



City of Pittsburgh  
Operating Policies

**Policy: Tuition Reimbursement  
Program for Fraternal Association of  
Professional Paramedic (FAPP)**

**Original Date: 9/30/09  
Revised Date: 04/2019**

**PURPOSE:** This policy is issued to provide a uniform system of administering the City of Pittsburgh's Tuition Reimbursement Program for all eligible Union and Non-Union employees.

**POLICY STATEMENT:** All eligible Union and Non-Union employees are to follow this policy when requesting tuition reimbursement for courses that will enhance their job performance. NOTE: If an employee submits an initial Pre-Approval Form for Tuition Reimbursement and the employee is working towards completion of a degree/program (i.e., Associate's, Bachelor's, etc.), once the program is approved as "job related" all of the required course work for the program/degree will be considered as job related.

*Disclaimer: No statements in this policy are intended or set forth as contractual commitments or obligations of the City to any individual employee or group of employees, or to establish an exception to the employment-at-will doctrine beyond that specified in the Civil Service Statutes and Rules or pertinent collective bargaining agreement. If there are differences between the various collective bargaining agreements and this policy, the pertinent collective bargaining agreement takes precedence.*

## Fraternal Association of Professional Paramedic (FAPP) Employees

### I. GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- A. To be eligible to request participation in this Program, the employee must:
  - 1. Have completed one (1) year of employment with the City of Pittsburgh as a full time regular employee from date of hire, rehire or reinstatement, AND
  - 2. Have completed the probationary period and be employed in a full time regular position covered by the collective bargaining agreement between the City of Pittsburgh and the FAPP at the time of submitting the Pre-Approval Request form, AND
  - 3. Not be on Disciplinary Probation, Workers' Compensation, Short Term or Long Term Disability, Sick Leave, Parental Care Leave or other paid or unpaid leaves of absence at the time of submitting the Pre-Approval Request, AND
  - 4. Be a current FAPP covered employee of the Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Emergency Medical Services at both the time of submission of his/her request for reimbursement and receipt of reimbursement.
- B. An eligible employee must complete a Pre-Approval Request Form B and submit it, along with all required supporting documents to his/her Bureau Chief as early as possible but at least ten (10) work days prior to the date the course starts.
- C. The employee's Bureau Chief must submit the Pre-Approval Request Form B, with all required supporting documents and the Bureau Chief's recommendation for approval or disapproval, to the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service(HRCS) as soon as possible but at least five (5) work days prior to the date the course starts.
- D. The Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service may require additional information or documents from the employee before approval or disapproval. Failure of the employee to provide the requested additional information to the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service prior to the date the course starts will preclude approval and the Pre-Approval Request will be disapproved.
- E. The City may revoke pre-approval at any time prior to the employee's payment of tuition and lab/technology fees becoming irrevocable.
- F. Eligible employees who have received approval of the Pre-Approval Request will receive 50% reimbursement of tuition and lab/technology fees upon the successful completion of a college, university, technical school, trade school or certified apprenticeship course of study which is job related, (i.e. will improve the employee's knowledge and skills to perform present job duties or enable the employee to meet the minimum requirements, as established by the Civil Service Commission, for promotion within the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services). Courses (credit or noncredit) must be taken at an accredited college, university, technical or trade school or as part of a certified apprenticeship program and must be credited toward a degree, certificate or license. Correspondence courses will not be eligible for consideration. Courses which qualify an employee for employment only in another allied health profession are not reimbursable.
- G. Successful completion of a credit or noncredit college, university technical/trade school or certified apprenticeship course is defined as achievement of a "C" grade or better for all undergraduate, technical/trade or certified apprenticeship coursework completed, and achievement of a "B" grade or better for all graduate level work completed, or achievement of a "P" grade for courses graded on a Pass/Fail basis only as determined by the college or university. Attainment of a

“C-“ for undergraduate, technical/trade or certified apprenticeship coursework or a “B-“ for graduate coursework does not constitute successful completion of a course.

- H. Reimbursement will be made after the employee completes a Tuition Reimbursement Program Reimbursement Request Form verifying the successful completion of a pre-approved course. Reimbursable costs will be for tuition and lab/technology fees only. Fees for registration, school activities, deferred payment, university, computer, administrative or late fees, graduation, books, instruments, transportation, meals, etc. are not reimbursable under the program.
- I. Reimbursement will be treated as ordinary income, and as such may be subject to Federal, State and/or Local taxes based on IRS requirements in effect at the time of the request.
- J. If an employee receives other available tuition assistance, such as a grant and/or scholarship from government, college/university and/or private funds, the City’s Tuition Reimbursement Program will reimburse 50% of the difference between such other available tuition assistance and the amount of the tuition and lab/technology fees.
- K. Employees must attend class on their own time. Participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Program must not interfere with the employee’s work responsibilities or hours of work.
- L. Approvals of both Pre-Approval and Reimbursement Request Forms under this Program are subject to and contingent upon City Council appropriating sufficient funds for the Program. The funds appropriated to each department for the Program shall be used to cover tuition and lab fees incurred by any department employee, regardless of bargaining unit status. Once the amount of pre-approved requests equals the allotted funds for a department in any given year, no further approval will be given to employees who enroll in courses during that year. If the funds allocated to a department for any given year are insufficient to pay for all requests for reimbursement, then the Bureau Chief shall determine which requests to approve. Pre-approval for courses which carry over to or begin in the fiscal year following pre-approval are contingent upon the City appropriating sufficient funds to cover the tuition and lab fees.
- M. Employees who transfer to another City department or bureau after they have received an approval on a Pre-Approval Request are ineligible for reimbursement of that course.
- N. An employee who resigns or is terminated from employment for any reason prior to completion of a pre-approved course will not be eligible for reimbursement.

## **II. PROCEDURES:**

### **A. Pre-approval Procedures**

1. Employee’s Request – Part 1 of Tuition Reimbursement Program Pre-Approval Request Form B.
  - a. A Pre-Approval Request Form B must be completed for each proposed course. The form must be submitted to the employee’s Bureau Chief at least ten (10) work days prior to the date the course starts. Forms are available online.
  - b. Part 1 of the Pre-Approval Request Form B includes:
    - Identifying employee data
    - Name and address of accredited institution or certified apprenticeship program
    - Grants, scholarships, awards or any other non-repayable financial

assistance received for tuition costs (e.g., PHEAA, PELL, etc.)

- Title of the proposed degree (including major), certificate or license program
- Course number
- Title of course
- Number of credits for the proposed course, if applicable
- Tuition costs for the proposed course
- Lab/technology fees, if any, for the proposed course
- Starting and ending dates for the proposed course
- Calculation of requested 50% reimbursement
- Description of why the proposed course is job related. (i.e., course will improve the employee's knowledge and skills to perform present job duties or enable the employee to meet the minimum requirements as established by the Civil Service Commission for promotion within the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services)
- Employee's signature verifying an understanding of and agreement to the General Guidelines and Procedures of the Program.

**b.** The employee must attach to the Pre-Approval Request Form B a copy of the institution's formal description of the proposed course and confirmation from the institution of the tuition and lab/technology fee costs associated with the course(s), source(s), and amount(s) of any scholarships, grants, etc.

**c.** Eligible employees are SOLELY responsible for providing supporting documents for each proposed course to the satisfaction of his/her Bureau Chief and the Director of the Department of Human Resources and Civil Service to receive full consideration under the City's Tuition Reimbursement Program. Failure to do so within the time frame specified in the Procedure for Employee Tuition Reimbursement Program for FAPP Employees shall result in the disapproval of the employee's request.

**2.** Bureau Chief Action - Part II of Pre-Approval Request Form B.

**a.** Upon receipt of the Pre-Approval Request Form B with Part 1 completed, the Bureau Chief will review the request to verify that the request has been submitted in a timely manner and that all required information and supporting documents are complete and accurate.

**b.** The Bureau Chief will review the request to determine if the employee meets the following qualifications for consideration under the Tuition Reimbursement Program:

- Is the employee eligible as defined in Section 1-A above?
  - Is the employee's identifying data (e.g., job title, start date, etc.) accurate?
  - Is the college, university or technical/trade school where the course will be taken accredited, or is the program a certified apprenticeship program?
  - Is the course a non-correspondence course towards a degree, certificate or license?
  - Is there money available in the appropriate code account to cover this request?
  - Does the course qualify the employee for employment in another allied health profession?
  - Is the proposed course job related? (i.e., will improve the employee's knowledge and skills to perform present job duties or enable the employee to meet the minimum requirements, as established by the Civil Service Commission, for promotion within the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services)
- c.** The Bureau Chief will complete 6a. in Part II describing how the course

and/or degree, certificate or license program is job related. The Bureau Chief will also complete Part II of the Pre-Approval Request Form B recommending approval or disapproval of the proposed course. If approval is recommended, the Bureau Chief will sign the form. If disapproval is recommended, the Bureau Chief must state his/her reason(s) for recommending disapproval and sign the form. Any modification, change, correction, etc. made to Part I of the form must be initialed and dated by the Bureau Chief or his/her designee.

**d.** The Bureau Chief will forward the completed Pre-Approval Request Form B and all accompanying documents to the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service for review for approval/disapproval at least five (5) work days prior to the date the course starts.

**e.** The Bureau Chief is responsible for ensuring that the Pre-Approval Request Form B and supporting documents are complete and accurate before forwarding them to the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service.

3. Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service  
Action – Part III of Pre-Approval Request Form B.

**a.** The Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service will review the Pre-Approval Request Form B, and all accompanying materials and the recommendation from the appropriate Bureau Chief.

**b.** The Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service will complete Part III of the Pre-Approval Request Form B indicating approval/disapproval of the request and state the reason(s) for the final approval or disapproval of the request. All decisions of the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service shall be final.

4. Copies will be distributed to department director, employee, payroll, and the employee's personnel file upon approval from Director of Human Resources and Civil Service.

## **B. Reimbursement Process**

1. The employee is responsible for initiating the reimbursement request process. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted in a timely fashion and no later than sixty (60) days after completion of a pre-approved course. Departments must accurately note the date the reimbursement request was received and the form must be initialed by the person who receives it. To be eligible for reimbursement consideration the employee must:
  - a.** Be a current employee of the City covered by the FAPP bargaining unit agreement at both the time of submission of his/her request for reimbursement and receipt of reimbursement.
  - b.** Complete the Reimbursement Request Form which includes employee identifying data, course title, course number, name of institution, whether the course is a graduate, undergraduate or other level course, verification of cost incurred (copy of paid invoice, receipt or cancelled check) and grade report to be sent to his/her Bureau Chief.
2. Upon receipt of the grade report and verification of costs incurred validating that the employee has successfully completed and paid for the course that has been pre-approved, the Bureau Chief will complete the section of the Reimbursement Request Form entitled FOR DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY.

3. Reimbursement may occur only upon successful completion of a pre-approved course and the availability of sufficient funds for allocation for tuition reimbursement. (See General Guidelines G and L).
4. If the reimbursement request is disapproved, the Department Director shall state the reasons(s) why the request for reimbursement was denied.
5. The approved reimbursement shall be charged to and be payable from each department's Education and Training Code Account.
6. The completed Reimbursement Request Form, with all attachments, must be sent to the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service. If the Bureau Chief has approved the Reimbursement Request, the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service will review all information submitted for compliance with the procedures and if approved will transmit it for processing. If the request is disapproved the Bureau Chief and Employee will be notified with an explanation.

NOTE: Pre-Approval Forms and Reimbursement Request Forms can be obtained online at <http://pittsburghpa.gov/humanresources/humanresources--policies>