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# City of Detroit

## CITY COUNCIL

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TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: David Whitaker, Director  
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: April 17, 2018

RE: Request for a Report on the City's Tuition Refund Program

Council President Pro-Tem Sheffield requested that the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) report on the background of the City of Detroit's Tuition Refund Program. Included in the request, President Pro-Tem Sheffield also asked for LPD to report on the last time the program was fully funded and to report on the level of funding required to fully restore the program. This report is our response to this inquiry.

### Background on the Tuition Refund Program

According to the twelve page City document prepared by the City's *Personnel Department*,<sup>1</sup> "Tuition Refunds," issued July 1, 1992, the City's Tuition Refund Plan was initiated in 1966. The Tuition Refund Plan was administered by the Personnel Department's Training Division. The document spelled out the parameters of the Plan as the following:

- **The Plan's purpose:** To encourage assist City employees to obtain additional education and training to assist in their respective career objectives with the City and to improve their performances in providing City services.
- **Type of Education or Training Qualified for Refunds:** The education or training must be related to the employee's current occupational field. Most accredited college or technical school programs that are directed towards a degree or a certificate qualified. Exceptions may be made only when shown to be directly related to the current job or major functions of the employee's occupational field. The training must be conducted by a recognized and approved institution.

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<sup>1</sup> The City's former Personnel Department is now the Human Resources Department.

- **Who is Eligible for the Plan:** Included are certified City employees that have passed their initial probationary period; sworn officers of the police department; City charter appointees and provisional hires who have completed six months of continuous service. However, contractual workers are excluded.
- **How Does the Plan Work?** The Plan is a reimbursement plan; tuition and registration fees must be paid upfront by the employee. Also reimbursements may be made for tuition and registration fees only, books and any other related educational costs are not covered. The Personnel Office administers the Plan and associated procedures, verification and documentation.

### **Status of the Tuition Refund Program as of 2007**

At the Tuition Refund Program's optimum period of operation in 2007, the parameters of the program were as follows:

#### **Tuition Assistance Program<sup>2</sup>** City of Detroit

The Tuition Assistance program has two components, a **direct billing process** and **reimbursement process**. The direct billing process provides direct payment to an educational institution after the completion of a class or training program. Under the reimbursement process, the employee pays all costs and must request reimbursement within 90 days after the completion of the class or training program.

Both processes require pre-approval from the employee's supervisor (departmental liaison) and (Human Resources Consultant) with the following supporting documentation:

- ❖ A copy of the registration form from the educational institution, with proposed costs
- ❖ A completed and signed Tuition Assistance application
- ❖ A completed and signed Registration Authorization form (Direct Billing Only)

Failure to submit the required documentation within 90 days, may exclude you from the program.

All classes must be successfully completed with a grade of a "C" or better for undergraduate students, or a "B" or better for graduate students.

\*\*\* The Tuition Assistance Program covers tuition and registration fees only.

The current maximum Direct Billing/Reimbursement, per fiscal year (July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>), per employee, is: (Based on Union affiliation)

Employee Development Program (seminars, conferences, etc.)	<b>\$1200.00</b>
Undergraduate Degree Program	<b>\$1500.00</b>
Graduate Degree Program	<b>\$2000.00</b>

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Tuition Assistance Program FORM 9009, Effective 06/01/07

All applications must be signed by the employer, supervisor, Human Resources Consultant and Department Liaison.

The City of Detroit and the universities listed below have agreed to allow employees to register with a letter of authorization from the City's Human Resources Department. The college/university will invoice the City of Detroit at the end of the semester.

Central Michigan University	Baker College	Davenport University
Henry Ford Community College	Spring Arbor University	University of Detroit-Mercy

### The Decline of the City Tuition Refund Program

The decline of the City's Tuition Refund Program was initiated in 2010. In one of several initiatives implemented by the Bing Administration as an attempt to curtail a path to financial insolvency by the City of Detroit, the City's Labor Relations Division of Human Resources issued a letter indicating, that the City of Detroit employee Tuition Refund Program would be suspended beginning September 1, 2010, through June 30, 2012.<sup>3</sup>

Citywide, the policy change geared to trim the Tuition Refund Program is clearly reflected in the City's budget, as we discovered in our review of the annual budget of Non-Departmental, from fiscal years 2011 through 2015. According to the **Fiscal Year 2010-11 Budget**, the Tuition Refund Program went from actual expenditures of \$531,591 in 2008-09, a 2009-10 Redbook (final budgeted amount) budget level of \$733,132 (the last full level of funding), which concluded with the Mayor Recommending \$69,933 for FY '10-11; **ultimately, this resulted with a budgeted reduction of \$663,199 (90.46%) for the Tuition Refund Program.** For **Fiscal Year 2011-12 Budget**, the Tuition Refund Program went from actual expenditures of \$467,629 in 2009-10 and a 2010-11 Redbook (final budgeted amount) budget level of \$69,933; with the Mayor's corresponding recommendation for 2011-12 of \$68,267. For the information we had available, we discovered that the Mayor Recommended \$29,300 for the program for the next three fiscal years.<sup>4</sup>

The budgetary information for the Tuition Refund Program we detailed earlier is illustrated in charts below:

		FISCAL YEAR 2010-11					
OBJECT	OBJECT NAME	2008-09 ACTUALS	2009-10 REDBOOK	2010-11 DEPT REQUEST	2010-11 MAYOR'S RECOMMEND	VARIANCE	VARIANCE %
628208	Training-Tuition Reimbursement	\$531,591	\$733,132	\$317,500	\$69,933	(663,199)	-90.46

		FISCAL YEAR 2011-12					
OBJECT	OBJECT NAME	2009-10 ACTUALS	2010-11 REDBOOK	2011-12 DEPT REQUEST	2011-12 MAYOR'S RECOMMEND	VARIANCE	VARIANCE %
628208	Training-Tuition Reimbursement	\$467,629	\$69,933	\$168,405	\$68,267	(1,666)	-2.38

		FISCAL YEAR 2012-13					
OBJECT	OBJECT NAME	2010-11 ACTUALS	2011-12 REDBOOK	2012-13 DEPT REQUEST	2012-13 MAYOR'S RECOMMEND	VARIANCE	VARIANCE %
628208	Training-Tuition Reimbursement	\$132,270	\$68,267	\$46,460	\$29,300	(38,967)	-57.08

<sup>3</sup> The letter from the Human Resources Labor Relations Division, dated July 26, 2010, indicated that "Effective September 1, 2010 the City's Tuition Refund Program is suspended for the balance of the 208-12 contract period. There will be no reimburse/payment for course work or employment development program ending after August 31, 2010. Effective July 1, 2012, all non-union employees must have a minimum of (3) years of service to qualify to participate in the City's Tuition Refund Program.

<sup>4</sup> Mayor Recommended \$29,300 for the program in fiscal years 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2015-16.

		FISCAL YEAR 2013-14					
OBJECT	OBJECT NAME	2011-12 ACTUALS	2012-13 REDBOOK	2013-14 REQUEST	2013-14 MAYOR'S RECOMMEND	VARIANCE	VARIANCE
628208	Training-Tuition Reimbursement	\$38,947	\$29,300	\$29,300	\$29,300	0	0%

		FISCAL YEAR 2014-15							
OBJECT	OBJECT NAME	2012-13 ACTUALS	2013-14 REDBOOK	2014-15 REQUEST	2015-16 REQUEST	2016-17 REQUEST	2014-15 Mayors RECOMMEND	2015-16 Mayors RECOMMEND	2016-17 Mayors RECOMMEND
628208	Training-Tuition Reimbursement	\$18,387	\$29,300	\$31,300	\$32,033	\$32,784	\$29,300	\$30,033	\$30,784

### Current Status of the Tuition Refund Program Conclusion & Question

Currently, it appears the only known agency/department that is receiving the benefit of the Tuition Refund Program is the Detroit Police Department (DPD). On DPD's employment flyer, it is indicated that, "Tuition Reimbursement (\$2000) after 1 year continuous service following the completion of the Detroit Police Academy.<sup>5</sup>" The program, which is conducted in partnership with Wayne State University, is detailed in a press release (attached) from WSU, dated July 16, 2016. The release states, "...a new Wayne State University pilot program will offer City of Detroit police officers tuition reimbursement to attend the school."

The WSU press release further states, "Under the pilot program, which will launch in fall 2016, Wayne State will provide the match for up to 30 officers per year. Eligible DPD officers must begin in a fall semester. The Detroit Police Department will pay \$2,000 for an officer's first semester and WSU will pay \$2,000 for the subsequent spring semester. The WSU offer is good for four consecutive years. The student must maintain a 2.5 GPA and remain in good academic standing. Program members must be seeking a bachelor's degree and declare a major of study."

In the most recent budget information we have available for the Tuition Refund Program, it appears that \$29,300 is currently available for the program, which at the present time, appears to only cover eligible Detroit Police Officers.

Finally, it appears it will take a budgeted annual figure of \$733,132 to fully restore the Tuition Refund Program. However, we respectfully request that the Administration, with the assistance of the Budget Department and Human Resources answer the following question in the next two weeks, ideally by May 2, 2018:

#### Question for the Budget Department and Human Resources:

1. The 2008-09 budgeted Redbook figure for Non-Departmental Object #628208 Training-Tuition Reimbursement was \$733,132, which was the amount prior to the reduction to the program in the 2010-11 fiscal year. Is \$733,132 the full budgeted figure required to fully restore the Tuition Refund Program to the level of availability in the 2008-09 fiscal year?

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

<sup>5</sup> A tuition matching program (up to \$2000) is currently available for Detroit Police Officers through Wayne State University.

Attachments:

**City of Detroit Human Resources Tuition Registration Authorization Form**

**City of Detroit Human Resources Tuition Assistance Application**

**DPD PO Hiring Information Sheet**

**WSU Press Release: *Wayne State University to match tuition reimbursement for Detroit police officers***

**Registration Authorization (Direct Billing)**

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Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate                       Graduate                       Professional Development

Course Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Course End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Program: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

University/School: \_\_\_\_\_

University/School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

University/School Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you submitted a previous Tuition Assistance Application within the last 90 days?  Yes  No

If yes, provide end date of semester/term: \_\_\_\_\_ and amount of payment requested: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby authorize \_\_\_\_\_ to release any information from my  
Name of Educational Institution  
school files that is requested by the Human Resources Department of the City of Detroit.

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Approved: _____	Date of Approval: _____
Authorized By (O/EDS Stamp): _____	

**FOR DIRECT PAYMENT REQUEST ONLY-**  
**To the Educational Institution participating in the City of Detroit Tuition Assistance Program:**

Please allow the above named individual to enroll for course(s) at your university/institution/college:  
At the successful completion of the course(s), submit an invoice no later than 90 days after the term ends to:  
City of Detroit, Human Resources Department, O/EDS Division  
Attention: Tuition Assistance Office  
1300 Rosa Parks Blvd.  
Detroit, MI 48216

The invoice MUST include the student's name, SSN, course(s), level (undergraduate or graduate), grade (minimum of C for undergraduate or B for graduate), date of course(s), itemized tuition cost and fees less any student grants or scholarships (limited amounts of payable fees are Tuition & Registration Fees only).

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## Tuition Assistance Application

### Purpose

The *Tuition Assistance Application* is used to request reimbursement for approved class costs or to request direct payment authorization validation required to register for a class. (Pre-Approval required for both processes)

### Usage

A *Tuition Assistance Application* is completed whenever an eligible employee is requesting to register for a class or workshops eligible for tuition assistance. (Pre-Approval is required)

### Attributes

The *Tuition Assistance Application* is a two page electronic form. To access this form, select the HR web page, or type <http://cityweb/humanresources>, then go to DOCUMENTS\FORMS and select Tuition Assistance Application [FORM9416].

### Completion and Filing

This form must be completed in full, with supervisory authorization. Insure that the following information is completed:

- Employee, Supervisor, Human Resources sections and Department Liaison are completed and **signed**.
- A copy of the registration form and cost is attached.
- A copy of a cancelled check or statement of payment on the Educational Institution's letterhead or other official form, including the dollar amount paid or proposed is attached.
- A copy of the grade report, transcript, certificate of completion, or statement of attendance on the Educational Institution's letterhead or other official form is attached.
- All courses on this application are in the SAME fiscal year. (July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>).

The original is to be retained by the Department Liaison. A Supervisory approved copy should be retained by the employee.

## **Distribution**

Supervisor\*

Employee\*

Employee Services Specialist (At Employee Services)

Department Liaison

Office Assistant (at O/EDS)\*

Manager – Employee Services (at O/EDS)

Department Director or Designee

## **Ownership**

The Manager – Employee Services (at Organization and Employee Development Services) is responsible for ensuring that this document is necessary and that it reflects actual practice and City policy. Questions concerning this form should be directed to the person listed above.



# Tuition Assistance Application

## PART 1 – TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE

Type of Assistance request:  Direct Billing  Reimbursement

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Previous Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 SSN: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Division: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Is this request for a Sworn Officer  Yes  No  
 Employee status:  Charter Appointed  Elected  Permanent  Provisional  F/T Labor Assoc/Union: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Office Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Office phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Does this request refer to classes in a program:  Yes  No, IF yes, type of program:  Undergraduate  Graduate  Professional Development  Vocational Training

Course(s) or Workshop(s) Name	Course Days	Course Times	Course start date	Course end date	Credit hours	Tuition Cost	Total Costs (Tuition & Registration Fees)

How will this course be of value in your work with the City of Detroit?

Will you receive financial assistance from any other source?  Yes  No, IF yes, Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Source: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby authorize \_\_\_\_\_ to release any information from my school files requested by the Human Resources Department of the City of Detroit. Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Educational Institution

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL DOCUMENTATION MUST BE SUBMITTED WITHIN 90 DAYS OF THE LAST DAY OF CLASS.**

**PART 2 – TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SUPERVISOR**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Is employee on Workers Compensation?  Yes  No How long has the employee worked for the City of Detroit? \_\_\_\_\_ Years

Are these course(s) or workshop(s) related to applicant's current occupation?  Yes  No Are these courses related to applicant's reasonable promotional opportunities?  Yes  No

I recommend approval of this application and believe the course(s) or workshop(s) is of value to this employee's performance as a city employee and the course times will NOT interfere with the proper performance of the employee's duties.

I do NOT recommend approval of this application. Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

**The information contained on this application is complete and accurate, as of \_\_\_\_\_:**  
date

Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 3 – TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HUMAN RESOURCES CONSULTANT**

Is employee serving an initial probation period (new hire)?  Yes  No Is employee in a grant funded position?  Yes  No

I recommend approval of this application and confirm this employee's eligibility to participate in the Tuition Assistance Plan.

I do NOT recommend approval of this application. Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

**The information contained on this application is complete and accurate, as of \_\_\_\_\_:**  
date

Human Resources Consultant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 4 – TO BE COMPLETED BY THE TUITION ASSISTANCE DEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

This application has been:  Approved  Denied ON Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Denial: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Fiscal Year maximum: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assistance Previously Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Authorized Assistance Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Fiscal Year:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Authorized Payment:** \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Payment Date is four - six weeks from Review Date above. If you do not receive payment within this time period, please contact the Tuition Assistance office.



## DETROIT POLICE OFFICER HIRING INFORMATION

*Recruit@detroitmi.gov*

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR DETROIT POLICE OFFICERS

Must be at least 18 years of age – Possess a valid Driver's License  
High School Diploma or GED from an accredited institution  
U.S. Citizenship – No Felony Convictions

### POLICE OFFICER PAY RANGE: \$36,900 - \$55,164

- Additional 2% for hires with at least 2 years college credit from an accredited college or university at hire
- Tuition Reimbursement (\$2000) after 1 year continuous service following the completion of the Detroit Police Academy\*
- Annual Step Increases for the first 5 years of employment
- Student Police Officers are paid while attending training; training is provided through the Detroit Police Academy

**Additional Pay:** Shift Differential (Afternoon, Midnight)  
Off-Duty Court Appearances  
Uniform Allowance

**Full Benefits Package:** Medical, Dental and Optical Insurance Plans  
Three (3) Paid Holidays per Year  
Four (4) Floating Holidays  
Twenty (20) Vacation Days per Year  
401K Plan & Optional Deferred Compensation Plan

*\*A tuition matching program (up to \$2000) is currently available for Detroit Police Officers through Wayne State University.*

### DETROIT POLICE HIRING PROCESS:

- Meet minimum requirements, including a criminal history check
- Pass MCOLES Pre-Employment Reading and Writing test\*\*
- Pass MCOLES Physical Fitness Test\*\*
- Attend Application Orientation
- Pass Background Investigation
- Pass Oral Board Interview
- Pass Psychological (written and oral) and Medical Examinations

*\*\*The MCOLES Reading & Writing Test and the MCOLES Physical Agility Test are currently being offered at no charge to Detroit Police Dept. candidates (normal fees of \$68 and \$45 are waived.) Contact Recruiting at 313-596-2607 for information and registration.*

### WALK-IN TO APPLY – NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED

MONDAY – FRIDAY 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Detroit Public Safety Building  
1301 Third Street, Detroit, Michigan 48226  
Contact us at: 313.596-2607 or email: [Recruit@detroitmi.gov](mailto:Recruit@detroitmi.gov)

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*The Detroit Police Dept. offers an extraordinary range of career options, from street patrol and investigations to advanced tactical units, crime analysis, community relations and more. The Detroit Police Dept. has it all for anyone who is seeking the full spectrum of being a law enforcement officer in a major city.*

*James E. Craig, Chief of Police  
City of Detroit*

**DIVERSITY STATEMENT:** The City of Detroit Police Department is committed to maintaining a police force that reflects the diversity of the community. The City of Detroit is constantly striving to provide the highest level of public service by men and women from all backgrounds and cultures to maintain a police department that is responsive to the needs of the total community.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER:** The City of Detroit is an Equal Opportunity Employer. No applicant for employment shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, disability or other criteria prohibited by city, state or federal law.