

CITY OF LA VISTA
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL REPORT
JANUARY 21, 2025 AGENDA

Subject:	Type:	Submitted By:
AMEND CITY PERSONNEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	WENDY LOWERY HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

SYNOPSIS

A resolution has been prepared to update Section XIII of the City's Personnel Manual.

FISCAL IMPACT

Total City funds available for tuition reimbursement per fiscal year will be established annually as part of the budget process.

RECOMMENDATION

Approval.

BACKGROUND

The City's Educational Assistance Program has not updated its tuition reimbursement policy in over 20 years. During this time, the cost of continuing education has increased by approximately 133%, not accounting for inflation. Therefore, City staff recommend raising the maximum reimbursement from \$1,500 to the federal taxable maximum of \$5,250 per year. This change aligns with the federal tax exemption threshold and is informed by our compensation survey. It aims to enhance employee satisfaction and retention.

To further promote retention, we propose implementing a one-year stay requirement for employees who utilize this benefit, ensuring the City receives value from their educational development.

This investment encourages employees to pursue relevant education, which in turn improves their skills and productivity. A more skilled workforce fosters innovation, making this adjustment beneficial for both employees and the City.

A copy of Section XIII of the Personnel Manual, which indicates the edits made, has been included for review.

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA VISTA, NEBRASKA AMENDING SECTION 13 OF THE CITY PERSONNEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL REGARDING THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of the City of La Vista, Nebraska, has determined that a need exists to make changes to the existing La Vista City Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual as adopted on December 20, 2005; and

WHEREAS, it is being proposed that Section 13 in the manual regarding the educational assistance program be amended to raise the maximum reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the City Council to amend Section 13 of the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual to incorporate the changes to the above-mentioned areas.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and City Council of the City of La Vista, Nebraska, that the existing La Vista City Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual adopted on December 20, 2005, is hereby amended to reflect the proposed change to Section 13 as submitted at the City Council meeting.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 21ST DAY JANUARY OF 2025.

CITY OF LA VISTA

Douglas Kindig, Mayor

ATTEST:

Rachel D. Carl, CMC
City Clerk

PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS

SECTION XIII: EMPLOYEE & PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

ADOPTED:	RESOLUTION NO. 96-012	AMENDED:	RESOLUTION NO. 13-122
DATE:	FEBRUARY 6, 1996	DATE:	NOVEMBER 5, 2013
AMENDED:	RESOLUTION NO. 00-152		
DATE:	DECEMBER 19, 2000		
AMENDED:	RESOLUTION NO. 02-099		
DATE:	OCTOBER 1, 2002		
READOPTED:	RESOLUTION NO. 05-159		
DATE:	DECEMBER 20, 2005		
AMENDED:	RESOLUTION NO. 13-116		
DATE:	OCTOBER 15, 2013		

13.1 **Orientation:** The Human Resources Office shall be responsible for providing new employees with a clear statement of fringe benefits available and reviewing said statement with the employee; reviewing the classification and pay plans currently in force with the employee; and ensuring that the employee completes all required documentation. Each department head shall be responsible for facilitating the adjustment of a new employee to the work situation by:

- (1) Providing the employee a clear statement of duties and official relationships;
- (2) Properly introducing the employee to work associates;
- (3) Instructing and guiding the employee in learning to perform all job functions;
- (4) Discussing with the employee at regular intervals the employee's progress in learning and performing the work.

13.2 **Training:** The City shall establish appropriate training programs for City employees, in order that service rendered by employees may be more effective, safe and efficient. Such training programs may include formal courses, seminars, workshop demonstrations, assignments of reading matter, or other such methods as may be available for improving the effectiveness and broadening the knowledge of employees in the performance of their respective duties. Employees are encouraged to develop and further their job skills and personal potential by participation in available training programs. Such training programs shall be conducted during regular working hours except as prohibited or rendered impractical by work schedules.

13.3 **Conferences/Conventions:** Employees are encouraged to participate in conferences, conventions, and meetings which have a direct relationship to the employee's position and the City's services. Approval for attendance at such conferences, conventions and meetings shall be obtained at the department level in advance of participation in such events.

13.4 **Educational Assistance Programs:** As an incentive for employees to further their educations and development, the City will reimburse regular permanent full-time employees who have completed probation prior to registration, for the cost of tuition, registration and laboratory fees for advanced training/college classes where each of the following conditions are met:

- (1) Classes apply to either career advancement in the City or to job enhancement in current position.

PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS

- (2) A Tuition Reimbursement Request is submitted in advance of registration and approved in writing by the department head and the City Administrator, and such Request is filed in the employee's personnel file.
- (3) The class is successfully completed with a grade of "C" or better.
- (4) Such classes are taken at a university, college, junior college or technical/trade school that has been accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.
- (5) Classes are taken on the employee's free time and not during work hours.
- (6) Maximum reimbursement per employee per calendar year shall not exceed \$5,250^{1,500}. Total funds available for tuition reimbursement per fiscal year will be established annually as part of the budget process, except as otherwise provided in a collective bargaining agreement. If the amount of funds available in a fiscal year is insufficient to honor the requests of all requesting employees (up to the maximum 5,250^{1,500} maximum limitation), the City Administrator or his/her designee shall prorate the available funds and reimburse employees in such amounts as the City Administrator or his/her designee determines to be fair and equitable. Any portion of any educational expense that is not reimbursed by the City in the fiscal year during which the expense was incurred by the employee because of funding limitations or expenses exceeding the maximum allowed, shall not qualify for reimbursement by the City in any subsequent fiscal year. The fiscal year in which the expense occurred shall be deemed to be the fiscal year in which the employee receives the final academic grade for the class or course involved.
- (7) The City reserves the right to limit the amount of reimbursement to the amount that would be paid at an alternate public accredited institution (e.g. University of Nebraska at Omaha).
- (8) Reimbursement will not be made by the City respecting (a) tools or supplies that may be retained by the employee after completion of a course of instruction, or meals, lodging, transportation or other costs, that do not represent tuition, registration or laboratory fees; (b) courses or other education involving sports, games or hobbies unless said course applies to either career advancement in the City or to job enhancement in current position.
- (9) Participation in the City's educational assistance program does not preclude participation in any other educational financial assistance program. However, employees can submit to the City for reimbursement **only** the amount of tuition, registration or laboratory fees not paid for by other programs.

To obtain reimbursement, the employee must:

- (a) Complete the Tuition Reimbursement Request form for approval by the department head and City Administrator prior to registering for the class;
- (b) Submit an official grade report or transcript to confirm a grade of "C" or better was received; and

PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS

- (c) Submit all related receipts for approved classes that indicate payment of eligible expenses to the Finance Director not later than one month after the end of the semester for which the reimbursement is being requested.

Post-Reimbursement Employment Commitment

In exchange for educational reimbursement, the employee agrees to remain employed with the City for a minimum of one (1) year following the completion of the course or program for which reimbursement was provided. If the employee voluntarily terminates employment or is terminated for cause before completing the one-year period, the employee shall be required to repay the full amount of the educational reimbursement. Repayment must be made within 30 days of termination.

- 13.5 **Performance Appraisal:** The work performance of each employee shall be evaluated annually. The Council Policy Statement regarding Employee Compensation – Pay for Performance details the City's performance appraisal process.