

EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT BENEFIT PROGRAM

Revised November 2018

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A. PURPOSE

1. Tooele City has established a benefit program that provides regular and appointed status employees with reimbursement for advanced education or POST certification. This policy defines the terms and conditions under which employees may be granted reimbursement.
2. Work-related training or required certifications are covered by department training budgets.

B. POLICY

Pending available funding, eligible employees may receive financial reimbursement for education and POST Academy as follows:

1. Advanced Educational Program

- a. Employees may receive financial reimbursement to aid in obtaining an associate's or higher degree in a field that directly relates to work performed by Tooele City Corporation.
- b. Employees submit an application for educational assistance reimbursement benefits during the application period, include a complete official copy of the course curriculum (unless one has already been submitted), and identify the course the employee plans to be reimbursed for during the fiscal year. Changes, deletions, or additions to the approved application require submission of an amendment. Such changes are subject to approval from the Educational Reimbursement Committee. Tooele City is not responsible for reimbursement of classes that have not received prior approval.
- c. Under this program, ALL courses, including courses which are not job-related or City related, are eligible for reimbursement up to the allotted amount, if such courses are required as a condition of completion or graduation by the academic institution.
- d. Reimbursement is subject to available funding approved each fiscal year but is limited to \$1,000, per employee, per fiscal year. Reimbursement totals accumulate based on the date the bill is paid or reimbursed by Tooele City, not the date the class ended. To be eligible for reimbursement/payment, a grade of C- or higher is required. For courses that do not receive grades, such as PASS/FAIL courses, the employee must submit a recognized certificate or letter from the school verifying that the employee has satisfactorily completed the course. The following expenses are eligible for reimbursement:

- (a) Initial application fees (not subject to grade requirements);
- (b) Class tuition/registration fees;
- (c) Books & syllabi which are course required;

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- (d) Sales tax related to above expenses;
 - (e) Reasonably priced materials which will assist a disabled employee (Special consideration will be made in compliance with the EEO/ADA policy);
 - (f) Concurrent enrollment, home study, Internet, and other educational methods as long as such courses comply with the guidelines of the Program; or
 - (g) CLEP tests and CLEP preparatory classes, only if such courses result in an overall cost savings to Tooele City. Employees may be required to provide written documentation demonstrating such savings. Reimbursement for CLEP courses is made after the school has granted credit for the respective course.
- e. The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement. This list is not all-inclusive. The Educational Reimbursement Committee must approve any expenses not specifically mentioned.
- (a) Courses that have not been approved by the Educational Reimbursement Committee
 - (b) Out-of-state tuition fees/non-member fees
 - (c) Audited courses
 - (d) Late registration fees/charges or fines
 - (e) Registration fees for special unique programs as designated by the Educational Reimbursement Committee
 - (f) Computers/equipment, Internet access, and/or general classroom supplies
 - (g) Calculators or other equipment
 - (h) Transportation
 - (i) Parking fees
 - (j) Meals
 - (k) Text books, manuals, or other materials that would aid the employee in studies, but are not required for the course
 - (l) Tutors or other study aids
- f. If an employee is entitled to veteran's or other educational benefits (i.e. grants or scholarships), the employee must use such benefits in lieu of City reimbursement. City reimbursement will be reduced by the amount of reimbursement for which the employee is eligible from the Veterans' Administration or any other source.
- g. Employees participating in the Advanced Educational Program are encouraged to take a minimum of 2 courses per year.
- h. Employees who participate in the Advanced Educational Program and voluntarily terminate their employment with the City must refund any monies paid by the City for the program during the preceding 14-month period.

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- i. Employees are not granted a level or step advancement upon completion of the Advanced Educational Program. All promotion and advancement opportunities follow respective policies.
 - j. Tooele City reserves the right to delay, deny, or discontinue Advanced Educational courses at any time and for any reason.
2. Sworn Law Enforcement Officer Student Loan/POST Reimbursement Program
- a. Sworn Law Enforcement Officers may receive reimbursement under the Sworn Law Enforcement Officer Student Loan/POST Reimbursement Program or the Advanced Education Program described above, but not both during the same fiscal year.
 - b. Sworn Law Enforcement Officers are eligible for reimbursement under this program after having served as a sworn law enforcement officer for Tooele City for two (2) years (includes FTO time).
 - c. Sworn Law Enforcement Officers must submit an application for educational assistance reimbursement benefits during the application period and include certification of the degree obtained/POST graduation, receipt for student loan payment made during the applicable fiscal year period (no reimbursement for payments outside the current fiscal year), and certification that the payment was not made by a source other than the employee. Employees may not accept benefits for the same payment made by any other outside program or agency.
 - d. The student loan debt must be related to the employee's successful completion of self-sponsorship through a POST academy recognized by Utah, or successful completion of an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, or master's degree obtained by the employee either prior to or during employment with Tooele City from an accredited college or university. The degree must be directly related to their job as a law enforcement officer. Examples include: general education, criminal justice, psychology, sociology, business administration, law, forensic science, computer science (crime analysis), public administration, emergency management, Spanish/foreign language useful to the agency, English, or similar. Example of non-qualifying degrees include, but are not limited to, education, accounting, arts, engineering, and dance. The Advanced Educational Reimbursement Committee makes the final decision regarding job relevancy and degree eligibility. Reimbursement is not made for collection agency payments nor for collection agency fees.
 - e. Reimbursement is subject to available funding approved each fiscal year but is limited to \$1,000 per fiscal year. Reimbursement is taxable income to the employee.

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- f. Employees who receive reimbursement and voluntarily terminate their employment with the City must refund any monies paid by the City for the program during the preceding 24-month period.
- g. Tooele City reserves the right to delay, deny, or discontinue Sworn Law Enforcement Officer Student Loan/POST Reimbursement Program at any time for any reason.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. Educational Reimbursement Committee - Designated representatives from human resources, finance, and another designated functional area who has the responsibility for reviewing, verifying, and approving requests for educational reimbursement benefits.
2. Accredited College or University - Tooele City recognizes schools as accredited institutions if they are recognized by the Higher Education Directory.
3. Advance Educational Program - Program designed to assist employees completing an approved and accredited two-year associate's degree, four-year bachelor's degree, or master's degree. Sworn Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) - Employees deemed eligible for enrollment in the Utah State Retirement Public Safety Retirement Program.
4. POST Academy/Self-sponsorship – A satellite academy approved by Utah POST, which offers basic training programs for LEO certification.
5. Work-Related Training/Required Certifications – Courses or exams that assist the employee in developing knowledge and skills that directly relate to the employee's current occupation or profession. Generally, the intent of this program is to enlarge or refine the employee's scope of expertise in their present job. The supervisor approves work related training on an individual basis as each respective department pays for this type of training.