



CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

GENERAL POLICE ORDER



EFFECTIVE DATE: FEBRUARY 10, 2023	CHAPTER: 1 - Administrative	PAGE: 1 of 5	NUMBER: 1.03.07
SUBJECT: TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM			
CHIEF: <i>Dornat A. Drummond, Chief</i>			

This order was revised in its entirety

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for the Tuition Reimbursement Program and to promote advanced and ongoing education for sworn members of the Cleveland Division of Police.

POLICY: It is the policy of the Cleveland Division of Police that all sworn members, except for members on extended illness status, any leave of absence or disciplinary suspension, are eligible for tuition reimbursement. The Tuition Reimbursement Program is administered through the Bureau of Support Services.

Reimbursement of tuition expenses is permitted only for those law enforcement classes directly applicable to the performance of an officer's current official duties. These classes are not required by the Division and are voluntarily taken by the officer.

Tuition reimbursement for classes not directly related to an officer's official law enforcement duties, including non-law enforcement related courses needed to fulfill the degree requirements, are not permitted (e.g., an art appreciation course required to meet the Fine Arts component of a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice).

DEFINITIONS:

Course – A law enforcement class related to a member's current official duties from a higher educational institution.

Reimbursement – The repayment of a member's out-of-pocket expenses for tuition costs based on the member's academic performance.

Tuition – The financial cost of course/lab/technology fees administered by a higher educational institution.

Tuition Credit – Any reduction of a member's out-of-pocket expense (e.g., grants, loans, gifts or scholarships) applied towards tuition.

PROCEDURES:

- I. General Guidelines
 - A. Courses shall meet all requirements to obtain reimbursement of tuition.
 - B. Request for tuition reimbursement shall have prior approval through the Commander of the Bureau of Support Services (BSS).

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- C. Members that apply for tuition reimbursement shall provide all necessary information for requests to be eligible.
- D. Supervisory members shall review all requests for tuition reimbursement for accuracy and timeliness.

II. Eligibility for Reimbursement

- A. Sworn members not on extended illness status, leave of absence, or disciplinary suspension are eligible for the Tuition Reimbursement Program.
- B. Career-Related Criteria:
 - 1. Any course related to a member's current official duties as an Ohio peace officer is eligible for reimbursement (e.g., an accounting course for an officer assigned to the Financial Crimes Unit or a forensics course for a member assigned to the Crime Scene and Records Unit is permissible).
 - 2. The Commander of the BSS shall make the final determination as to whether a course is career-related. There is no right of appeal as the U.S. Department of Justice oversees the strict use of these funds, ensuring that all courses are directly related to law enforcement.
- C. Before applying for reimbursement, members shall obtain prior approval for course eligibility for the Tuition Reimbursement Program.
 - 1. Complete a "Tuition Reimbursement" entry into the Division's tracking software (BlueTeam).
 - 2. Forward the entry with attached supporting documentation detailing how the course relates to your current law enforcement duties to the Budget Unit Officer in Charge (OIC).
 - 3. The Budget Unit OIC shall forward the member's request to the Commander of the BSS.
 - 4. Members will be notified of course eligibility from the Commander of BSS via BlueTeam. Members may also view the progress of their request via BlueTeam's "Member Explorer".
 - 5. Members who fail to ascertain course eligibility for reimbursement before taking the course are subject to denial of reimbursement.
- D. Allowable Costs
 - 1. Tuition, course/lab, and technology fees are the only approved cost eligible for reimbursement through the Tuition Reimbursement Program. The expenses associated with transportation, parking, books, room and board, proficiency

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exams, or penalty fees of any kind are NOT reimbursable.

2. Reimbursement will be reduced by any tuition credits received in the form of grants, gifts, scholarships, benefits or other financial assistance that the student has no liability to repay.
3. Financial assistance received in the form of loans, such as Stafford Loans, are eligible for reimbursement in the year the funds are used for tuition.

E. Member's Academic Performance

1. Reimbursement shall be made on a sliding scale based on the letter grade attained as follows:
 - a. An "A" is eligible for 100% reimbursement.
 - b. A "B" is eligible for 75% reimbursement.
 - c. A "C" is eligible for 50% reimbursement.
 - d. A passing grade in a pass/fail course is eligible for 50% reimbursement.

F. The maximum reimbursement is a cumulative \$6,000.00 per calendar year. For reimbursement, the course's start date determines the reimbursable calendar year.

III. Application for Reimbursement

- A. Member's original BlueTeam entry for Tuition Reimbursement shall be updated with the required documentation and forwarded through the member's chain of command to their respective Deputy Chief for further processing.
- B. If the entry includes multiple courses for a semester at the same educational institution, all eligible courses shall be entered in the same application.
- C. Members shall attach to the original BlueTeam Tuition Reimbursement request documentation of final grades and proof of payment/loan within forty-five days after course completion.
 1. Documentation shall consist of the grade report, proof of cost, and proof of payment (e.g., canceled check, credit card statement or receipt or statement or letter from the educational institution). Proof of payment documentation must correspond to the cost of courses for which reimbursement is requested and include any reductions in tuition due to tuition credits.
 2. The member may be required to provide additional documentation and original documents.
 3. The Commander of the BSS shall determine whether or not the documentation

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satisfies the level of proof required for reimbursement.

IV. Supervisor Responsibilities

- A. Supervisors that are forwarded Tuition Reimbursement applications shall ensure the following:
 - 1. The proper documentation (proof of cost, tuition credits, proof of payments, grade report and course eligibility approval) is attached.
 - 2. The attached documentation corroborates the member's reimbursement amount requested.
 - a. If the member has any tuition credits for a course, they shall deduct the credit from the cost of the course.
 - b. Calculations shall match the member's out-of-pocket expense and correspond with proof of payment documentation.
 - c. The member's grade for the course shall determine what percentage of the out-of-pocket expense will be reimbursed (See section II. E. 1.).
- B. The application shall be forwarded through the member's chain of command to their respective Deputy Chief.
- C. Following Deputy Chief's review and approval, the request shall be forwarded to the BSS Commander.
- D. The BSS Commander shall verify the information and forward it to the Budget Unit OIC, who will facilitate reimbursement and close the request in BlueTeam with a final disposition based on the grade, percentage, and total amount paid to member.
- E. If the member needs additional documentation or the requested amount does not correspond with provided documentation, the BSS Commander shall return the entry to the member for corrections.

V. Fund Accounting and Disbursement

- A. Fund accounting and disbursements are a function of the Budget Unit.
- B. Funds for reimbursement are established by current collective bargaining agreements and paid for out of law enforcement trust funds.
- C. Funding is variable, and disbursements may be limited to available funding.
- D. If funds are insufficient to provide the maximum allowable reimbursement, then the disbursement will be made on a prorated basis based on the available funds.

IV. Members who complete coursework for which they were reimbursed shall email a copy of a

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grade report or diploma to the Personnel Unit at cpdpersonnel@clevelandohio.gov and upload the same into the Learning Management System for inclusion in the member's training file.

THIS ORDER SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DIRECTIVE OR POLICY FOR THIS SUBJECT AND WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED OR SUPERSEDED.