

6.09 TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

A. Program Overview

Departments under the hiring authority of the Board of Commissioners shall request an appropriation in the budget process to allocate money for the purpose of reimbursing up to 75% of actual tuition costs (excluding books, miscellaneous fees, etc.) for a college class or course, not to exceed \$3,200 (three thousand two hundred dollars) per year, to full-time, non-bargaining employees who, upon being granted prior approval by the Board, successfully complete coursework in an employment related field of study in a two (2) year, four (4) year, or graduate level program at an accredited institution. Approval is at the sole discretion of the Board.

B. Eligibility

All non-bargaining, full-time employees who have successfully completed their new hire probationary period under the hiring authority of the Board of Commissioners are eligible for the program. Coursework must be in an employment related field in a two (2) year, four (4) year, or graduate level program at an accredited institution.

C. Procedure

Eligible employees who wish to take part in the tuition reimbursement program must complete a Tuition Reimbursement Request Form and submit it to their department at least three (3) weeks prior to the start of the semester. A letter will be sent to the employee either granting or denying the employee's request.

Employees must receive a grade of "C" or better for undergraduate courses and "B" or better for graduate courses. Employees may be required to complete any applicable forms and/or provide such evidence/documentation as is satisfactory to the employer. Once all requirements are successfully met, the County will issue a reimbursement payment to the employee.

D. Withdraw From Course(s)

An employee will not be eligible for tuition reimbursement if they withdraw from an approved course. The employee is required to notify their supervisor and Department Head immediately in writing if they withdraw from an approved course.

E. Incomplete Course

If the employee receives an incomplete in a course for cause shown, the employee will have until the end of the following semester in which to complete the work and have the incomplete removed. Failure to complete the work will prohibit the employee from participating in the tuition reimbursement program and any advance payment received shall be repaid to the employer.

F. Termination

1. Involuntary—If an employee is terminated by the Board, eligibility for tuition reimbursement ends immediately, whether the class is completed or not. If an employee is laid off or terminated due to a non-performance related issue, the employee maintains eligibility for reimbursement at the completion of the course, provided the class began prior to the layoff or termination.



2. **Voluntary**—If an employee terminates employment, for any reason other than retirement, prior to the completion of an approved course, the employee will not receive tuition reimbursement.

G. Repayment After Voluntary or Involuntary Termination

If an employee leaves the County for any reason other than a layoff or retirement, the employee shall be required to reimburse the County the cost of payments made towards the employee's tuition at the following rates:

- **One hundred percent (100%) of all payments made on behalf of said employee's tuition during the last twelve (12) months of employment; and**
- **Seventy-five percent (75%) of all payments made during the last thirteen (13) through twenty-four (24) months of employment.**
- **Fifty percent (50%) of all payments made during the last twenty-four (24) through thirty-six (36) months of employment.**

H. Required Documentation of Payment

Upon approval, an employee claiming this benefit shall submit evidence to the Employer via a paid receipt showing payment in full of all charges and evidence that the employee has successfully completed the course with the required grade. The employee shall not be reimbursed for any charges for which the employee is entitled reimbursement from any other entity.

I. Termination of Tuition Reimbursement Program

The Board of Stark County Commissioners may cease offering this program at its sole discretion. In this event, the County will fulfill all current obligations and give appropriate advance notice so employees can plan their future academic endeavors accordingly.

