by the employee. The County will collect on a prorated basis.

a) The employee will return 100% of the payments if leaving County employment within six months following completion of the course.

b) The employee will return 50% of the payments if leaving County employment between seven months and one year following completion of the course.

e. Approval Authority. The County Administrator, or Deputy County Administrators, may approve training or education programs for Department Directors. Department Directors may approve training in accordance with this Chapter for assigned employees within the limits of approved employee development funds in the departmental budget.

A committee comprised of the Deputy County Administrators and the Director of Human Resources will review applications and determine funding awards for all degree programs. (See Section 8.3 for more details on this process). After being approved by

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the Department Director, the Human Resources Department will review the applications in order to ensure for compliance with this Section, prior to submission to the Training and Education Evaluation Committee (TEEC).

f. Departmental Education Funds. In addition to the centralized funds controlled by the TEEC for degree program (or certification courses that lead to a degree), each Department will retain a line item for employee training and education that falls outside of the scope of the TEEC. Use of these funds will be controlled through the use of a training application. After approval by the Department Director, the Human Resources Department will review these applications for compliance with this policy prior to the start of the training.

g. In-Service Training. Whenever possible, in-service training shall be provided by the County when the same or similar training is required of groups of employees. Central training funds, when authorized by the County Administrator or a Deputy County Administrator, may be approved, when appropriate, for general employee, supervisory, or management training. When possible, Department Directors are encouraged to pool their training resources to facilitate lower cost training in special areas of interest. The Human Resources Department is available to provide sources, and in conjunction with Central Purchasing, to contract for special in-service training programs.

h. Program Incompletion: If an employee resigns or is terminated from employment with the County prior to the completion of previously approved course work, they will not be eligible to receive reimbursement. Employees who do not fulfill their original education plans or agreement (such as consistently unacceptable grades, dropping or canceling classes without informing Human Resources or failure to attend class) may be dropped from the program at the discretion of the committee and will be required to reapply in order to receive additional funding. Participants may also be dropped from the program in cases where they remain in a leave without pay or other non-work status for thirty days or more. In accordance with section d, "Repayment of

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Funds,” employees may be held responsible for reimbursing the County for payments received.

i. Application Requirements: Training Applications are available on the intranet, as well as in the Human Resources Department. Each applicant is responsible for ensuring the application is sent through their chain of command for their approvals. Applications must be filled out completely prior to committee review or they will be subject to rejection. The responsibility for obtaining all required information (including signatures), meeting program requirements, and submitting the application on time is solely that of the applicant.

### ***Section 8-2: Skill Development Program Policy***

a. Program Administration. Educational assistance is primarily intended for the reimbursement of a program’s general fee or tuition expenditures; however, other costs will be reviewed upon request. (Application fees, travel costs, transcripts, or graduation fees are not reimbursable under the program.) Assistance will normally be made on a reimbursement basis upon successful completion of course work; however, requests for advance payments will also be considered.

b. Grade Requirements. A grade of “C” or better must be obtained in all undergraduate programs and other related course work. A grade of “B” or better must be obtained in all graduate courses to qualify for reimbursement. For skill development programs, employees must show evidence of satisfactory completion.

c. Application Process: Applicants to the program may apply for assistance in coursework that helps them to update specialized skills, obtain a certification, or obtain a licensure. Applications for skill development courses (including certifications or licensure) are made on prescribed forms (TA 9708 or TA 9708A) that are available in all departments and agencies of the County, or via the County’s intranet.

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d. Eligibility Criteria: In order to be eligible for assistance in a skill development program, an employee must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. The employee must have completed the equivalent of 6 months of full-time service (1040 hours) and have satisfactorily completed their probationary period by the time of the award.

2. First consideration will be given to employees in a regular full-time or regular part-time position. If there are remaining funds, consideration may be given to other categories of employees.

3. The employee's most recent performance evaluation of record must be satisfactory or better as of the date of the award and throughout participation in the program. An employee may be dropped from the program if he/she receives a less than satisfactory overall performance evaluation.

### ***Section 8-3: Degree Program Policy***

a. Program Administration. Educational assistance is primarily intended for the reimbursement of tuition expenditures; however, other costs will be reviewed upon request. (Application fees, travel costs, transcripts, or graduation fees are not reimbursable under the program.) Assistance will normally be made on a reimbursement basis upon successful completion of course work; however, requests for advance payments will also be considered.

1. Training & Education Evaluation Committee (TEEC). A committee comprised of the Deputy County Administrators and the Director of Human Resources will review applications and determine funding awards.

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2. Grade Requirements. A grade of “C” or better must be obtained in all undergraduate programs and other related course work. A grade of “B” or better must be obtained in all graduate courses to qualify for reimbursement.

3. Mid-Year Funding. If additional funds become available during the fiscal year, such funds may be offered to applicants whose funding requests were not previously granted or by competitive process.

b. Application Process: All applicants applying for assistance in obtaining an academic degree (or certification courses that lead to a degree) should use the Education Assistance Program Application (TA 516). Training applications must be submitted and approved by the Division Manager and Department Director before they are submitted to the Human Resources Department for consideration.

A competitive process will be held at least twice a year. Should additional funds become available; the TEEC will evaluate previously submitted, unfunded applications. The number of participants and the amounts awarded will be dependent on the funds budgeted in that particular year. Priority will be given to individuals previously accepted into the program. Acceptance in one year does not, however, guarantee continued funding in future years.

c. Eligibility Criteria: In order to be eligible for educational assistance in a degree program (or certification courses that lead to a degree), the employee must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. The employee must be in a regular full-time or regular part-time position, have satisfactorily completed their probationary period, and must have completed the equivalent of 1 year of full-time service (2080 hours) with the County by the time of the award.

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2. The employee must be enrolled and/or conditionally accepted as a degree-seeking student (associates, bachelors or masters) at an accredited institution, or enrolled in a certification course that leads to a degree.

3. The employee's most recent performance evaluation of record must be satisfactory or better as of the date of the award and throughout participation in the program. An employee may be dropped from the program if he/she receives a less than satisfactory overall performance evaluation.

d. Ranking Criteria: The following criteria will be used to rank all candidates after their eligibility for a degree program (or certification courses that lead to a degree) has been determined:

1. Consideration will be given to candidates who have already demonstrated substantial commitment to their educational goals by their record of school attendance and successful completion of preceding education programs, prior to application into this program.

2. Consideration will be given to employees who have demonstrated their commitment to the organization, either in their current positions or in other County related activities.

3. Consideration will be given to applicants who are seeking a degree which has been determined to be relevant and desirable in terms of future County needs.

e. Funding Requirements: Applications must be received in Human Resources no later than the posted application deadlines in order for employees to receive program funding. Funding of the degree program is based on monies available for each fiscal year.

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The County will make a contribution of up to 50% of each approved training course for each employee per fiscal year. The maximum amount of funding per employee per fiscal year will be \$2,000.