

**Subject:** TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

**Date:** May 25, 2011

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**Replaces Policy Dated:** August 4, 2010

**PURPOSE:** To provide a means of assistance to Pinal County employees in obtaining job related education.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY:** The greatest assets of Pinal County government are its employees. It is the policy of Pinal County to provide limited financial aid in the form of tuition reimbursement for employees.

**SCOPE:** Pinal County employees who have completed a minimum of twelve months of continuous full-time service who are not on Leave of Absence (LOA) status without pay at both application approval and reimbursement, and who are evaluated at least as meets standards on their last performance evaluation are eligible to participate in a program of reimbursement for tuition and furtherance of their education.

**POLICY:** Reimbursement covers up to 75% of tuition and books, subject to the limitation set forth below. The actual amount of reimbursement is a function of funding availability and total dollar amount of requested reimbursement.

- The annual amount of tuition reimbursement is \$1,500 per employee per Fiscal Year and a \$20,000 lifetime maximum reimbursement
- Reimbursement rate of 75% will be given to grades "C" or better, or "Pass"
- Employee is required to first incur \$2,000 in tuition expenses in order to be eligible to receive \$1,500 of reimbursement from County
- Courses must be for credit and at 100 level or above; no audited courses.

If an employee is enrolled in an established degree program at an accredited four-year college or university in a field which is directly related to their duties performed for Pinal County or which qualifies them for a different position within Pinal County, then all eligible courses which fulfill requirements for that degree are eligible for tuition reimbursement. However, should an employee receive County reimbursement for some, or all of their job related education, they will, as a condition of continued employment, be required to perform any work for which they are qualified by reason of the education received.

**PROCEDURE:** Application for tuition reimbursement must be made in writing **prior** to registration and received in Human Resources at least sixty days prior to the beginning of class. The request must state the employee's name, current home address, date of employment with the County, classification title, department and work unit, if applicable. The degree and major course of study must be indicated as well as the educational institution. A detailed explanation must be given of the course(s) and how the degree and/or courses relate to the employee's duties for Pinal County. Also included must be the dollar amount of the request. The employee's Department Director must affirmatively endorse each request in writing before being submitted to the Human Resources Department.

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The Training and Development Manager will review the request and make a written recommendation based on an assessment of similar requests from the same or other departments and the availability of funds. The recommendation of the Training and Development Manager will be forwarded to the Human Resources Director who will approve or deny the request based on the information available, an assessment of job relatedness of the request, the potential benefit to the County, actions taken on prior requests and the County's financial position. The Human Resources Director may seek the advice of any Elected Official, County staff member, educational institution faculty or staff member or other persons in formulating approval or disapproval of a request for tuition reimbursement.

Upon successful completion of approved courses, the employee will be eligible for reimbursement of tuition. The employee must present a certification of successful course completion or transcript copy and a receipt for tuition paid to the Human Resources Department. Request for reimbursement must be made within thirty days after completion of each course.

Qualified employees who have presented proof of completion of course work with a grade of "C" or better, along with a receipt for tuition paid, shall be eligible for reimbursement of 75% of tuition cost, not to exceed \$1,500 per Fiscal Year .

Each employee, upon receiving a reimbursement, will be required to sign an agreement stating that if he or she separates from Pinal County employment for any reason within one year of the date of receiving reimbursement, an amount will be withheld from the final paycheck according to the following schedule:

<u>Date of Separation</u>	<u>Percentage of Reimbursement Withheld</u>
Up to 3 months from receiving reimbursement	100%
4 to 6 months from receiving reimbursement	75%
7 to 9 months from receiving reimbursement	50%
10 to 12 months from receiving reimbursement	25%

Repayment will be withheld from the final paycheck due to the employee to include accrued vacation pay. If full repayment cannot be made from the final paycheck, employees will have a period of 6 months from termination date to repay all amounts due to the County. Employees who fail to repay this obligation will not be eligible for rehire and remaining balance will be referred to collections.

