

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT OR TUITION PRE-PAYMENT PROGRAM

Amended January 2025

City of Grand Rapids
420 North Pokegama Avenue
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT OR TUITION PRE-PAYMENT PROGRAM

Tuition reimbursement or tuition pre-payment is a self-development program for employees to further their careers at the City of Grand Rapids (City). Employees may select courses of study, which are directly related to either their present job or the pursuit of a City-related career, or licensing, program, or advanced training related to their present job, where the added licensing, program, or advanced training would benefit the position the employee is filling for the City.

Administration is responsible for administering and monitoring this program.

Eligibility

- Regular full-time employees are eligible after their probationary period has been completed;
- Part-time and seasonal employees are eligible immediately upon hire, or based on the needs of the City, as approved by City Administration;
- Full-Time employees must maintain continuous service in these job categories while taking the course(s). Part-time seasonal employees must maintain consistent seasonal employment in position while taking the licensing, program, or advanced training.

Pre-Course Approvals

- The course, licensing, program, or advanced training is to be approved by the City Administrator and Department Head, prior to enrollment on a Request for Tuition Reimbursement or Tuition Pre-Payment Form.

Restrictions

- Coursework, course attendance, licensing, program, or advanced training is normally accomplished on the employee's own time. Attendance for required classes, which are offered only during work hours, is subject to approval by the City Administrator and Department Head and must be for courses directly related to the job or relevant degree requirements. For full-time employees, if absence from work is approved, the employee may use earned flexible time off (FTO); or comp time, if any hours exist, if approved by the City Administrator and Department Head.

For part-time seasonal employees, seeking licensing, program, or advanced training related to their present job, hourly payment for attendance at programs or classes offered during normal work hours, for the completion of advanced education, will be determined on a case-by-case basis, as approved by the City Administrator and Department Head.

- The career, licensing, program, or advanced training being pursued and the relationship of the course to that career, or licensing, program, or advanced training must be identified by the employee;
- Courses, licensing, program, and advanced training eligible for reimbursement must be “directly job related” or “career” related.” Career-related courses are only eligible to be reimbursed if the course is part of a degree and would benefit an existing or future City position description.
- For non-City related courses required of a degree or certificate program, proof of admittance to that program must be provided;
- Participants in a degree program are expected to concentrate on City-related courses first, as a condition of continued approval of course/class;

To alleviate concern over the employee balancing the needs of the job with multiple courses/classes at one time, the number of courses/classes in progress at one time is at the discretion of the City Administrator and Department Head;

- Funding by other agencies (such as scholarships and the GI Bill) must be used by the employee first. The City is the secondary payer in such circumstances and all amounts funded by other agencies will be deducted from the City’s reimbursement allowance;
- A full-time employee who voluntarily leaves service or is discharged will be required to pay back all reimbursements made (i.e. final processed) during the previous sixty months. The payback amount will be reduced by 20% for each full year of service rendered to the City, following successful completion of the courses.
- Tuition reimbursement or tuition pre-payment for part-time seasonal Public Works employees will have a five-year commitment to work seasonally. If the part-time seasonal employee chooses to not work seasonally for the five-year commitment, the part-time seasonal employee will reimburse the City on a pro-rated basis of 1/5ths. For example, if the part-time seasonal employee works one year for the City and decides to not return to work seasonally, the employee will be expected to reimburse the City for 4/5ths of the tuition or program costs. If the City elects to not re-hire a part-time seasonal employee, the tuition is forgiven.
- Institutions eligible to be considered for approval include most colleges, vocational schools, and self-study institutions. Private consultants and motivation organizations are not covered;
- Attendance alone does not define successful completion; therefore, most seminars do not qualify under the program;

- CLEP tests and similar conversions of previous knowledge to an academic record are not covered.

Course Completion and Reimbursement

- Successful completion (a letter grade of “C” or better, a “pass” in a pass/fail grading system, or a certificate of completion based on a competency exam) is required before reimbursement will be made;
- The “pre-course approved” Request for Tuition Reimbursement or Tuition Pre-Payment Form is re-submitted by the employee along with a grade report and tuition statement;
- Only tuition and required book costs are covered. Other costs and fees such as late fees, lab fees, training equipment and materials, and student fees are normally not covered, however, exceptions may be considered upon request of the employee. If the tuition amount includes a substantial amount of tangible goods (such as parts for constructing a radio receiver), the program will cover only the tuition portion.

Maximum Reimbursement

- The City will reimburse tuition and required book costs for qualified full-time, part-time seasonal employees as approved by the City Administrator and the Department Head.
- If the course, licensing, program, or advanced training is coordinated by the City for a group of full or part-time seasonal employees, the City will cover the expense of the course, licensing, program, and/or advanced training, and the employee will abide by the reimbursement policy.

Taxability of Reimbursed Amount

Federal law provides that certain City-paid education expenses are nontaxable if they are for job-related courses. The course taken is job-related if it maintains or enhances the skills needed for an employee’s current position without furnishing the requisite qualifications for entering a new trade or business. Administration, in consultation with a tax consultant, will determine, if necessary, to furnish an employee with a 1099 or W2 as appropriate.

REQUEST FOR TUITION REIMBURSEMENT OR TUITION PRE-PAYMENT

Employee Name: _____ PERA # _____

Current Job Title: _____

Name of Educational Institution: _____

Name of Training or Program, if applicable: _____

Prior to any tuition approval or pre-paid tuition, you and your Department Head must complete the following questions. In addition, please provide a course description either from the course catalog or course syllabus, or a course description of the licensing, program, or advanced training. Completed forms should be forwarded to the Administration Department/City Administrator.

To Be Completed By Employee:

1. Is this course directly related to my present position? Yes No

If yes, explain how it is related:

2. Is this course part of a degree, which is an educational requirement under a current company job description? Yes No

If yes, what position and what is the educational requirement?

To Be Completed By Supervisor

- 1. I have discussed this request with the employee and support tuition reimbursement or tuition pre-payment based on the following reasons:

Courses:

Course Title	Est. Tuition	Start Date	Completion # of Credits
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Course Title	Est. Tuition	Start Date	Completion # of Credits
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Licensing Title	Est. Tuition	Start Date	End Date
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Program Title	Est. Tuition	Start Date	End Date
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Advanced Training Title	Est. Tuition	Start Date	End Date
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This request is for:

PRE-PAYMENT of licensing, program, or advanced training, as approved by the City Administrator and Department Head. In addition, in the event the part-time seasonal employee chooses to not work seasonally for the five-year commitment, the part-time seasonal employee will reimburse the City on a pro-rated basis of 1/5ths. The City is hereby authorized to deduct the remaining pre-payment tuition balance from wages or other payments due to the employee from the City. If the City elects to not re-hire a part-time seasonal employee, the tuition is forgiven.

REIMBURSEMENT of the covered amount after successful completion of the course(s). In addition, upon termination of employee from the employment of the City for any reason, any reimbursements made for classes taken during the previous 60 months shall become due and payable. The amount due and payable shall be the balance of the reimbursement at termination calculated by amortizing the reimbursement over the 60 month period. The City is hereby authorized to deduct any remaining tuition balance from wages or other payments due to the employee from the City.

I have read the Tuition Reimbursement/Tuition Pre-Payment Policy and agree to all of its conditions.

	_____	_____
	Employee	Date
Approved:	_____	_____
	Department Head	Date
Approved:	_____	_____
	Administration	Date

Accounting Use Only:

We have received evidence of successful completion of the above course(s). Please proceed as follows:

REIMBURSE employee \$ _____ as per attached documentation.