

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY
PERSONNEL REVIEW COMMISSION
RESOLUTION NO. 2022-002**

A Resolution providing for an Amendment to the Cuyahoga County Personnel Review Commission's (PRC) Employee Handbook to create a Tuition Assistance Program to be applicable to all PRC employees.

WHEREAS, Article IX of the Charter of Cuyahoga County creates a Personnel Review Commission consisting of three electors of the County having experience in personnel matters or personnel administration and who are supportive of equal opportunity considerations; and,

WHEREAS, Section 9.01 of the Charter provides the authority for the Personnel Review Commission to employ persons in the service of the County; and

WHEREAS, the County Executive/Department of Human Resources has recommended amending the County's Human Resources Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, otherwise known as the Employee Handbook to provide a tuition reimbursement policy; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 9.01 of the County Charter, the County's human resources policies and systems, including ethics policies for County employees, shall be established by ordinance, and shall be administered in such manner as will eliminate unnecessary expense and duplication of effort, while ensuring that persons will be employed in the public service without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, or ancestry; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 9.02(4) of the County Charter, the PRC has responsibility for creation of rules and policies related to the PRC's authority set forth in the County Charter in accordance with the human resources policies established by ordinance; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary that this Resolution be effective May 6, 2022, in order that critical services provided by the PRC can continue and to provide for the usual, daily operation of the PRC.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY PERSONNEL REVIEW COMMISSIONERS ("COMMISSIONERS"):

SECTION 1. Adoption of Revised Cuyahoga County Personnel Review Commission Employee Handbook: The Commission hereby amends the PRC's Employee Handbook ("Employee Handbook") by adding new Section 10.13, as detailed in the attachment hereto, which amendment shall be effective for all PRC employees and shall remain in full force and effect and shall be followed by PRC employees under the authority of the Commissioners until such time as the Commissioners decide to rescind the program, if at all. The PRC shall disseminate the policy to all employees who are subject to the policy in accordance with the PRC's usual method of dissemination.

SECTION 2. It is necessary that this Resolution become effective May 6, 2022 for the usual daily operation of the PRC; the preservation of public peace, health, or safety at the PRC; and any additional reasons set forth in Section 2 of the Employee Handbook.

On a motion by _____, seconded by _____, the forgoing resolution was duly adopted.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTION:

NOT PRESENT:

Tuition Assistance Program

It is the policy of the Personnel Review Commission (PRC) to support and encourage employees to reach their personal goals, to take advantage of educational opportunities to enhance their job-related skills and to promote career development. Acquiring new skills; staying current with best practices and new technology; and gaining access to new information improves employee productivity, creates a pool of qualified and productive staff, and strengthens the PRC's commitment to promote the economic well-being of its employees.

Participation is voluntary and is not a condition of continued employment.

Eligibility

Employee Eligibility: To be eligible for any form of tuition reimbursement under this program an employee must:

1. Be a full-time, benefits eligible employee as defined in section 6.01 Employment Status in the Employee Handbook.
2. Have completed one (1) year of full-time continuous service prior to the date on which the course(s) commences.
3. Be pursuing a degree or taking individual courses at an institution approved by the PRC Director. The courses must be related to the employee's current position or a probable future assignment; and
4. Be in active employment status when the course(s) is completed. The resignation, release, or discharge of a participating employee after enrollment, and prior to the class completion date, will result in the employee's automatic ineligibility for a tuition reimbursement.

Eligible Coursework:

1. Program must be offered by an institution approved by the County's Human Resources department.
2. Eligible education includes undergraduate and graduate classes and individual credit granting seminars.
3. Does not include conferences or courses required for licensure/certification or to maintain minimum job qualifications.
4. Does not include books, fees, lab charges, travel, mileage, room and board/lodging or other non-tuition expenses.

Reimbursement

1. Grade of “C” or better for undergraduate studies, “B” or better for graduate studies, and a “Pass” or “Completed” for seminars.
2. Classes taken for Audit purposes are not eligible for reimbursement.
3. Maximum reimbursement of \$3,600 per calendar year for undergraduate and graduate study.

Approved Institution

For purposes of this Tuition Assistance Program, Approved Institution means a non-profit, public, or private institution of higher education that provides Associate’s, Baccalaureate, and Master’s/graduate programs and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission for the programs being offered, as selected by the County’s Human Resources department from time to time through a request for proposals process. The Director of Human Resources shall, no less than once every calendar year notify PRC employees of those institutions identified by the Director of Human Resources as an Approved Institution.

Procedures

To be eligible to receive reimbursement for educational expenses, employees must follow the following procedures:

- Prior to enrolling in an educational course, the employee must provide their manager/supervisor with information about the course for which the employee would like to receive reimbursement/payment and discuss the job-relatedness of the continuing education.
- At least thirty (30) days prior to the commencement of the course(s), a Tuition Reimbursement Request Form must be completed by the employee, signed by the employee’s department head or designee and submitted to the PRC Director for approval.
- Once the course(s) have been approved via the PRC Director, employees shall execute a Tuition Reimbursement Agreement, which describes the terms under which reimbursement is provided.
- The PRC Director will maintain the original Tuition Reimbursement Request Form and all subsequent supporting documentation.
- Once the course is successfully completed, the employee shall submit documented receipts (or outstanding invoices) for tuition payment/reimbursement from the

educational institution and documentation reflecting that the employee received the required passing grade or certification of a passing completion to the PRC Director, who will then forward the document to Human Resources for processing.

- Requests for reimbursement received after the commencement of the course will not be approved. **Completing tuition reimbursement documentation or enrolling in a class is not a guarantee of payment. Tuition reimbursement requests will not be authorized unless approved by the employee's department head and authorized by the PRC Director prior to the begin date of the class.**
- Employees are not permitted to take classes during their working hours under this program.
- The PRC Director and the Human Resources Department will coordinate the reimbursement with the Fiscal Office.

Repayment Rules

Should an employee leave PRC employment for any reason during the three (3) year period following the completion date of the last course taken by the employee, the employee shall be responsible to repay the reimbursement per the following schedule*:

- Within 1 year, one hundred percent (100%) of any reimbursements received by the employee within the previous 12-month period immediately preceding the employees' last day of employment.
- Within 2 years, seventy-five percent (75%) of any payments made within the previous 12-month period immediately preceding the employee's last day of employment.
- Within 3 years, fifty percent (50%) of any payments made within the previous 12-month period immediately preceding the employee's last day of employment.

*Special circumstances, as it relates to repayment will be reviewed and a determination will be made collaboratively with the PRC Director and the Commissioners.

Any exception granted by the PRC Director and Commissioners is made on a case-by-case basis. All decisions will be final and not considered a precedent for future requests.