

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS

I. TITLE

The official title of this program shall be the "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 within the county. It constitutes implementation of the provisions of the contracts concerning eligible employees which provide the County to establish rules and regulations on which the program shall operate, pursuant to which the County will provide funding for AME to administer **up to** 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 **up to 75 percent of the tuition cost subject to availability of funds** of approved courses for full-time employees and a proportion for part-time employees, with a maximum reimbursement of \$5,250 per calendar 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 Suffolk Community College, all full-time County employees holding permanent, contingent permanent or provisional status who meet the below criteria with 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 below 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 proportionate of the approved Tuition Reimbursement amount determined commensurate with the number of hours worked each week as compared to the normal full-time week.

Degree Pursuit:

Associate's Degree or Equivalent
Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent
Master's Degree or Equivalent
Doctoral Degree or Equivalent
Non-Degree Program or Equivalent

Minimum Tenure

One (1) year
Two (2) years
Four (4) years
Five (5) years
One (1) year

*Training Certifications required for employment exempted, per review.

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, **but it must be directly related to a Suffolk County Civil Service title.**

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 courses 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 **up to 75 percent of the tuition cost, based upon available funding**. 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 per satisfaction of the below criteria immediately preceding application for reimbursement hereunder.

<u>Degree Pursuit:</u>	<u>Minimum Tenure</u>
Associate's Degree or Equivalent	Two (2) years
Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent	Three (3) years
Master's Degree or Equivalent	Five (5) years
Doctoral Degree or Equivalent	Six (6) years
Non-Degree Program or Equivalent	Two (2) years

VI. LIMITATION

Course approval will be judged on the basis of the County's need, the employees 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 twelve (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 **and prior to claim submission** forfeits the right to reimbursement from the County.

If an employee receives reimbursement for an approved course from any other source, such as scholarships, grants, G. I. Bill, etc, those awards shall be deducted from their tuition costs.

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.