

ORDINANCE NO. 81-16**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPENDIX A, SECTION XVI OF THE
FORT SMITH MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING THE CITY OF FORT SMITH
EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

**BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
CITY OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS, THAT:**

Section 1: The Fort Smith Municipal Code Section XVI (D) is amended to read as follows:

Section XVI. - Benefits

D. Tuition Reimbursement - The City of Fort Smith supports employees who wish to continue their education to secure increased responsibility and growth within their professional careers. In keeping with this philosophy, the City has established a reimbursement program for expenses incurred through approved and accredited learning institutions. Employees participating in the Program must meet certain requirements for participation:

- Employee must be a Full Time regular employee.
- Employee must have one full year of service with the City before the first class begins.
- Employee must agree to continue working for the City for at least one full year after the degree is obtained. If this qualification is not met, the employee agrees to reimburse the City the full cost of education reimbursements received.
- Employee must submit a degree plan with a declared major for consideration of college or university coursework.
- Management and Program Administrator approval is required prior to participation.
- Participating employees must maintain acceptable job performance, as determined by their managers throughout their course of study.
- Managers and employees are responsible for adherence to City policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The City will reimburse coursework up to a maximum of \$4,000 per year incurred by an employee for continuing education through an accredited program that either offers growth in an area related to his or her current position or might lead to promotional opportunities. This education may include college credit courses and continuing education unit courses. Seminars and certification tests may be reimbursed if it relates to the employee's work.

1. Supplies, books and classroom equipment, and other fees will be the responsibility of the employee. The City will only reimburse college credit course hour fees, flat tuition of courses, and seminar and certification fees.
2. Upon completion of the course, an employee will provide an official transcript or completion certificate from the accredited institution to the Director of Human Resources within thirty (30) days. The employee must secure an overall GPA of 2.5 or greater for the coursework taken during the semester to receive 100% reimbursement. If the employee does not complete the coursework in the semester or completes the coursework in the semester with a GPA less than 2.5, no reimbursement will be given. Expenses must

- be validated by receipts, and a copy of the transcript, final grade card, or certification must be presented to show hours or certification received.
3. If an institution of higher learning, organization, or designated third party, agrees to bill directly the City of Fort Smith and/or the employee after the coursework is completed and in accordance with the overall GPA and other requirements, all parties will sign an agreement that delineates the responsibilities of each party.
 4. Course work must be scheduled so as not to interfere with the employee's regularly scheduled working hours.
 5. The City shall ask an employee to sign a release authorizing the City to solicit the required documentation and/or information from an institution of higher learning, organization, or a designated third party. Providing false information may result in loss of eligibility for benefits and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the City's Code of Conduct.
 6. Availability of Funds – all reimbursement for education expenses is made to the extent to which budgeted funds are available. Due to budget considerations, the City may limit the number of employees annually who participate in this program.

Procedures

To receive tuition reimbursement, employees shall follow the procedures listed here:

- The employee must provide his or her manager with information about the course for which he or she would like to receive reimbursement. If this is a college course, a completed degree plan shall be included with the course information.
- The pre-approval section of the tuition reimbursement form shall be completed and all the appropriate signatures obtained prior to enrolling.
- The employee must then take the form to HR, and a copy will be added to the employee's file. The employee will maintain the original until he or she has completed the course. The employee can then enroll in the course.
- After completion of the course, the employee shall resubmit the original tuition reimbursement form with the reimbursement section filled out, including appropriate signatures, as well as receipts and evidence of a passing grade or certification attached.
- The HR department will then coordinate the reimbursement with the Accounting department.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 15th DAY OF November, 2016.

ATTEST:

Shirley Gard
City Clerk

APPROVED:

Sandy Sander
Mayor

Approved as to form:

Jimmy Confield
City Attorney
Publish 1 time