

E. EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

GENERAL POLICY

It is the policy of Scott County to provide its employees with relevant training opportunities to enable them to achieve and sustain a high standard of work performance. The purpose of the employee development programs described in this policy is to promote professionalism in all areas of County employment with the ultimate goal of upgrading the work scope, ability and total effectiveness of County employees, thereby improving productivity, efficiency and economy of operations.

SCOPE

This policy is applicable to the following:

All employees responsible to the Scott County Board of Supervisors;

All employees responsible to a county elected office holder providing the appropriate elected office holder and the Board of Supervisors have certified its applicability;

All employees not directly responsible to either the Board of Supervisors or an elected office holder and whose governing body and the Board of Supervisors has certified its applicability.

Whenever the provisions of this policy are in conflict with the Code of Iowa, or with a collectively-bargained agreement between the County and a certified bargaining unit, the provisions of the collectively-bargained agreement and/or the Code of Iowa will prevail.

CATEGORIES OF TRAINING

The County's employee development program can be categorized into three major areas:

1. Seminars and professional conferences designed to enhance an employee's knowledge and abilities in a particular area of expertise.
2. In-house training programs designed to meet the common needs and interests of employees in various occupations and at various levels of the organization.
3. A tuition reimbursement program designed to encourage employees to seek additional formal education that is related to their work for Scott County.

SEMINARS AND PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES

As may be appropriate and cost-effective to the County, departments are encouraged to provide employees with opportunities to attend outside training sessions, seminars and/or professional conferences that the department head anticipates will enhance the employee's knowledge and performance on the job. Generally, training of this nature will be in a particular area of expertise that may be unique to that department.

Opportunities to attend such training are subject to approval by the appropriate department head, and limited to the availability of funds in the department's budget. Registration fees and travel expenses for this type of training should be budgeted on a departmental basis (see also Travel Regulations, policy T).

IN-HOUSE TRAINING PROGRAMS

The Human Resources Department is responsible for developing an ongoing in-house training program to meet common training needs and interests of the employee workforce. In-house training programs will be offered with funds budgeted by the Human Resources Department.

As may be needed to identify common training needs and interests, the Human Resources Department will survey County departments and employees in general to obtain their views as to relevant training topics.

In-house training programs will be coordinated as much as possible with departmental scheduling requirements to enable maximum employee participation. Programs may be offered during normal work hours or during off hours as may be appropriate to the topic being presented. An employee's attendance at a training session during his/her normal work hours must be approved in advance by the appropriate supervisor.

In an effort to minimize costs while offering effective programs using qualified instructors, the County may jointly sponsor training programs with other local employers. In such cases, the cost of the program will be shared proportionally by those organizations participating in the program.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

To encourage employees to seek continuing education that is related to their work, the County will reimburse up to seventy five percent of the cost for tuition, books and laboratory fees up to a maximum reimbursement of \$1,200 per year, subject to the following conditions:

1. To be eligible for the tuition reimbursement program, an employee must occupy a regular, benefit-eligible position, and must have completed her/his probationary period.

2. Courses must be at the college level and must be offered by an accredited educational institution by the U.S. Department of Education.
3. Courses must be related to the employee's present position or a position to which the employee could logically expect to be promoted.
4. Courses not related to the employee's position, but required as part of a degree program shall be eligible for reimbursement provided, however, that the employee has been officially accepted into a degree program. Such degree shall be reasonably related to the employee's position or a position to which they could logically expect to be promoted. Courses designed to obtain professional certifications are not eligible for tuition reimbursement, but may qualify for departmental employee development.
5. All courses must be taken on the employee's own time.
6. The employee will be responsible for paying the cost of the course tuition initially. After successful completion of the course and presentation of a copy of the official transcript, an employee with a grade of "C" (2.0) will receive 50% reimbursement, a "B" (3.0) or an "A" (4.0) will receive 75% reimbursement. No payment for grades will exceed the allotted maximum benefit of \$1,200 per rolling calendar year. The employee must submit the original bill/invoice for tuition to his/her immediate supervisor for approval by the Assistant County Administrator/HR Director and reimbursement by the Auditor's Office. The County will follow all IRS guidelines concerning educational assistance as taxable income.
7. In the event of a reduction in the work force, and an employee is laid off while taking an approved course, she/he will be reimbursed on the same basis as an active employee provided the course is completed within six months of termination. In the event an employee voluntarily resigns, retires or is dismissed for cause while taking an approved course, the employee shall not be eligible for reimbursement.
8. If an employee who has received Tuition Reimbursement voluntarily separates County employment within two years of completion of a course shall be required to reimburse the County for tuition reimbursement received on a prorated basis. The employee must reimburse 100% for reimbursements made within the preceding 6 months, 75% for reimbursements made within the preceding 12 months and 50% for reimbursements made within the preceding 24 months. A total permanent disability termination or layoff at the County's request will not require reimbursement.
9. An employee wishing to participate in the program must complete a request form (available on the Intranet) and submit same to the Human Resources

Director at least three weeks prior to the course registration date. The request must include a course description and an accurate estimate of all tuition, book and lab fees. The employee will be notified of the Human Resources Directors' approval or denial of the request at least one week prior to the course registration date.

10. Within twenty days of completion of the course, the employee shall complete a reimbursement request form and forward it to the Human Resources Department along with all receipts for tuition, books and lab fees (Other expenses such as material fees, activity fees, application fees, etc. are not reimbursable). The employee also shall provide verification of the final grade received in the course. Upon approval by the Human Resources Director, the employee will be reimbursed by claim check through the County Auditor's Office.

Funding for the County's tuition reimbursement program will be included in the Human Resources Department's budget.