

Subject: TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

Date: August 2, 2023

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Replaces Policy Dated: May 25, 2011

PURPOSE: To assist Pinal County employees in obtaining job related education, with the intention of advancing the employee's career path or aspiration within the County.

STATEMENT OF POLICY: The greatest assets of Pinal County government are its employees. It is the policy of Pinal County to provide limited financial aid in the form of tuition reimbursement for the continued development of employees.

SCOPE: This policy applies to full-time County employees.

ELIGIBILITY: Pinal County employees who have completed initial probation and twelve months of continuous full-time service and at least meets standards (proficient) on their most recent performance evaluation. Employees who have received discipline resulting in suspension or demotion will have a twelve (12) month waiting period before eligibility will be considered.

POLICY: Reimbursement may cover tuition, laboratory fees, registration fees, and books, subject to the limitations set forth below. The actual amount of reimbursement is limited by funding availability and total dollar amount of requested reimbursement.

- The annual amount of reimbursement available to each employee is based on available County budget allocation, not to exceed the IRS annual maximum per employee, with a \$20,000.00 lifetime maximum reimbursement.
- The average in-state tuition rate per credit hour will be used to establish the maximum reimbursement amount per course completed. Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona will be used to establish the average per credit hour rate.
- Reimbursement will be given to grades "C" or better, or "Pass".
- Employees are required to provide an official receipt from the educational institution for tuition expenses in order to be eligible to receive reimbursement from the County. No reimbursement will be provided for expenses covered by any resources (i.e. grants, scholarships, etc.).
- Courses must be for credit. Audited courses are ineligible for reimbursement.

COURSE ELIGIBILITY: An employee shall be enrolled in an established degree or certificate program at an accredited career school, trade school, college or university, in a field which is directly related to their duties performed for Pinal County or which qualifies them for a different position within Pinal County. All eligible courses which fulfill requirements for that degree or certificate program may be eligible for tuition reimbursement and must be submitted individually for consideration.

PROCEDURE: Application for tuition reimbursement must be made in writing prior to registration and received by Human Resources at least 30 calendar days prior to the start of education course work. The request must state the employee's name, current home address, date of employment with the County, classification title, department and work unit, if applicable. The degree/certificate and major course of study must be indicated as well as the educational institution. A detailed explanation must be given of the course(s) and how the degree/certificate and/or courses relate to the employee's duties for Pinal County. Also included must be the dollar amount of the request. The employee's Appointing Authority or authorized designee must affirmatively endorse each request in writing before being submitted to the Human Resources Department.

The Human Resources Director or will approve or deny the request based on the information available, an assessment of job relatedness and the availability of funds. Each course in a specific degree or certificate program must be pre-approved.

If the employee's application for Education Reimbursement is denied, Human Resources shall inform the employee of the denial within ten (10) business days of the application and provide the employee with a copy of the denial and the reason for the denial. The denial of an employee's Education Reimbursement application is not grievable or appealable.

REIMBURSEMENT: Upon successful completion of an approved course, the employee must present a certification of successful course completion or transcript, including the passing grade, and an official receipt for tuition paid by the eligible employee to the Human Resources Department. Requests for reimbursement must be received by Human Resources within thirty (30) days after completion of each course.

SEPARATIONS AND REPAYMENT: One of the primary reasons for this program is to promote employee retention and employee career advancement with Pinal County. Employees receiving tuition reimbursement shall sign a reimbursement agreement that states if he or she voluntarily separates from Pinal County employment within six (6) months of the date of receiving reimbursement, an amount up to 50% of the reimbursed amount may be withheld from any final wages or vacation balance due in their final paycheck.

The County Manager or designee may approve exceptions to this Policy that are consistent with the intent of the Policy.