



**CITY OF VISALIA PERSONNEL POLICY**  
**Policy #312**  
**Education Assistance**

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**I. PURPOSE**

The City of Visalia believes that formal education has a positive impact on an employee's contribution to the organization and therefore supports self-development and educational efforts by providing reimbursements for many of the expenses associated with continuing education courses.

**II. POLICY**

It is the policy of the City of Visalia to encourage employees to continue their education whenever possible. Employees should take advantage of worthwhile educational opportunities to help improve job performance in their current job classifications as well as to prepare them for advancement or promotion within the City.

It is the employee's responsibility to seek out the courses and other training mediums that will enhance their career development. Professional development can be obtained through attendance at seminars, educational courses and webinars, certification courses, and degree programs that will assist the employee in performing their current job functions or a potential future assignment and increase the employee's contribution to the City.

To help employees meet the costs of continued education, Department Heads may authorize an educational expense reimbursement for their employees meeting the City's requirements as outlined in the following sections of this policy.

- A. Course Criteria - The criteria for course eligibility is broad but must be related to the employee's present job or potential career development within the City or part of a degree program. Eligible courses will be offered through a college, university, adult education program, business, technical school, recognized correspondence school, or qualified institutions/organizations, as determined by the Department Head.
- B. Eligibility - Applicants must be probationary or regular full-time employees. Employees on their initial probationary period may apply, but reimbursement will not occur until after successful completion of the probationary period. Hourly employees are not eligible.
- C. Reimbursement Amount - The City will provide employees up to an annual amount specified in the applicable bargaining unit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Compensation and Benefit Summary to help defray education expenses. Allowable Expenses include registration/tuition fees, required fees (such as a health fee), required textbooks or e-books, lab fees, and costs for testing for a certification. Expenses for parking, graduation-related expenses/fees, equipment (such as computers, iPads, etc.) routine supplies (such as paper, binders, pencils, pens, etc.) or other related items are not reimbursable under this program. Unless specifically provided by MOU, expenses for travel, room accommodations, and meals are not eligible for reimbursement.



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- D. Department Head Approval - The employee's Department Head shall determine eligibility consistent with this policy. Department Head approval must be obtained prior to any course registration to ensure the employee's educational program meets requirements and all eligibility criteria are met.
- E. Course Completion - Class and study time must be scheduled outside the employee's normal work hours. A grade of "C" or better, a "Pass" if taken Pass/Fail, or other evidence of satisfactory course completion (such as a certificate) is required to receive reimbursement of expenses.
- F. The program is run on a Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30) basis. If a course/class begins in one fiscal year and ends in the next fiscal year, the reimbursement will be in the fiscal year in which the class ends.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

- A. Prior to enrolling in any class or training, employees must complete a Request for Approval Form and submit it to their immediate supervisor/manager for review and approval. The request must include applicable course(s), purpose, job relevance, approximate cost, dates, and the name of the institution or source of training. The specific course(s) planned for the current term must be listed (not a general program, such as "BA Degree" or "Criminal Justice degree").
- B. Upon manager/supervisor approval, the request is submitted to the Department Head for final approval. Final approval is required prior to course start date. Departments are responsible for tracking and monitoring employee education assistance requests, ensuring criteria and deadlines are met.
- C. Within 30 days of satisfactory completion of the pre-approved coursework, the employee must complete and submit the Education Assistance Request for Refund Application, along with required supporting documentation (receipts, grades/certificates, course approval form), to the department head for reimbursement approval.
- D. To initiate reimbursement payment processing, the department must submit a completed copy of the Request for Refund form to Finance within 60 days of course completion along with a Check Request form. Reimbursement processing for probationary employees will be initiated upon successful completion of the probationary period. If an employee has separated from the City when the class is completed, no reimbursement will be made.
- E. Payment of educational reimbursements will be charged to the department for which the employee works. The charge will be to the Educational Reimbursement Account. The department is responsible for maintaining copies of all documentation. Failure to follow procedures and meet required deadlines will result in denial of reimbursement.