

AN ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF DACULA PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, TO ADOPT EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND TUITION REIMBURSEMENT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the City has reviewed its policies and procedures for employee benefits; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the City of Dacula to amend the Personnel Management System to update the employee benefit policy;

NOW THEREFORE, THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DACULA HEREBY ORDAINS that the City Personnel Management System be amended as follows:

SECTION 1.

The following Section 6, Subsection 16.8 is adopted as follows:

6.18 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Purpose

The City of Dacula recognizes that the skills and knowledge of its employees are critical to the success of the organization. The City may reimburse an employee up to a maximum amount per calendar year as allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. Reimbursements are for continuing education through an accredited school and/or program recognized by the US Department of Education that either offers growth in an area related to the employee's current position or that may lead to promotional opportunities. To maintain eligibility, employees must remain in an active pay status and be performing their job satisfactorily through the completion of each course and/or degree or certification program. This education may include college credit courses, continuing education unit courses, seminars and certification tests that are job related.

Tuition Reimbursement is based upon budget allocation appropriated on an annual basis from the City Council. The allocation of funds in one year does not guarantee additional funding in subsequent years. Additionally, the funding of this program is based upon the approval of the City Administrator and may be for an amount up to the federally approved limit, depending on available funds.

There will be no duplicate payments for the same course. The employee is required to first apply for any outside benefits for which he or she may be eligible for including, but not limited to, State or Federal Educational benefits (including V.A.), outside agencies, grants (HOPE Grant), etc. Awards, grants, and scholarships which do not require repayment by the

employee are not eligible for reimbursement and must be disclosed. The City will provide reimbursement only for qualified cost(s) which exceed the amount paid by outside sources up to the maximum approved amount.

An employee must secure a minimum passing grade of a “C” or its equivalent or obtain a certification to receive any reimbursement. Expenses must be validated by receipts from the institution attended, and a copy of the final grade or certification received.

All full-time employees who have completed 12-months of employment are eligible.

Procedures

To receive reimbursement for educational expenses, employees should follow the procedures listed here:

- Prior to enrolling in an educational course, the employee must provide his or her department head with a completed Educational Course or Certification Request Form with information about the course or certification he or she would like to receive and to discuss the job-relatedness of the continuing education. If the Department Head approves of the request, it will then be forwarded to the City Administrator for approval. The City Administrator will determine the maximum reimbursable amount for an employee.
- Approved courses may range from obtaining GED certifications to technical courses such as electronics, engineering, computers, finance, business management up through the master’s degree level of studies. Doctoral degrees are not eligible for this benefit.
- Approved courses are to be taken on the employee’s own time unless the City Administrator has approved time on the clock for such courses.
- Qualifying courses must directly relate to duties and responsibilities of the employee’s current position or must enhance the employee’s potential for advancement to a position with the City to which the individual has a reasonable expectation of advancing.
- Once the course or certification has been successfully completed, the employee will submit a Tuition Reimbursement Request Form, attaching receipts from the school and evidence of a minimum passing grade of a “C” or its equivalent or certification. If employee has received any assistance from outside agencies such as the HOPE Grant or V.A. (G.I. Bill), etc., please attach supporting documentation. There will be no duplicate payments for the same course(s).
- Reimbursements are for actual tuition fees only and do not include fees paid for books or any other miscellaneous fees such as: administrative, graduation, testing and examinations, student services, athletics, technology, parking, food, mileage, lodging, etc.
- The Human Resources Department will coordinate the reimbursement with the Finance Department following the receipt of all necessary documentation. Reimbursements requested more than 60-days after completion of course(s) will not be honored.

The employee shall not be eligible for reimbursement for training or education expenses under the following conditions:

- The employee does not obtain prior written approval of his or her Department Head; or
- The employee does not follow the procedures listed; or
- The employee is terminated voluntarily or involuntarily or resigns before receiving the final grade or certification.

The employee shall be responsible for reimbursing the City for the training or education expenses under the following conditions:

- The employee is terminated voluntarily or involuntarily or resigns within two years after the completing the education or training program. Reimbursement to the City shall be made according to the following schedule:
 - 100% if terminated or resigns within six months of completing the education or training.
 - 75% if terminated or resigns between six months and one year of completing the education or training.
 - 50% if terminated or resigns between one year and eighteen months of completing the education or training.
 - 25% if terminated or resigns between eighteen months and two years of completing the education or training.

If termination or resignation occurs after two years of the education or training, no reimbursement is required.

While educational assistance is expected to enhance employee performance and professional liabilities, the City cannot guarantee that participation in formal education will entitle the employee to automatic advancement, a different job assignment, or pay increases.

SECTION 2.

In the event any Court of competent jurisdiction determines that any portion of the foregoing amendment is invalid, unconstitutional or otherwise illegal, such rulings shall not impair the validity of the rest and remainder of this amendment.

SECTION 3.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Ordinance are hereby repealed.

SECTION 4.

The City Administrator, Assistant City Administrator, and Director of Planning and Economic Development are further authorized to correct typographical errors in the text of the existing Personnel Manual and to produce and publish a final codified version of the Manual with the amendments and revisions outlined herein.

SECTION 5.

This Ordinance shall take effect January 1, 2024 upon its adoption by the Mayor and City Council.

SO ORDAINED by the governing authority of the City of Dacula, this 7th day of December 2023.

AYES: ____

NAYES: ____

HUGH D. KING, III
MAYOR, CITY OF DACULA

ATTEST:

BRITTNI NIX
CITY ADMINISTRATOR