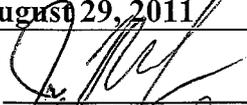
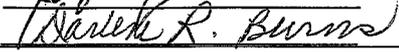


430  
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Revision Number: 1	Effective Date: August 29, 2011
Supersedes: 430	Issue Date: August 29, 2011
Revision Date: 0-January 15, 2008	Approvals: HR Director:  Commission: 

**PURPOSE**

County employees are encouraged to seek further education to perform their jobs more effectively and to enhance their professional development. Uintah County may subsidize the education expenses of County employees under specified circumstances.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to Career Service and Appointed Employees and is subject to availability of funds.

**CROSS REFERENCES**

Policy 400 - Leave

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

1. Program Eligibility
  - A. The education program must provide a benefit to the County by directly relating to the work the employee currently performs or is likely to perform in a career ladder progression or promotion.
  - B. Unless otherwise approved by the County Commission, assistance will only be granted to employees attending accredited universities, colleges, or technical schools.
  - C. One-time classes, annual trainings, etc. are excluded from educational assistance. These types of courses shall be referred to the Department Head and may be subsidized through the department's budget.
  
2. Reimbursement
  - A. Tuition may be reimbursed up to \$1,500 per year for a total of four (4) years for a "C" grade or above (or passing in a pass/fail course). Employees are responsible for any fees, books, and any other charges in excess of tuition. Tuition costs shall not be carried into the next budget year for reimbursement.
  - B. Reimbursement is subject to Federal and State Tax Regulations. It is the employee's responsibility to keep abreast of the tax regulations and implications.

- C. Employees receiving other tuition assistance such as scholarships or grants shall document such on the application. If approved, the employee will be eligible for reimbursement with proper documentation of alternate assistance AND proof of satisfactory grades.

3. Procedure

- A. Employees are encouraged to attend classes during non-working hours. On a case-by-case basis, the Department Head may flex an employee's work schedule to allow the employee to attend classes. Employees may use accrued PTO if they wish to be paid for time missed during work hours to attend classes.
- B. An application for educational assistance and a commitment agreement must be received by the HR Director no later than thirty (30) days prior to the beginning of the class.
- C. To receive education assistance, an employee must receive approval from the HR Director and County Commission prior to commencement of the program.
- D. To be eligible for reimbursement, an employee must complete a contract approved by the commission documenting participation in the education program and agreeing to repay any education assistance money received in the 12 months immediately preceding voluntary termination from County employment.
- E. The employee must submit proof of a satisfactory grade and proof of tuition payment to the HR Director prior to reimbursement. Reimbursement amounts shall appear as taxable income on the employee's paycheck.

4. Required Classes – If the County requires an employee to attend an education program or class as a function of the employee's position, the County shall pay the full cost of the program or class.

5. Course Cancellation

- A. Forced Class Cancellation – Once enrolled and approved for assistance, the County will pay cancellation costs and tuition costs less the amount that was reimbursed to the employee when it changes an employee's work requirements or schedule such that the employee meets one of the following conditions:
  - 1. The employees work requirements/schedules were initiated by the County.
  - 2. Optional requirements/schedules have been explored and have been proven to be unworkable.
  - 3. Optional satisfactory arrangements have been made with the institution and none have been offered (may require written documentation).

B. Normal Class Cancellation – Employees are ineligible for reimbursement when the employee:

1. Decides not to enroll in a course, drops a course, or when a course is canceled by the institution.
2. Decides to drop out of a program.

6. Commitment

A. Employees who have been reimbursed by the County's educational assistance policy shall remain employed by the County, at equivalent or higher status for:

1. One (1) year, from the last reimbursement, for each \$1,500 reimbursed to the employee, up to \$6,000 for four (4) years.
2. If the employee terminates employment before the above terms, the employee shall pay any educational assistance reimbursements back to the County to satisfy the commitment requirement. For example, if the employee received \$1,000 and terminates employment on 5/1/11, and has not satisfied the commitment agreement, all reimbursements after 5/1/10 shall be paid back to the County. The HR Director and County Auditor may consider payment arrangements for up to three (3) years.
3. If an employee is terminated for cause, the employee may not declare that the commitment agreement is a contract of any sort. The educational assistance program is strictly voluntary and utilized by the employee at his/her discretion.