

## **PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

### **EMPLOYEE EDUCATION**

POLICY NO. 3-05-95 (1)

FEBRUARY 12, 2004

#### **A. PURPOSE**

This policy sets forth the Commission's philosophy on employee education and training and presents the conditions under which financial assistance will be made available to encourage its acquisition.

#### **B. POLICY**

The Commission encourages the education and training of its employees and will, to the extent that funds are available and within the guidelines set forth below, make financial assistance available to help cover a portion of the costs associated with its attainment.

These guidelines are provided to assist in the application of this policy:

1. Eligibility. Requests for tuition assistance will be considered only from permanent, full-time employees who have completed at least twelve (12) months of continuous employment with the Commission.
2. Prior Approval. Requests for tuition assistance must be in writing and must be submitted before the employee enrolls in the desired course. Requests must include:
  - a. Course title and number.
  - b. Description of the course and an explanation of how it relates to the employee's present position.
  - c. Name of the school offering the course.
  - d. Days of the week and times the class meets.
  - e. Duration of the course.
  - f. Number of credits and cost of tuition.
  - g. Proposed modifications to the employee's work schedule.

- h. The amount of assistance being requested.
  - i. A list of all prior tuition assistance provided to the applicant by the Commission.
- 3. Approval Procedure. Written requests for tuition assistance must be submitted to the employee's division director. The director shall forward the request, along with their recommendation, to the Commission's executive secretary. The request and the recommendations of the executive secretary and division director shall be presented to the Commission for a final determination.

The deadlines for submitting requests are April 1, August 1, and December 1. Reimbursement for classes taken in the ensuing time period will not be made unless written requests for assistance are received by these dates.

- 4. Reimbursement. If the employee's request is granted, tuition reimbursement will be made when the employee submits:
  - a. Proof that the course was completed and that they achieved at least a "C" grade.
  - b. A receipt reflecting the tuition associated with the course and the fact that the fee was paid.

Requests for reimbursement must be made within sixty days of the day that the school mails course grades to students.

Prior to receiving reimbursement, an employee must agree in writing to refund the reimbursement if they voluntarily leave Commission employment within twelve months of completing the course.

- 5. Amounts. Within budgetary constraints, reimbursement of up to 100 percent may be made for courses directly related to the type of work that the employee is currently performing and equips the employee to better perform his or her present duties.

Reimbursement of up to 50 percent will be made available for courses not directly related to the work that the employee is currently performing but which are required for a work-related degree that the employee is working towards.

Reimbursement will be based on the cost at the least expensive college or university that is practical and will be limited to an amount not covered by other aid. Reimbursement will be further limited to an amount not to exceed \$1000 per any consecutive twelve month period and \$2500 in pursuit of any given degree (undergraduate degree, masters degree, etc.).

In all cases, reimbursement of 100 percent will be made if the course is required by the Commission.

6. Scheduling. Employees are encouraged to enroll in courses that do not conflict with the Commission's normal office hours. With the benefit of flex-time scheduling, an employee may be allowed to attend classes during regular business hours. These employees will still be required to complete their normal hours of work per week. An employee may elect to take annual leave to attend classes if this leave does not conflict with the employee's work obligations.
7. Seminars, Workshops, Conventions, and non-College Courses. The Commission may provide funding for seminars, workshops, conventions, and non-college courses if the forums provide training that is directly job-related.

An employee who identifies a forum that is believed to be beneficial and job-related may submit a memorandum of request to their division director. The request must contain:

- a. A description of the training to be provided, including the location, timing, sponsoring entity, and cost.
- b. A statement of how the training pertains to the employee's present duties and responsibilities.
- c. Benefits that will result from participating in the forum.

The division director may grant the request if the forum is directly job-related and if funding is available in the division's budget. Denials may, within ten days, be appealed to the executive secretary. Training which involves out-of-state travel must obtain related authorization from the executive secretary as provided for in Policy 1-07-82.