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## **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **I. TITLE**

The official title of this program shall be "Suffolk County Tuition Reimbursement Program." This will differentiate the program from the free "In-Service Training Courses," which have been sponsored by the County and from the "Empire State Satellite Educational Program."

### **II. PURPOSE**

This program is designed to give financial assistance to County employees who wish to take courses that will either improve their ability to perform on the job or will enhance their career opportunities. It constitutes implementation of the provisions of the contracts concerning eligible employees which provide the County to establish rules and regulations on which an in-service program of training shall operate, pursuant to which the County will provide funding for AME to administer 75 percent of the cost of approved courses of study upon the successful completion thereof by the employee.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

Tuition reimbursement means financial assistance amounting to 75 percent of the tuition cost of approved courses for full-time employees and a proportion for part-time employees, with a maximum reimbursement of \$5,250 per year.

The word "course" means an organized instructional unit within one of the regularly scheduled academic terms of an educational institution or in a condensed format whether in-person or online.

### **IV. ELIGIBILITY**

With the exception of sworn members of the Police Department, Correction Officers, Deputy Sheriffs, Faculty and Guild members of the Suffolk Community College, all full-time County employees holding permanent, contingent permanent or provisional status with a minimum of one (1) year of continuous service at the time of application are eligible to apply for participation in this program except as may be hereinafter provided.

Part-time employees meeting the above status and length of time criteria also are eligible for the program. However, the benefits to be received by part-time employees shall be a proportion of the full 75 percent tuition benefit determined by the number of hours worked each week as compared to the normal full-time week.

### **V. REIMBURSEMENT**

Approval for reimbursement will be determined by judging each individual course or the matriculated course of study on the basis of the employee's stated relevance to their present job as well as the job opportunities that would be available upon completion of the course of study. It is not a requirement that the course of study be related to the present job or career path.

Reimbursement that is approved on a course of study basis shall include all required courses mandated by the educational institution for the completion of the course of study approved. Required classes which comprise the requirements necessary to obtain a certificate or degree shall be inclusive of the terms for other approved courses of study.

Members of Bargaining Unit #6 shall receive reimbursement for classes necessary to obtain certificates for trade or promotional requirements.

Upon satisfactory completion of an approved course, an employee will be reimbursed for 75 percent of the tuition cost. This tuition cost does not include registration fees, books, laboratory fees, mileage, etc.

Satisfactory completion of an approved course shall consist of official notice from the school that the student has received a passing grade. When this is submitted along with the bursar's receipt for the tuition paid, the employee shall then receive the reimbursement.

Any exempt employee designated in §A6-2 of the SUFFOLK COUNTY CODE shall only be entitled to reimbursement under this program on or after the effective date of November 8, 1989, if he or she has been employed by the County for a period of at least two (2) consecutive years immediately preceding application for reimbursement hereunder.

**VI. LIMITATION**

Course approval will be judged on the basis of the County's need, the employee's career development, availability of appropriated funds and whether the application is for a regularly announced formal course conducted by accredited schools and recognized by the Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees, Inc. Failure to meet any of these requirements shall not necessarily result in a disapproved application inasmuch as each application is judged on an individual basis.

An employee may be approved for no more than 12 credits (or 4 non-credit courses) per calendar year (January 1 to December 31). The start date of the academic term in which the course is being offered will determine the calendar year to which the course is being credited.

To be eligible to receive any reimbursement applications must be received by AME before the starting date of classes for the academic term in which the course is being offered. Late applications will not be reviewed.

An employee who terminates employment with Suffolk County prior to completion of the course forfeits the right to reimbursement from the County.

If an employee receives payment for an approved course from any other source, such as scholarships, grants, G. I. Bill, etc, the County's share of the cost shall be limited to the amount that the 75 percent of the allowed tuition exceeds the amount received from other sources.

This program does not include conferences, workshops, seminars, symposiums and the like which last from one to several days and for attendance at which employees are allowed time off.

**VII. APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL AND REIMBURSEMENT**

Application forms will be available from the Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees, Inc.

Upon completion, the application form should be forwarded to the Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees, Inc. to be received by that office prior to the starting date for the academic term in which the course is being held.

The employee will be notified directly by the Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees, Inc. on whether or not the application is approved for reimbursement. This determination shall be final.