

Town of Southborough
Personnel Board

Tuition Reimbursement Policy
(effective July 1, 2020)

I. Policy Statement

The Town of Southborough (Town), through its Personnel Board, is committed to providing its Salary Administration Plan (SAP) employees with opportunity and support for continued development of knowledge and skills to be applied in meeting the needs of their positions with the Town. The Town provides financial assistance to SAP employees to enhance their professional development within their current position or in preparation for future assignments. This Policy outlines the eligibility requirements, application process and reimbursement process for qualifying for and receiving tuition reimbursement under Sections 11(i)(2)- (4) of the Personnel Bylaw (SAP), Town Code Section 31. While this benefit is available to all eligible full-time and part-time employees, preference will be given to full-time employees, as defined in the SAP.

II. Employee Eligibility

To be eligible for tuition reimbursement:

- (A) An employee must be a full-time or part-time employee under the SAP with at least six (6) months' employment with the Town as of the date of application. Eligibility begins when the employee has been in the employ of the Town for six (6) months and ends on the date the employee resigns or receives a notice of termination.
- (B) An employee must not be under any disciplinary action, including written warnings, or a written Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) within the last twelve (12) months. Employees must meet minimum performance expectations (as determined by their manager). After successful completion of a written PIP, an employee must wait six (6) months prior to re-applying for tuition reimbursement.

III. Application Process

- (A) The employee and their manager must meet prior to the application process to create an individual development plan for the employee.
- (B) The employee and their manager discuss the pursuit of the specific degree or class in connection with the employee's individual development plan
- (C) The employee completes a "Tuition Reimbursement Application" in the form approved by the Personnel Board, which is signed by the manager.
- (D) The employee submits the application to the Personnel Board in accordance with the guidance provided by the Personnel Board for the fiscal year in which the courses are to be taken and reimbursement paid. *It is the obligation of applicants to find out the deadline for applications for the fiscal year for which they are applying.*
- (E) Applications that fulfill the requirements and are received on time will be acknowledged by the Personnel Board and reviewed at the next regular meeting of the Board after the deadline.

III. Application Process (cont'd)

IV. Requirements

- (A) Personal Time: The courses and related examinations and any other course requirements must be taken and completed on the employee's own time, not during working hours.
- (B) Documentation Required for Payment:
 - (1) Minimum Grade Requirement: reimbursement for fees and expenses will be approved only for courses in which the employee receives a grade of "B" or better or "Pass" in a Pass/Fail course (or equivalent under the applicable grading system). Appropriate documentation of grade must be submitted by the employee to the Personnel Board prior to approval of payment.
 - (2) Proof of Payment: as this is tuition reimbursement, not tuition assistance, payment for courses must be made in the first instance by the employee. Proof of employee's payment or payment by a third party on employee's behalf must be submitted to Personnel Board prior to approval of payment.

V. Repayment upon Resignation or Termination

Employees who have received tuition reimbursement money and who leave their employment with the Town through resignation or termination for cause may be required to return the money they received from the Town:

- (A) Money received **within one (1) year** of the date of resignation/termination: refundable 100% to the Town;
- (B) Money received **more than one (1) year** before the date of resignation/termination: not required to be refunded.
- (C) Pending reimbursements: if an employee resigns or is terminated for cause prior to completing coursework, no reimbursement payment will be made for this coursework or future coursework.

These provisions do not apply to employees who are laid off at the discretion of the Town. Such employees are entitled to (1) retain any monies paid and (2) obtain reimbursement after the date of termination if all other requirements are met, as if no termination action had occurred.