

# RANCHO MURIETA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

<b>Category:</b>	Personnel	<b>Policy #</b> 2011-01
<b>Title:</b>	Continuing Education and Tuition Reimbursement	

## PURPOSE

Rancho Murieta Community Services District is committed to and encourages continuing education and training activities for all District employees. The Tuition Reimbursement Program is designed to encourage employee development and professional growth by sharing the cost of formal educational programs that are related to an employee's current career path or another career field within the District's services. The District also supports continuing education to maintain current certifications as required for continued employment and to maintain/increase job skills utilizing certificate and training programs.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION BASIC POLICY AND GUIDELINES

The General Manager, upon consulting with the employee's immediate Supervisor and/or Manager, shall approve training and certification of District employees. The cost of continuing education classes, seminars, conferences, etc. shall be paid by the District through the normal Accounts Payable process.

### Professional Registration, Certification and Licensing

The District will pay fees when such registration, certification and/or licensing is a requirement of the employee's position.

### Professional Activities

The District encourages participation in professional societies and committees when these activities are compatible with and an enhancement to District functions. The District will pay reasonable costs of participation in these activities, subject to approval by the General Manager and the limitations of the District's budget.

Authorization may be granted for employees to attend professional conferences and meetings or to participate in some form of activity or training in the interest of the District.

### Career Development

Successful completion of training courses may be considered in approving salary and advancement and making promotions. Evidence of such activity shall be submitted to the District for inclusion in the employee's personnel records.

### Continuing Education Programs

1. Courses or trainings designed to provide an employee with technical information pertaining to his/her current job should be paid for by the District. This may include conferences, seminars, workshops, continuing education programs or certification programs.

2. Costs of obtaining or retaining professional certificates or licenses.
3. Other programs deemed appropriate by the General Manager.

### **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT BASIC POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

Upon approval by the General Manager, and budget approval by the District's Board of Directors, an employee shall be reimbursed for his/her tuition or registration fees and books upon successful completion of credit based classes taken in the pursuit of a formal degree/certificate program (typically a set of coursework designed to extend over a period of time with a degree or specialty certificate earned at the end of the coursework upon passing a final exam).

#### Eligibility for Program Participation and Reimbursement

1. The employee must have regular full-time status.
2. Prior General Manager or Director of Administration review and written approval is required initially when an employee is seeking to enroll in a program or course to ensure they meet the Tuition Reimbursement Program requirements.
3. Class attendance, class preparation and study time must be scheduled outside the employee's regular working hours or a flexible work schedule must be approved by the Department Manager and General Manager to allow attendance outside of work time.
4. An employee may request to use their own vacation time balances in order to take a class on their own time that otherwise would not be approved as a department expense.
5. The employee must successfully complete the course and receive a grade of "C" or better. In the case of pass/fail courses or courses where no grade is given a written statement from the instructor or a certificate of completion will be accepted to document successful completion of the course.

No reimbursement will be made to an employee who receives a grade of "D" or below for the class, does not complete the course or the course is completed but the certification exam is not taken.

#### Eligible Education Programs

Reimbursement will be limited to classes and/or programs that meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Course(s) must have a reasonable potential to offer a benefit to the District.
2. Courses that promote employee development for career advancement that are presented by an approved institution.
3. Alternate Education Programs: It is recognized that employees may seek enhancement of their knowledge and skills via college level programs that are not presented in a college or university setting and thus do not receive academic units. In such situations, approval for eligible expenses may be granted on a case-by-case basis based on the following criteria:
  - a. The educational program must be equivalent to college level.

- b. The educational program must be specifically related to the career field in which the employee is presently working or another career field within the District's services.
4. Degree (Associate, Bachelor, Masters, other as approved) from an accredited college or university or a professional/trade institution approved by the General Manager.
5. Specific courses taken for credit related to the District's core services and functions.
6. Specific courses taken for credit related to support functions of the District (e.g., accounting, secretarial, welding, chemistry, computer, computer-aided drafting).
7. Self-study/correspondence or online courses from reputable institutions with final exam and certificate in subjects related to District functions.
8. Other programs deemed appropriate by the General Manager.

#### Amount of Reimbursement

The District will reimburse a full-time employee up to \$1,500 per fiscal year for tuition or registration fees and books as determined appropriate by the General Manager. Special consideration will be given for extraordinary education tuition or fees.

#### Process for Reimbursement

1. Employee(s) must complete a Tuition Reimbursement Form and submit it through his/her Supervisor and/or Manager to submit to the Human Resources Department for approval prior to enrollment and commencement of course(s).
2. Once an employee has received approval for a degree program, future reimbursement requests related to the approved degree program may be submitted to the Human Resources Department after completion of the course(s).

#### Reimbursement

1. Reimbursement shall be made upon successful course completion with a minimum final grade of "C", a pass in a pass/fail course, or proof of completion. No reimbursement shall be made for audited or incomplete courses.
2. Within 60 days of successful completion of approved course work, the employee must submit and attach the following to the Tuition Reimbursement Form:
  - a. Proof of successful completion of course(s) (e.g., transcript).
  - b. Receipt(s) showing a breakdown for eligible expenses to match documentation on the form for the expenses requested for reimbursement.
  - c. Proof of payment.
3. Funds received from any outside source to cover education expenses, such as a scholarship or grant that does not need to be paid back, must be applied toward the cost of the tuition/fees before the District's tuition reimbursement program shall apply.

If an employee's employment with the District is terminated for any reason other than a layoff, reduction in force or job elimination, prior to completing the approved course, the employee will not

be reimbursed for expenses associated with the course. If an employee leaves the District within one (1) year of reimbursement, the employee will be asked to pay the District back for those expenses provided for tuition reimbursement. If an employee's employment is terminated due to layoff, reduction in force or job elimination, the employee will receive reimbursement in accordance with this policy for costs incurred through completion of any course (provided the course is completed in accordance with the terms of this policy).

<b>Approved by Rancho Murieta Community Services District's Board of Directors</b>
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January 19, 2011
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