

**CITY OF LA VISTA  
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL REPORT  
OCTOBER 15, 2013**

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Submitted By:</b>
AMEND CITY PERSONNEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	RITA M. RAMIREZ ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

**SYNOPSIS**

A resolution has been prepared to amend Section 13 of the City Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

N/A

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approval.

**BACKGROUND**

Originally, two changes were being considered to Section 13.4 (Educational Assistance Programs) of the Personnel Rules and Regulations. As we reviewed the proposed changes to Section 13.4, it became apparent that other subsections of the Employee & Personnel Development section were in need of updating as well. The result is number of proposed changes as outlined below.

With the switch in how the City delivers fire and emergency medical services, all references to "Members of the Volunteer Fire Department (MVFD)" were removed. Subsection 13.5, which addressed paramedic and EMT training courses, was also deleted.

Some responsibilities with regard to employee orientation were previously assigned to department heads. The Human Resources office has been performing these duties and the policy language was changed to reflect the current practice.

Due to a tax regulation issue, in the past the City has not offered educational assistance for classes associated with an advanced degree. The regulation issue is no longer a factor, and we are proposing that Section 13.4 be updated to allow for reimbursement for advanced degree education. In conjunction with this change we tightened up the language regarding the type of classes that would qualify. Maximum reimbursement amounts per employee were not changed and language was included to make it clear that the amount of funds available for educational assistance will be established each year during the budget process, and to ensure that employees can only be reimbursed in one fiscal year for an expense, even if the total expense exceeds the maximum allowed in one year.

The other proposed change to Section 13.4 adds language that would prohibit employees from applying for reimbursement from the City if they are also receiving Veteran's benefits, scholarships, etc. for the same

class(es). Our current language does not include this exclusion; however we have done some research on these policies in other cities and several of them have language similar to the proposal included.

Finally, with the implementation of Pay for Performance (PFP) a few years ago, a Council Policy Statement was created that outlines the employee performance appraisal process. In light of that fact, Section 13.6 was virtually deleted and the PFP policy statement is referenced.

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA VISTA, NEBRASKA, AMENDING SECTION 13 OF THE CITY PERSONNEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL REGARDING THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of the City of La Vista, Nebraska, has determined that a need exists to make changes to the existing La Vista City Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual as adopted on December 20, 2005; and

WHEREAS, it is being proposed that Subsection 13.4 in the manual regarding the educational assistance program be amended to incorporate reimbursement for eligible graduate program classes and prohibit the potential for duplicate reimbursement for the same costs; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the City Council to amend Section 13 of the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual to incorporate the changes to the above listed subsection.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and City Council of the City of La Vista, Nebraska, that the existing La Vista City Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual adopted on December 20, 2005, is hereby amended to reflect the proposed changes to Subsection 13.4 as submitted at the City Council meeting.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 15TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2013.

CITY OF LA VISTA

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Douglas Kindig, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Pamela A. Buethe, CMC  
City Clerk

## PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS

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**SECTION XIII: EMPLOYEE & PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT**

**ADOPTED:** **RESOLUTION NO. 96-012**  
**DATE:** **FEBRUARY 6, 1996**  
**AMENDED:** **RESOLUTION NO. 00-152**  
**DATE:** **DECEMBER 19, 2000**  
**AMENDED:** **RESOLUTION NO. 02-099**  
**DATE:** **OCTOBER 1, 2002**  
**READOPTED:** **RESOLUTION NO. 05-159**  
**DATE:** **DECEMBER 20, 2005**  
**AMENDED:** **RESOLUTION NO. 13-XXX**  
**DATE:** **OCTOBER 15, 2013**

13.1 **Orientation:** The Human Resources Office shall be responsible for providing new employees with a clear statement of fringe benefits available and reviewing said statement with the employee; reviewing the classification and pay plans currently in force with the employee, and ensuring that the employee completes all required documentation. Each department head shall be responsible for facilitating the adjustment of a new employee ~~or MVFD~~ to the work situation by:

- (1) Providing the employee ~~or MVFD~~ a clear statement of duties and official relationships;
- (2) Properly introducing the employee ~~or MVFD~~ to work associates;
- (3) Instructing and guiding the employee ~~or MVFD~~ in learning to perform all job functions;
- (4) Discussing with the employee ~~or MVFD~~ at regular intervals the employee's ~~or MVFD's~~ progress in learning and performing the work;
- ~~(5) Providing the employee or MVFD a clear statement of fringe benefits available;~~
- ~~(6) Reviewing with the employee the classification and pay plans currently in force.~~
- ~~(7) Ensuring that the employee or MVFD completes all required documentation with the City Clerk.~~

13.2 **Training:** The City ~~Administrator and department heads~~ shall establish appropriate training programs for City employees ~~and MVFD~~, in order that service rendered by employees ~~and MVFD~~ may be more effective, safe and efficient. Such training programs may include formal courses, seminars, workshop demonstrations, assignments of reading matter, or other such methods as may be available for improving the effectiveness and broadening the knowledge of employees in the performance of their respective duties. Employees ~~and MVFD~~ are encouraged to develop and further their job skills and personal potential by participation in available training programs. Such training programs shall be conducted during regular working hours except as prohibited or rendered impractical by work schedules.

13.3 **Conferences/Conventions:** Employees ~~and MVFD~~ are encouraged to participate in conferences, conventions, and meetings which have a direct relationship to the employee's position and the City's services. Approval for attendance at such conferences, conventions and meetings shall be obtained ~~from at~~ the department ~~level head or City Administrator~~ in advance of participation in such events.

13.4 **Educational Assistance Programs:** As an incentive for employees to further their educations and development, the City will reimburse regular permanent full-time employees ~~who have completed probation prior to registration,~~ for the cost of tuition, registration and laboratory fees for advanced training/college classes where each of the following conditions are met:

## PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS

(1) (1) Classes are work related and apply to either career advancement in the City or to job enhancement in current position.

(2) A Tuition Reimbursement Request is submitted in advance of registration and are approved in writing and in advance by the department head and the City Administrator, and such Request approvals are is filed in the employee's personnel file.

(3) The class is successfully completed with a grade of "C" or better.

(4) Such classes are may be taken at a university, college, junior college or technical/trade school that has been accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.

(5) Classes are taken on the employee's free time and not during work hours.

(6) Employee has not received reimbursement from any other sources (i.e. VA benefits, scholarships, grants, etc.) for payment of tuition, registration, and laboratory fees for which they are applying to the City.

(7) (2) Maximum reimbursement per employee per calendar year shall not exceed \$1,500. Total funds available for tuition reimbursement per department per fiscal calendar year will be established annually as part of the budget process, except as otherwise provided in a collective bargaining agreement. If the amount of funds available in a fiscal year is insufficient to honor the requests of all requesting employees (up to the maximum \$1,500 maximum limitation), the City Administrator or his/her designee shall prorate the available funds and reimburse employees in such amounts as the City Administrator or his/her designee determines to be fair and equitable. Any portion of any educational expense that is not reimbursed by the City in the fiscal year during which the expense was incurred by the employee because of funding limitations or expenses exceeding the maximum allowed, shall not qualify for reimbursement by the City in any subsequent fiscal year. The fiscal year in which the expense occurred shall be deemed to be the fiscal year in which the employee receives the final academic grade for the class or course involved., shall not exceed \$4,500.

(8) (6) The City reserves the right to limit the amount of reimbursement to the amount that would be paid at an alternate public accredited institution (e.g. University of Nebraska at Omaha).

(7) (9) Reimbursement will not be made by the City respecting (a) tools or supplies that may be retained by the employee after completion of a course of instruction, or meals, lodging, transportation or other costs, that do not represent tuition, registration or laboratory fees; (b) courses or other education involving sports, games or hobbies unless said course applies to either career advancement in the City or to job enhancement in current position. (e) any graduate level course of a kind normally taken by an individual pursuing a program leading to a law, business, medical or other advanced academic or professional degree.

To obtain reimbursement, the employee must:

## PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS

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- (a) Complete the Tuition Reimbursement Request form for Obtain approval by of the department head and City Administrator prior to registering for beginning the class;
- (b) Submit an official grade report or transcript to confirm that a grade of "C" or better was received; and
- (c) Submit all related receipts for approved classes that indicate payment of eligible expenses to the Finance Director not later than one month after the end of the semester for which the reimbursement is being requested.

13.5 **Paramedic/EMT-I Courses:** MVFD are eligible, subject to budgetary authority and the approval of the Fire Chief and City Administrator, to attend a paramedic or EMT-I course for which the City will pay all tuition. MVFD attending such courses will be reimbursed for the cost of texts and other materials required by the course. Upon successful completion of the paramedic course and certification, a MVFD must commit to a 4 year (four year) term of membership with the Volunteer Fire Department. Upon successful completion of the EMT-I course and certification, a MVFD must commit to a 1 year (one year) term of membership with the Volunteer Fire Department. If the member does not successfully complete the paramedic or EMT-I course, the cost of all tuition, texts and other materials shall be reimbursed to the City.

13.56 **Performance Appraisal/Evaluation:** The work performance of each employee who has not yet reached the maximum salary for his/her grade and classification shall be evaluated annually every six (6) months. The Council Policy Statement regarding Employee Compensation – Pay for Performance details the City's performance appraisal process. The work performance of those employees at the maximum salary rates for their grades and classifications shall be evaluated annually. The performance evaluation shall be conducted by the immediate supervisor when possible. Supervisors may conduct unscheduled performance evaluations as they deem appropriate. MVFD will receive a performance evaluation on an annual basis. The supervisor or department head shall discuss the performance evaluation with the employee or MVFD. A copy of the performance evaluation shall be given to the employee or MVFD and the City Administrator and placed in the employee's or MVFD's permanent personnel file.

## PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS

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- (1) Providing the employee a clear statement of duties and official relationships;
- (2) Properly introducing the employee to work associates;
- (3) Instructing and guiding the employee in learning to perform all job functions;
- (4) Discussing with the employee at regular intervals the employee's progress in learning and performing the work.

13.2 **Training:** The City shall establish appropriate training programs for City employees, in order that service rendered by employees may be more effective, safe and efficient. Such training programs may include formal courses, seminars, workshop demonstrations, assignments of reading matter, or other such methods as may be available for improving the effectiveness and broadening the knowledge of employees in the performance of their respective duties. Employees are encouraged to develop and further their job skills and personal potential by participation in available training programs. Such training programs shall be conducted during regular working hours except as prohibited or rendered impractical by work schedules.

13.3 **Conferences/Conventions:** Employees are encouraged to participate in conferences, conventions, and meetings which have a direct relationship to the employee's position and the City's services. Approval for attendance at such conferences, conventions and meetings shall be obtained at the department level in advance of participation in such events.

13.4 **Educational Assistance Programs:** As an incentive for employees to further their educations and development, the City will reimburse regular permanent full-time employees who have completed probation prior to registration, for the cost of tuition, registration and laboratory fees for advanced training/college classes where each of the following conditions are met:

- (1) Classes apply to either career advancement in the City or to job enhancement in current position.
- (2) A Tuition Reimbursement Request is submitted in advance of registration and approved in writing by the department head and the City Administrator, and such Request is filed in the

## **PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

employee's personnel file.

- (3) The class is successfully completed with a grade of "C" or better.
- (4) Such classes are taken at a university, college, junior college or technical/trade school that has been accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.
- (5) Classes are taken on the employee's free time and not during work hours.
- (6) Employee has not received reimbursement from any other sources (i.e. VA benefits, scholarships, grants, etc.) for payment of tuition, registration, and laboratory fees for which they are applying to the City.
- (7) Maximum reimbursement per employee per calendar year shall not exceed \$1,500. Total funds available for tuition reimbursement per fiscal year will be established annually as part of the budget process, except as otherwise provided in a collective bargaining agreement. If the amount of funds available in a fiscal year is insufficient to honor the requests of all requesting employees (up to the maximum \$1,500 maximum limitation), the City Administrator or his/her designee shall prorate the available funds and reimburse employees in such amounts as the City Administrator or his/her designee determines to be fair and equitable. Any portion of any educational expense that is not reimbursed by the City in the fiscal year during which the expense was incurred by the employee because of funding limitations or expenses exceeding the maximum allowed, shall not qualify for reimbursement by the City in any subsequent fiscal year. The fiscal year in which the expense occurred shall be deemed to be the fiscal year in which the employee receives the final academic grade for the class or course involved.
- (8) The City reserves the right to limit the amount of reimbursement to the amount that would be paid at an alternate public accredited institution (e.g. University of Nebraska at Omaha).
- (9) Reimbursement will not be made by the City respecting (a) tools or supplies that may be retained by the employee after completion of a course of instruction, or meals, lodging, transportation or other costs, that do not represent tuition, registration or laboratory fees; (b) courses or other education involving sports, games or hobbies unless said course applies to either career advancement in the City or to job enhancement in current position.

To obtain reimbursement, the employee must:

- (a) Complete the Tuition Reimbursement Request form for approval by the department head and City Administrator prior to registering for the class;
- (b) Submit an official grade report or transcript to confirm a grade of "C" or better was received; and
- (c) Submit all related receipts for approved classes that indicate payment of eligible expenses to the Finance Director not later than one month after the end of the semester for which the reimbursement is being requested.

13.5 **Performance Appraisal:** The work performance of each employee shall be evaluated annually. The Council Policy Statement regarding Employee Compensation – Pay for Performance details the City's performance appraisal process.

**CITY OF LA VISTA  
TUITION REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST  
(Instructions on the next page)**

**EMPLOYEE COMPLETES THIS SECTION:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Employee ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Division \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Course name and description:

Reason course will enhance job performance or promotability:

#Units \_\_\_\_\_ Fees: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Start date \_\_\_\_\_ Expected date of completion \_\_\_\_\_

School name and address:

This application is submitted in accordance with Personnel Rules and Regulations for tuition reimbursement. My enrollment is voluntary. Time spent taking the courses will not be considered work time. No application has been made nor will any compensation be accepted for full or partial payment of tuition for this course from any other sources (GI Bill, scholarships, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DEPARTMENT HEAD COMPLETES THIS SECTION:** (Strike out wrong words.)

I have reviewed the course description and find that it will/will not enhance the employee's performance or promotability and will/will not be taken on City time. I therefore do/do not recommend tuition reimbursement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMPLETES THIS SECTION:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Course eligible for reimbursement

\_\_\_\_\_  
Course not eligible for reimbursement/reason: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Administrator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Amount reimbursed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Warrant date \_\_\_\_\_

Processed by \_\_\_\_\_

TO SUBMIT THIS FORM, FILL IN THE SHADED AREAS,  
PRINT AND SIGN THE FORM, THE SUBMIT TO DEPARTMENT HEAD  
FOR PROCESSING AS DESCRIBED BELOW.

**TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE**

The following rules apply to all requests for tuition reimbursement:

1. Employee must be a regular, full-time employee and have completed probation as of the date of course registration.
2. Requests must be approved in advance of course registration by the Department Head and by the City Administrator. Failure to get advanced approval disqualifies the request.
3. Course taken must apply to either career advancement in the City, or to job enhancement in current position. Employees must have a reasonable expectation of meeting the qualifications of a higher position upon completion of the course. If there are any questions, employee should resolve the appropriateness of the course in advance by discussing the matter with the Department Head.
4. Courses must be disapproved for not meeting basic criteria described above, for being more appropriately charged to training budget, if budgeted funds have been exhausted, or if the course is being taken on City time.
5. Department Head will review and approve or disapprove request. If approved, form is sent to City Administrator for approval. A copy of the form will be sent back to the employee noting the City Administrator's decision.
6. Upon completion of an approved course and not later than one month after the end of the semester for which the reimbursement is being requested, employee must send his/her copy of form with receipts and grade report to the Finance Director.