

EXHIBIT # 1

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-28891

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, ACCEPTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINANCE AND CITYWIDE PROJECTS COMMITTEE TO AMEND THE CITY'S TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AS FOLLOWS: TUITION ASSISTANCE SHALL BE BASED ON, BUT NOT EXCEED, THE ESTABLISHED CREDIT HOUR TUITION RATE IN THE STATE'S UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AT THE TIME OF ENROLLMENT; ASSISTANCE SHALL BE BASED ON A SLIDING SCALE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE IN APPROVED COURSEWORK FROM ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING WITH A SIX CREDIT HOUR LIMIT PER SEMESTER; ASSISTANCE SHALL BE LIMITED TO 80 PERCENT OF THE TUITION COSTS FOR COURSES IN WHICH EMPLOYEES EARN AN "A," 60 PERCENT WHEN THEY EARN A "B," AND 40 PERCENT WHEN THEY EARN A "C," EXCEPT GRADUATE COURSES FOR WHICH ASSISTANCE REQUIRES EARNING NO LESS THAN A "B"; A REPAYMENT REQUIREMENT IF THE EMPLOYEE SEPARATES FROM EMPLOYMENT BY THE CITY WITHIN TWO YEARS OF HAVING RECEIVED ASSISTANCE, WITH AN EXCEPTION FOR EMPLOYEES WHO ARE LAID OFF OR DIE; AND APPROVING THE REVISED CITY OF MIAMI BEACH EMPLOYEE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SET FORTH IN THE ATTACHED EXHIBIT A.

WHEREAS, there City of Miami Beach (City) has a long-standing tradition of encouraging employees to further their education by offering a tuition assistance program; and

WHEREAS, the tuition assistance program has not been revised since 2004; and

WHEREAS, costs for a post-secondary education have risen considerably in the intervening years; and

WHEREAS, tuition assistance is available only to full-time City of Miami Beach classified employees who have completed their probationary periods, or for unclassified employees who have a minimum of six (6) months of continuous service. (Time served in a Provisional/Temporary status is excluded); and

WHEREAS, the Finance and Citywide Projects (FCWP) Committee members reviewed the status of the program and recommended the following changes at the December 12, 2014 meeting: tuition assistance shall be based on, but not exceed, the established credit hour tuition rate in the State's University System at the time of enrollment; assistance shall be based on a sliding scale directly related to the employee's performance in approved coursework from accredited institutions of higher learning with a six credit hour limit per semester; assistance shall be limited to 80 percent of the tuition costs for courses in which employees earn an "A," 60 percent when they earn a "B," and 40 percent when they earn a "C," except graduate courses for which assistance requires earning no less than a "B"; and a repayment requirement if the employee separated within two years of having received assistance, with an exception for employees who are laid off or die; and

WHEREAS, a revised City of Miami Beach Employee Tuition Assistance Program that incorporates the recommendations of the FCWP Committee, and other clean-up revisions, is attached as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the applicability of the revised City of Miami Beach Employee Tuition Assistance Program, as set forth in Exhibit A, to employees covered by a collective bargaining unit will be subject to negotiations when the current collective bargaining agreements expire.

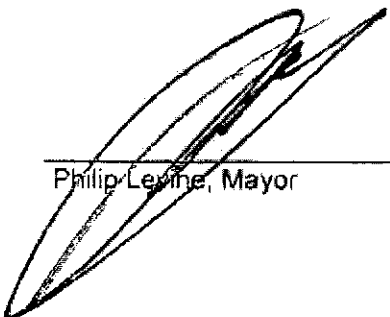
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT DULY RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, that the Mayor and the City Commission hereby accept the recommendations of the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee to amend the City's Tuition Assistance Program as follows: tuition assistance shall be based on, but not exceed, the established credit hour tuition rate in the State's University System at the time of enrollment; assistance shall be based on a sliding scale directly related to the Employee's performance in approved coursework from accredited institutions of higher learning with a six credit hour limit per semester; assistance shall be limited to 80 percent of the tuition costs for courses in which employee's earn an "A," 60 percent when they earn a "B," and 40 percent when they earn a "C," except graduate courses for which assistance requires earning no less than a "B"; and a repayment requirement if the employee separated from employment by the City of Miami Beach within two years of having received assistance, with an exception for employees who are laid off or die, within two years of having received assistance; and approve the revised City of Miami Beach Employee Tuition Assistance Program set forth in the attached Exhibit A.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 14 day of January, 2015.

ATTEST:

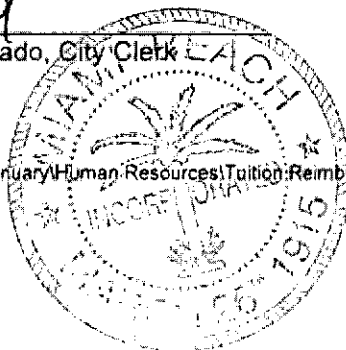


Rafael E. Granado, City Clerk



Philip Levine, Mayor

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**APPROVED AS TO
FORM & LANGUAGE
& FOR EXECUTION**



City Attorney

1/7/15

Date

COMMISSION ITEM SUMMARY

Condensed Title:

A resolution of the Mayor and City Commission of the City of Miami Beach, Florida, accepting the recommendation of the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee to approve changes to the tuition assistance program.

Key Intended Outcome Supported:

Ensure that a universal culture of high quality customer-service is driving the conduct of the City Commission and all City employees

Item Summary/Recommendation:

The Tuition Assistance Program is an employment benefit, so long-term that the last time it was reviewed was ten years ago in October 2004. The purpose of the program is to encourage employees to further their education by taking approved or accredited courses which will improve their performance in the services they were hired to perform or would be relevant to the employees' career development and potential advancement within the City.

After significant discussion, the FCWPC recommended that the tuition assistant program be modified as follows, upon City Commission approval, for employees in the unclassified and "others" salary groups.

- Assistance based on a sliding scale directly related to the employee's performance in school, for approved coursework from accredited institutions of higher learning
- Six credit hour limit on the number eligible for tuition assistance per semester
- A repayment requirement if the employee separates within two years of having received assistance, with an exception for employees who are laid off or die

Undergraduate Programs

- 80% reimbursement for courses in which employees earn an "A"
- 60% reimbursement for courses in which employees earn a "B"
- 40% reimbursement for courses in which employees earn a "C"

Graduate Programs

- 80% reimbursement for courses in which employees earn an "A"
- 60% reimbursement for courses in which employees earn a "B"

Applicability of these changes to employees covered by a collective bargaining unit will be a subject to negotiations with representatives from the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Communications Workers of America (CWA), Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), Government Supervisors Association of Florida (GSAF) and the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) when current collective bargaining agreements expire.

Advisory Board Recommendation:

At the December 12, 2014, Finance and Citywide Projects Committee meeting, members unanimously voted to continue approve changes to the tuition assistance program as set forth herein.

Financial Information:

Source of Funds:		Amount	Account
	1	\$305,000	011-9590-000367
	2		
OBPI	Total		

Financial Impact Summary:**City Clerk's Office Legislative Tracking:**

Sylvia Crespo-Tabak, Human Resources Director

Sign-Offs:

Department Director SC-T	ACM/CFO KGB	City Manager JLATA
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MIAMIBEACH

AGENDA ITEM

DATE

C7D
1-14-15



MIAMI BEACH

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: January 14, 2015

SUBJECT: **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE FINANCE AND CITYWIDE PROJECTS COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

BACKGROUND

At the November 19, 2014, City Commission meeting, the subject program was referred to the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee (FCWPC) for its review and recommendations and the matter was addressed at the December 12, 2014, meeting.

The Tuition Assistance Program is an employment benefit, so long-term that the last time it was reviewed was ten years ago, in October 2004. Budgetary allocations during the same period of time have fluctuated between \$30,000 and the current \$20,000 per year. Expenditures in 2004 were over budget by almost \$8,000 but every year since then, except for 2010, expenditures were significantly below allocated amounts. In fiscal year 2013/14, 34 employees made use of the benefit for a total expenditure of slightly over \$19,000. Based on the amounts reimbursed, six of the 34 employees who filed for reimbursement are enrolled in post-graduate programs.

The purpose of the program is to encourage employees to further their education by taking approved or accredited courses which will improve their performance in the services they were hired to perform or would be relevant to the employees' career development and potential advancement within the City. The City reimburses tuition only for one course per semester for a total of 12 credit hours per calendar year.

To be eligible for reimbursement, employees must successfully complete each course taken, which means earning a grade of "C" or better and a "pass" if the course is graded on a pass/fail basis. Reimbursement rates are as follows:

- Approved undergraduate community college and non-credit/certificate courses - \$158.25;
- Approved undergraduate university courses - \$251.16; and
- Approved graduate courses - \$531.15.

DISCUSSION

At the December 12, 2014, meeting, Committee members were informed that in addition

to the tuition assistance program, the City of Miami Beach has partnered with Barry University, Carlos Albizu University, Florida International University and Nova Southeastern University to offer employees preferred tuition rates for a number of programs. Offerings vary, yet despite significant discounts, post-graduate credit hours may cost as much as \$760, exclusive of application and lab fees, books and other related expenditures.

In April 2014, staff undertook an informal survey regarding tuition assistance and received eight responses from municipalities in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties. One did not offer any assistance; another offered it to select bargaining unit employees and a third suspended its program due to budgetary constraints.

The different approaches among the entities that responded were striking. Two entities allocated a certain amount to the program and reimbursed at the State tuition credit hour rate until the allocations were exhausted. Since there were no limits on the number of credit hours eligible for assistance, reimbursement was based on available funding. If an employee delayed submitting the required information, he or she ran the risk of losing out on the benefit due to budgetary constraints.

Two municipalities, the Village of Key Biscayne and the City of Doral, based their reimbursements on employee achievement. An "A" was reimbursed at 100%, a "B" and 75% and a "C" at 50% at both organizations. The Village of Key Biscayne reimbursed an employee up to \$4,000 per fiscal year and the City of Doral reimbursed up to 18 credits per fiscal year.

Miami-Dade County reimburses up to 50% of tuition costs to any employee who earns a "C" in an approved course after financial and other assistance has been applied.

ANALYSIS PRESENTED TO THE FCWPC

Should the City elect to make changes to the Tuition Assistance Program, the matter will have to be negotiated with labor representatives as part of the collective bargaining process. Changes, if adopted, may apply to employees in the unclassified or "others" salary groups upon adoption.

The attached revised program procedures incorporate the following:

- Assistance based on a sliding scale directly related to the employee's performance in school
- No limit on the number of credit hours eligible for tuition assistance
- A repayment requirement if the employee separates within two years of having received assistance, with an exception for employees who are laid off or die

The Administration recommends a two-year pilot program because it is difficult to anticipate how much interest the program will generate and whether the City will be able to afford to offer such an employment benefit. The cost analysis is based on the following assumptions and the undergraduate tuition cost at Florida International University and \$760.00 per credit hour for the Corporate Master of Business

Administration also at Florida International University.

Undergraduate Program

- Instead of 28 employees, 56 enroll in an undergraduate program (a twofold increase);
- Each of the 56 takes 6 credit hours per semester for a total of 18 semester hours per year at \$203.59 per credit hour;
- 40% earn an "A" which results in a cost of \$66,000;
- 30% earn a "B" which results in a cost of \$37,000; and
- 30% earn a "C" which results in a cost of \$25,000 for a total expenditure of \$128,000

Corporate Master of Business Administration

- Instead of 6 employees, 18 enroll in this graduate program;
- Each of the 18 takes 6 credit hours for a total of 18 semester hours per year at \$760 per credit hours;
- 60% earn an "A" which results in a cost of \$118,000; and
- 40% earn a "B" which results in a cost of \$59,000 for a total expenditure of \$177,000

Consequently, based on the above assumptions, this pilot program could run at \$305,000.

RECOMMENDATION

After significant discussion, the FCWPC recommended that the tuition assistant program be modified as follows, upon City Commission approval, for employees in the unclassified and others salary groups.

- Assistance based on a sliding scale directly related to the employee's performance in school, for approved coursework from accredited institutions of higher learning
- Six credit hour limit on the number eligible for tuition assistance per semester
- A repayment requirement if the employee separates within two years of having received assistance, with an exception for employees who are laid off or die

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Graduate Programs

- 80% reimbursement for courses in which employees earn an "A"
- 60% reimbursement for courses in which employees earn a "B"

Applicability of these changes to employees covered by a collective bargaining unit will be a subject of negotiations with representatives from the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Communications Workers of America (CWA), Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), Government Supervisors Association of Florida (GSAF) and the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) when current collective bargaining agreements expire.

The Administration recommends adoption of the FCWPC's recommendation and further recommends that beginning with the 2016/17 fiscal year budget, program costs be re-evaluated during the budget allocation process.

Attachment

JLM/KGB/SC-T

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH EMPLOYEE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The City of Miami Beach Employee Tuition Assistance Program ("Program") is established to provide financial assistance to eligible employees voluntarily participating in training or educational programs from accredited institutions of higher learning designed to improve their effectiveness which directly benefits City operations, activities and objectives; provide professional development; and help prepare employees for other opportunities within the City's service.

Tuition is the fee for instruction and lab fees only, and does not include textbooks, exams, audit fees, or any other expenses.

Tuition assistance is available to full-time City of Miami Beach classified employees who have completed their respective probationary periods and to unclassified employees who have no less than six months of continuous service. Time served in provisional/temporary status is not included when determining eligibility.

An accredited institution of higher learning, as defined in the Higher Education Act, is an educational institution that awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit towards a degree; is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; and is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted preaccreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education.

QUALIFICATIONS:

The tuition assistance shall be based upon and not exceed the established credit hour tuition rate in the State university system at the time of enrollment and shall be limited to six credit hours per semester. Upon successful completion of approved coursework, the assistance schedule is based on the following levels of achievement:

1. Grade A = 80% reimbursement
2. Grade B = 60% reimbursement
3. Grade C = 40% reimbursement; except for graduate level courses which are not eligible for reimbursement at this level of performance
4. A passing grade on a pass/fail basis = 80% reimbursement

Employees receiving financial assistance including scholarships, fellowships, grants, special discounts and/or Veteran's benefits, will be eligible for tuition assistance after the financial assistance has been applied to the tuition costs.

The City reserves the right to determine and amend the number of courses, the number of credit hours, and the level of tuition assistance prior to the beginning of a school semester.

EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY:

Tuition assistance is available to full-time City of Miami Beach classified employees who have completed their respective probationary periods and to unclassified employees who have no less than six months of continuous service. Time served in provisional/temporary status is not included when determining eligibility.

- (a) For classified employees, an overall evaluation of "meets expectations" or higher on the latest employee performance evaluation preceding the beginning of classes.

Exception: A classified employee whose latest overall evaluation is less than "meets expectations" may be eligible for tuition assistance for coursework related to specific areas of performance that have a requirement to take courses as a part of their job performance, upon approval of the Human Resources Department.

- (b) Unclassified employees must receive the approval of his or her supervisor to participate in the Program.

COURSEWORK ELIGIBILITY:

Guidelines for establishing eligible coursework are as follows:

- (a) Degree and certification programs at accredited institutions which relate directly to career opportunities within the City of Miami Beach are eligible for approval.
- (b) For those employees who have been approved for a degree program, all general education courses specifically required by the school will be approved.
- (c) All other coursework will be considered on a course by course basis.
- (d) All courses must be taken outside of working hours unless the employee's department director approves the use of annual leave. If administrative leave is granted to take a course during working hours, which requires City Manager approval, no tuition assistance will be granted.

- (e) Online Internet courses and programs provided by accredited Florida-based educational institutions are eligible for tuition reimbursement

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR:

The department directors shall be responsible for verifying that all approved coursework is in compliance with this administrative procedure, as well as all other aspects of the program. Department directors shall approve or disapprove all reimbursements for degrees, programs, and coursework for employees within their departments.

EMPLOYEE OBLIGATIONS:

In order to be eligible for tuition assistance, employees receiving tuition assistance under this Program must remain in the City's employ for a minimum of two years following the last tuition assistance payment. Employees separating from City service prior to the expiration of this period will reimburse the City for the assistance received during the final year of employment through deductions from their final payroll check. If the final paycheck is insufficient, the employee will still be responsible for making arrangements to reimburse the City or their separation papers shall be coded as not having left the City in good standing and the employee shall remain responsible for any remaining reimbursement.

In the event the employee fails to reimburse the City, the services of an attorney required to collect such debt shall be sought and such attorney's fees and court costs shall be added to the amount owed the City.

No reimbursement will be required of those employees who have been laid off. If the employee dies while in the City's service, no reimbursement will be sought from the employee's estate.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Employees wishing to participate in the Program shall submit to their department directors an application for coursework/degree approval no later than thirty days prior to the start of classes.

COURSEWORK, DEGREE REVIEW AND APPROVAL:

The department director shall approve or disapprove the employee's request after verifying the employee's eligibility for participation in the Program.

(a) Approval

After the department director approves the request, a copy of the original application is returned to the employee advising them of the approval.

(b) Disapproval

If the department director disapproves the application, he or she shall advise the employee of the reason for the rejection no later than 30 days from the date of the receipt of the application.

REIMBURSEMENT:

All approved applicants will submit a request for reimbursement, along with tuition receipts, official grade notifications, and all supporting documentation, to their department directors no later than thirty days from receipt of their grades. The departments shall submit all applications to the Human Resources Department, whether approved or disapproved, with the supporting documents for final review and reimbursement approval.

PENALTIES:

Should an employee submit documentation which the employee knows is false or intentionally misleading in order to receive benefits to which the employee is not entitled, the employee shall be deemed ineligible to continue to participate in the Program and shall repay City of Miami Beach for any tuition assistance received while in the City's employ. The employee may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, dismissal from the City service.