

109

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO 92-6  
(AS AMENDED THROUGH JUNE 11 1997)

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Jefferson County Commission by law, the following Administrative Order is hereby issued:

PURPOSE

TO ESTABLISH A POLICY AND PROGRAM PROVIDING FOR LIMITED TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR CERTAIN ACADEMIC STUDY AND TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL TRAINING BY COUNTY EMPLOYEES IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION WORK FORCE. TO PROMOTE THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF THE BEST INDIVIDUALS TO SERVE THIS COUNTY; AND TO PROVIDE EMPLOYEES WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE THEIR CAREERS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

1. POLICY

It is the policy of the Jefferson County Commission to encourage and assist County employees to pursue certain academic study and technical/vocational training that will enhance the quality and effectiveness of the employee's services to the County and thereby to the residents of the County. The authorized study shall be such as will upgrade the employee's performance capabilities in the employee's current position or will enable the employee to assume greater responsibilities in the employee's career of public service with Jefferson County.

**APPROVED AT**  
**BESSEMER COMMISSION MEETING**  
DATE 6-11-97  
1 MINUTE BOOK 6 PAGE 425-79

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility to submit an application for the Tuition Reimbursement Program shall require the following:

- (a) One continuous year of full-time employment with Jefferson County immediately preceding the filing of an application.
- (b) All employees occupying permanent part time, Baylor, and 7-on 7-off positions under the Jefferson County Medical Recruitment and Retention Initiatives who have already met the requirement in section (a) shall also be eligible to participate.
- (c) The applicant has clearly demonstrated an attitude, desire and capability to successfully complete all levels of the approved course of study. The following information shall be considered.
  - (i) General work history,
  - (ii) Jefferson County work record, including Performance Evaluations and attendance.
- (d) All college or university course work must be taken at an accredited institution as determined by standards set by the Southern Regional Accreditation Board for colleges and Universities, or by comparable accrediting body. Technical/vocational course work must be taken at a school which is licensed by the Alabama Department of Education and accredited by an organization which has been designated as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency by the U S. Department of Education or through an apprenticeship program which has been approved by the County Commission. (Correspondence course work - home study courses are not eligible.)

## 3. TUITION REFUND AMOUNTS

Definition: As used herein the term "course tuition rate" shall mean the rate charged for the same or equivalent credit course at the University of Alabama, Birmingham.

- (a) The County will provide reimbursement in accordance with this AO for reimbursable courses at the rate of 100% of the course tuition rate for each reimbursable course. The County will reimburse for any course related fees, such as lab fees.
  - (i) No books, other fees, charges or assessments are eligible for reimbursement, including the following: ACT, GRE or other standardized entrance examinations, deferment fees, late charges and schedule adjustment fees, student activity fees; student health or dental fees, building fees; or parking or decal fees.
- (b) The amount of any financial grant assistance from the educational institution or any other source shall be deducted from the gross fees paid by the applicant prior to applying the County's reimbursement percentage.
- (c) The maximum amount of reimbursement shall not exceed the course tuition rate for two courses per academic term (e.g., per semester, per quarter, per module). Provided, an exception may be granted by the Commission for a third course in very special cases, i.e., if the course is not reasonably available at another time. This provision shall be effective as to all new contracts upon the date of adoption.

#### 4. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- (a) Applications to participate in the Tuition Reimbursement Program under this Administrative Order shall be made upon an application form provided by the County's Employee Relations Office. The application form shall include the academic training contract
- (b) The applicant shall define the course of study for which he or she is requesting approval on the application form. The term "course of study" is defined as those courses necessary to earn a specific degree, diploma, or certificate with a specific major subject from the admitting institution. Course titles must be specified and listed by the applicant on the application form. Elective courses in a degree program may be identified as such without showing specific titles. The Tuition Reimbursement Program will not include costs associated with seminars, workshops, non-credit or refresher course

lwork in which grades are not routinely assigned for work performed and grade reports are not routinely issued. These costs will fall under the County's travel and training policy.

- (c) The application shall require a personal endorsement by the applicant's supervisor, the department head and the supervising appointing authority. Each endorsement shall certify that the endorser has concluded that the application satisfies all aspects of the policy and eligibility requirements of the AO.
- (d) The endorsed application with proof of admission to the requested program shall be presented to the County Commission for consideration and action. No courses completed prior to Commission approval of the course of study may be reimbursed under this policy.
- (e) Any change of degree program or technical/vocational training program by an approved candidate shall require a new application form to be approved by the County Commission.
- (f) Any job transfer involving a change in supervising appointing authority shall require confirmation of the degree program or technical/vocational training program by the appointing authority for the new position.
- (g) Any applicant who fails to submit a request for tuition reimbursement for one calendar year shall be required to complete a new application form to be approved by the County Commission.

## 5 . REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE

- (a) Approved applicants shall make direct payment to the college or university or technical/vocational school for all costs.
- (b) No later than thirty (30) days after the completion of the current term of the course of study, the applicant shall submit to the department head a request for reimbursement, including a reimbursement checklist, evidence of completion and the grade achieved, and proof of cost incurred for the subject tuition, and eligible fees.

- (c) The department head shall confirm satisfaction of the requirements of this AO and the contract by endorsement and forward the request to the County's Employee Relations Office for payment.
- (d) In the event that the applicant shall fail to complete the current term or course for which reimbursement is requested, by reason of an event beyond control of the applicant such as a death in the immediate family, a traumatic or disabling event or injury or illness to the applicant or a member of the immediate family, a change of circumstances or conditions in the county employment, any of which are the direct cause of the failure, the applicant may:
  - (i) Apply for a reimbursement of the subject tuition from the college or university or technical/vocational school. If denied,
  - (ii) Apply for a credit against the tuition for the subject course at a succeeding term. If denied by the college or university or school.
  - (iii) Appeal directly to the Jefferson County Commission in accordance with Paragraph 6 (b) below (bypassing the supervising appointing authority).

## 6. APPEAL PROCEDURE

As an integral part of the Tuition Reimbursement Program, it is the policy of the Jefferson County Commission to ensure the equitable and consistent application of the provisions herein to all eligible employees regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age or disability. Therefore, any adverse decision made by the department head or supervising appointing authority shall be appealable in accordance with the following provisions.

- (a) Appeal to Supervising Appointing Authority
  - (i) Within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of denial of a submitted contract or refund amount, or of the termination of a contract by the department head, the employee may submit a written appeal to the supervising appointing authority.
  - (ii) The supervising appointing authority shall respond to the appeal in writing within ten (10) calendar days of receipt.

(b) Appeal to Commission

- (i) Within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of an adverse decision by the Supervising appointing authority, the employee may submit a written request to appear before the Commission to present an appeal orally and/or in writing. The matter shall be acted upon as soon as possible.
- (ii) The Commission may grant or deny the request to appear. The Commission may take the matter under submission without a hearing. The decision of the Commission shall be binding on all parties.

7. OBLIGATION OF THE APPLICANT


- (a) The applicant must execute an academic training contract on a form provided by the County's Employee Relations Office and submit it to the County Commission for approval.
- (b) To be entitled to the reimbursement authorized by this AO, the applicant shall fulfill the following requirements:
  - (i) Provide verification of cost incurred and payment for tuition and course fees.
  - (ii) Complete the current term of the approved course of study.
  - (iii) Achieve a grade of "C" or better for an undergraduate course and a grade of "B" or better for a graduate course. For courses without a letter grade, achieve a passing grade.
- (c) In order to continue to be eligible for reimbursement and additional terms of an approved course of study, the applicant must maintain a standard of performance and conduct satisfactory to the educational institution and the County Commission. The County Commission reserves the right to terminate any academic or technical/vocational training contract at any time upon the occurrence of one or more of the following:

- (i) Failure to achieve or maintain the necessary academic standards as defined by the educational institution and the AO.
  - (ii) Failure to maintain conduct satisfactory to the education institution.
  - (iii) Failure to maintain conduct satisfactory to the County Commission including violation of Personnel Board rules and regulations.
  - (iv) In the event that the applicant's employment with Jefferson County is terminated or the applicant performs an act which indicates an intent not to comply with the terms of this agreement.
- (d) The County Commission reserves the right to terminate all academic and technical/vocational training contracts at the end of any current term of a course of study if the County Commission determines that continuation of the Tuition Reimbursement Program is no longer in the best interest of the County.
- (e) In consideration of the County Commission's promise to reimburse applicant for education training, as aforesaid, applicant covenants, promises and agrees to work for Jefferson County, for a period of time (hereinafter called "the work obligation") equal to trial period of time for which applicant has received an education reimbursement, as aforesaid, up to a maximum of two (2) years continuous full time or full time equivalent employment. The work obligation shall begin on the first work day (or as otherwise approved by the County Commission) after applicants approved course of study ends by reason of (1) graduation or completion thereof, or (2) applicant's voluntary or involuntary withdrawal approved by the County Commission. In the event that applicant is unable to perform the work obligation, or fails to perform, applicant covenants, promises and agrees to pay the County Commission all the amounts received from the County pursuant to the academic training contract plus interest at the rate of 6% (six percent) per annum compounded annually, from date of payment by the County, reduced in proportion to the work obligation that has been completed. Applicant agrees and hereby authorizes that said amount shall be deducted by the County and/or the Pension Board of the Jefferson County Retirement System from any amounts due to the applicant by the County anther the Pension Board, Any balance then remaining shall be immediately due and payable to the County.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE

This tuition refund program shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Jefferson County Commission. The terms and provisions shall apply to all previously approved academic training contracts, courses of study and pending applications All pending applications shall be reviewed for compliance herewith and if necessary returned to the applicant for resubmission in accordance with this Administrative Order.

ORDERED at the Jefferson County Courthouse, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1997.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary M. Buckelew, President  
Jefferson County Commission



RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION that  
Administrative Order No. 92-6 is amended as follows:

Paragraph 2(d) is amended by deleting the last sentence which reads:

"(Correspondence coursework - home study courses are not eligible.)"

and substitute the following:

"(Online course work taken at an accredited institution in accordance with standards set by the Southern Regional Accreditation Board for Colleges and Universities, or by a comparable accrediting body, is eligible.)"

APPROVED BY THE  
JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION  
DATE: 4-11-06  
MINUTE BOOK: 150  
PAGE(S): 540