



**Title of Agenda Item:** Partnership with Clayton State for Continuing & Professional Education – Executive Offices & Human Resources

**Submitted By:** Ricky L. Clark, Jr., City Manager

**Date Submitted:** October 17, 2024

**Work Session Date:** October 21, 2024

**Council Meeting Date:** October 21, 2024

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## Background/History:

The Executive Offices seeks approval for a strategic partnership between the City of Forest Park and Clayton State University's Continuing & Professional Education (CPE) program. This collaboration will provide targeted professional development opportunities for our employees in key areas such as Microsoft Office, business writing, customer service, and professional etiquette. This initiative aligns with the **Operational Efficiency (O)** pillar of the **ONE Forest Park** program, ensuring that our workforce remains skilled, competent, and equipped to serve the citizens of Forest Park effectively.

The **ONE Forest Park Initiative** is focused on promoting unity, excellence, and continuous improvement across all City departments. As part of this initiative, the "O" pillar stands for **Operational Efficiency**, which aims to optimize internal processes, improve service delivery, and enhance employee performance.

To achieve these goals, we have identified the need for ongoing training and skill development among our workforce. By partnering with Clayton State University's CPE program, we can offer courses tailored to our employees' needs in the following critical areas:

1. **Microsoft Office Suite:** Proficiency in programs such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook will enhance the efficiency and productivity of our workforce in document management, data handling, and communication.
2. **Memo and Letter Writing:** High-quality written communication is essential for both internal operations and external interactions. Training in this area will ensure clarity, professionalism, and consistency in our official correspondences.
3. **Customer Service & Professional Etiquette:** As representatives of the City, employees must demonstrate exceptional customer service and professional behavior. This training will enhance the quality of interactions between employees and the public, contributing to a positive public image for the City.

## Justification

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The need for professional development is evident across all sectors of the City's workforce, from administrative staff to frontline personnel. By equipping employees with these essential skills, we directly support the **Operational Efficiency** objective, ensuring the City operates at peak performance. Specifically, this initiative addresses the following:

- **Operational Efficiency:** Enhancing employees' technical and soft skills will improve their ability to perform tasks more efficiently, reduce errors, and increase the quality of service delivery.
- **Public Service Excellence:** Training in customer service and professional etiquette ensures that our interactions with the public are respectful, courteous, and aligned with the high standards we strive to uphold. This will foster greater trust and satisfaction among the citizens of Forest Park.
- **Employee Empowerment and Morale:** Providing access to professional development opportunities demonstrates the City's commitment to employee growth, which will boost morale, job satisfaction, and overall performance.

### Strategic Benefits

1. **Increased Productivity:** Proficiency in Microsoft Office applications will lead to faster task completion, improved accuracy, and better data management across departments.
2. **Improved Communication:** Training in memo and letter writing will ensure that all City communications are clear, concise, and professional, reducing miscommunication and enhancing internal collaboration.
3. **Enhanced Public Interaction:** By improving customer service skills, employees will handle interactions with citizens more effectively, which will enhance the overall reputation of the City and create a more positive community experience.
4. **Alignment with ONE Forest Park Goals:** This initiative supports the larger vision of **ONE Forest Park** by promoting operational excellence and ensuring all employees are aligned with the City's mission of providing superior service to its residents.

### Program Details

- **Cost:** \$7,500
- **Training Duration:** 18 hours (over six weeks)
- **Cohort Size:** Up to 25 employees per cohort
- **Cohort Frequency:** One cohort per year
- **Schedule:** One day per week, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM
- **Location:** City Hall, Council Chambers

### Financial Impact

The total cost of this professional development program is **\$7,500**, which includes 18 hours of instruction for up to 25 employees per cohort. The City Manager proposes conducting one cohort per year, ensuring that a significant portion of the workforce receives training over time. The training will be funded through the Human Resources training budget, which has been allocated to support the goals of the **ONE Forest Park** initiative. Funding for this cohort would be allocated out of ARPA funds.

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Cost: \$

Budgeted for: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Financial Impact:

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