

SECTION 16: TRAVEL, TRAINING, AND REIMBURSEMENT

16.1 Policy Directives

It is the policy of Harper County to reimburse employees for reasonable and necessary expenditures made by employees on official County business. Reimbursement shall include mileage at the rate establish by the Board of County Commissioners, common carrier fares, lodging and meal expense.

- a. **Approval:** All expenses for requested travel (Part 1) must be itemized and submitted to the appropriate Elected Department Head for approval on a County Travel Request and Reimbursement Form. Upon return from travel the Expense Report (Part 2) of the County Travel Request and Reimbursement form must be completed with receipts attached to the voucher and submitted for the next accounts payable. Out of state travel will not be approved unless specifically budgeted and/or approved by the Board of County Commissioners.
- b. **Travel Advances:** The County will pay no travel advances except to third party providers to cover registration, travel agencies and hotel/motel cost.
- c. **Lodging:** Hotel or motel accommodations shall be reasonable and shall be reimbursed on an actual cost basis consistent with facilities available in proximity to the location of the conference or business meeting being attended. Single occupancy rates will be reimbursed.
- d. **Meals: What constitutes an allowable meal:** A meal that an employee purchases when the employee has received **overnight** travel approval from the County Commissioners and does in fact stay away from home overnight for a work related event. Day trips are not allowed meal purchases.
- e. **What is not allowable:**
Harper County **will not** pay for the purchase of alcoholic beverages.
Harper County **will not** pay for snacks while traveling.
Harper County **will not** pay for meals for those that are not an employee of Harper County. For example, vendors, contractors or consultants that are doing work for Harper County **are not** Harper County Employees.
- f. **Maximum amount allowed per meal including tips:**

	In State	Out of State
Breakfast	\$8.00	\$10.00
Lunch	\$12.00	\$15.00
Dinner	\$15.00	\$20.00
- g. **What is needed to substantiate the meal and allow voucher payment:**
Employees must submit **original** receipts with your payment voucher. The receipt should show the amount of the expense, the date of the expense, the time of the expense, the location of the expense and the business reason for the expense. These receipts must be the **original** receipt identifying what was purchased and from whom. Tips may be added to the receipt and are included in the maximum amount listed above. **Credit card charge receipts are not acceptable; only itemized receipts are allowed.** Also, an approved travel request must be attached to the voucher along with a copy of the agenda and/or registration to show that meals were not included in the registration fee. If these documents are not

provided or if an employee goes over the maximum amount allowed, the employee will be asked to reimburse the County by personal payment and the credit card **will be** taken away for misuse.

- h. **Transportation:** Transportation cost will be reimbursed as follows:
- Airfare: Reimbursed at the rate of coach fare. The use of special discount fares are encouraged.
 - Automobile Mileage: Reimbursed for the most direct route at current mileage rates approved by the Board of County Commissioners.
- i. **Vehicle Check Out Policy**
1. County vehicles may be checked out by contacting the Appraiser's Office. Please submit requests at least two weeks in advance.
 2. The vehicle will be assigned on a first come first serve basis. During peak inspection times in the Appraiser's Office, the vehicle may be unavailable.
 3. You may pick the vehicle up the night before your meeting.
 4. The vehicle will be provided to you with a full tank of gas. While traveling, use your county issued credit card to fill the vehicle. If you do not have a department fuel card with Anthony Farmer's Coop, please contact the Appraiser's Office to use the checkout fuel card. Upon returning, please fill the vehicle at the Anthony Farmer's Coop. All fuel put on the checkout fuel card will be billed to your department.
 5. Vehicle must be returned in the condition it was in when checked out. Please clean any spills immediately and empty any trash upon returning.
 6. Upon return of the vehicle, inspect the condition of the vehicle. Any damages will be charged to the requesting department.
 7. Upon returning the keys to the Appraiser's Office, submit a mileage form and any receipts for fuel if you used the Checkout Anthony Farmer's Coop card.
 8. Only Harper County Employees may operate the vehicle.
 9. No alcoholic beverages are allowed in the vehicle.
 10. No smoking is allowed in vehicle.
 11. Any tickets received (moving violations, parking violations etc) are the sole responsibility of the driver of the vehicle. County funds will not be used to pay for tickets or fines. Any habitual violators will be prohibited from using the travel vehicle.
 12. This vehicle is not to be used in the rural area for inspections.
 13. It is highly recommended to use the travel vehicle so that the County can see the true cost savings of not paying mileage when personal vehicles are used.

Approved by the Harper County Board of County Commissioners on September 1, 2015

16.2 Professional Development Program

I. Objective

Harper County offers educational tuition assistance benefits to encourage self-development by providing financial assistance for certain education-related expenses. This benefit is intended to encourage professionalism and assist employees in increasing effectiveness in their current position, preparing them for possible advancement, and/or increasing their adaptability to new ideas and change.

The Professional Development Program includes assistance with the cost of tuition and other expenses related to either the pursuit of a degree, or for the preparation and taking of County-approved Certification or Licensing programs (C&L) and the examinations required as part of these programs.

II. Employee Eligibility

Employees are eligible for tuition assistance benefits provided they have been employed on a full-time basis at the time of enrollment in and completion of the course or program, for no less than 12 months, with the exception of current and potential Emergency Medical Services (EMS) employees. EMS employees, regardless of length of service, are eligible for tuition assistance benefits under this policy, as well as those individuals not yet employed, but participating in the Kansas State Board of Emergency Medical Services (KSBEMS) Education Incentive Grant (EIG) Program, sponsored by Harper County.

For the purpose of benefit eligibility, "full-time" basis means the employees has a normal work schedule of at least 40 hours per week.

III. Education Reimbursement Benefits

A. Tuition Assistance

Tuition Assistance is designed to encourage self-improvement through outside study by providing financial assistance with the cost of education-related expenses incurred at an approved facility or institution in the pursuit of a degree, certification, or license.

1. Approval

Employees must secure proper approval prior to enrolling in a course to avoid paying tuition and required fees that are not reimbursable under the Professional Development Program. Approval is at the discretion of the Department Head in conjunction with the Board of County Commissioners.

To obtain approval, an employee must take the following actions:

- Employee completes a Harper County, Kansas Tuition Assistance Agreement Application and provides it, along with the documentation described on the form, to their Department Head for approval.
- If approved, the Department Head sends the Application to Human Resources, to present to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.
- Once approval is granted, the employee is notified, and completes a Harper County, Kansas Tuition Aid Reimbursement Repayment Agreement, which is submitted to Human Resources.

- **Note:** An employee who has submitted an Application, but has not commenced classes within one (1) year of the date the form was approved, must complete an updated Application for approval.

2. Course Criteria

In order to qualify for Tuition Assistance benefits under this Plan:

- The degree, certification, or license must relate to the employee's job function or career.
- The required curriculum leading to a degree, certification, or license and the number of hours completed must be appropriate.
- The employee must have been in their position a reasonable amount of time to allow pursuit of further education without impacting job performance.
- Course schedules should not conflict with the employee's work schedule. However, special situations which might require time off the job may be considered. Such situations might involve the scheduling of an examination at times when the employee is usually at work.

3. Course Eligibility

The following types of courses **are** eligible for consideration for Tuition Assistance:

- Formal college courses offered by an accredited institution.
- Online courses offered by an accredited institution.
- Required courses within a curriculum that lead to a diploma, certificate, license, or degree in a field of interest to the County, even though these courses are not specifically job-related (i.e., Religion or Art).

The following types of courses **are not** eligible for Tuition Assistance:

- Expenses for auditing or testing out of a college level course.
- Preparation courses to prepare for an exam that is required to attend graduate school.
- Recreation or leisure time courses.

4. Eligible Expenses

The following expenses related to the course may be eligible for reimbursement under the Plan:

- **Tuition fees** charged by the institution for both undergraduate and graduate course work
- **Required textbooks** may include books in printed or electronic format (including shipping charges if purchased online by the student).
- **Required supplies** for the course may be eligible if they are required for the enrolled course(s). Any other items that are needed, but not specifically required (i.e., stated in the syllabus), will **not** be eligible.
- **Required fees** assessed by the institution which are required for enrollment in and completion of an approved course or degree and are not refundable after completion of a course or course of study.
- **Expenses associated with obtaining a specific certification or license.**
- **Examination Fees and Expenses.** The cost of sitting for an exam related to a specific certification or license is eligible. No more than two sittings of the examination are eligible, with the exception of EMS certification/licensure. EMS employees, or potential employees, may test up to three times. In the case of a third attempt, the employee or potential

employee, must participate in an authorized review course prior to taking the test.

- Other expenses associated with sitting for an exam are also eligible. For example, application fees and/or exam sitting fees required to take the exam are eligible expenses.

Employees will be required to provide a copy of the course syllabus with the tuition assistance request, to provide documentation of the requirement. Harper County EMS employees and potential employees must also provide verification of participation in the Kansas Board of EMS Education Incentive Grant (EIG) program, if applicable.

5. Expenses Not Covered

- Optional fees associated with the course. “Optional” fees are the result of the institution providing services not automatically assessed or related to the enrollment in and completion of a course or degree. Optional fees also include those fees charged as the result of employee choice or negligence.
- Computer hardware, internet access fees, and connectivity equipment/charges related to online courses and/or software used for program and system updates are not eligible.
- The expenses related to obtaining a certificate or license are eligible, but the expenses associated with maintaining it are not eligible.
 - **Note:** When maintaining a certification or license is necessary for an employee to perform their job (for example, a yearly recertification exam), reimbursement may be made through accounts payable if approved by the Department Head and Board of County Commissioners.
- Assistance received under these guidelines shall not duplicate those made by other parties.

6. Tuition

- Eligible expenses will be paid directly to the institution, through the regular accounts payable process.
- Assistance over \$5,250.00 during a calendar year will be considered earnings and reported as wages, subject to income tax. Taxable expenses will be included as gross income on the employee’s W-2 form, and processed through payroll.
 - **Note:** The current IRS limit is \$5250.00 and subject to change based on IRS guidelines.

7. Repayment Options

Repayment options will be determined by the Board of County Commissioners on a case by case basis, and outlined in the executed Memorandum of Agreement, in the event of a voluntary resignation.

8. Further Information

Human Resources coordinates the administration of these guidelines throughout the County.

The County reserves the right to modify or terminate this Plan, in whole or in part, in such manner as it shall determine, either alone or in conjunction with other

plans of the County. Modification or termination may be made by the County for any reason, including but not limited to modifications under the Internal Revenue Code or to comply with applicable state or federal regulations. The Professional Development Program is subject to Harper County Budget constraints and the continued availability of KSBEMS EIG program funding.

Approved by the Harper County Commissioners, effective 3/1/2018
Amended 11/18/2019