

Administrative Order



**Administrative Order No.:** 7-4

**Title:** Tuition Refund Program

**Ordered:** 11/6/2003

**Effective:** 11/16/2003

**AUTHORITY:**

Section 4.02 of the Miami-Dade County Charter and Section 2.28 of the Miami-Dade County Code.

**SUPERSEDES:**

This Administrative Order supersedes Administrative Order No. 7-4, dated July 25, 1995.

**POLICY:**

It is established County policy, approved by the Board of County Commissioners on August 27, 1963, to promote a program encouraging County employees to improve their effectiveness by obtaining additional training. This program provides that employees enrolled in accredited educational institutions may be reimbursed for 50% of tuition costs, for approved coursework which will enable them to improve their performance in their current positions and prepare them for increased responsibilities.

Tuition is the fee for instruction and lab fees only, and does not include textbooks, exams, audit fees, or any other expenses.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

All employees who take "approved" coursework and achieve a grade that is "C" or higher and is acceptable by the school as a passing grade, will be entitled to a refund of 50% of tuition costs upon completion of the course.

Employees receiving financial assistance including scholarships, fellowships, grants, and/or Veteran's benefits, will be eligible for a refund of 50% of tuition costs after the financial assistance has been applied to the tuition costs.



## **ELIGIBILITY OF EMPLOYEE:**

All full-time career employees are eligible for participation in the Tuition Refund Program if the following requirements are met:

- (a) Completion of 13 pay periods of full time employment with the County.
- (b) An overall evaluation of "satisfactory" or higher on the latest employee performance evaluation preceding the beginning of classes.

Exception: An employee whose latest overall evaluation is less than "satisfactory" may be eligible for Tuition Refund for coursework that relates to specific areas of weak performance.

- (c) Exempt employees must have received a satisfactory rating from their supervisors on the latest performance review.

## **ELIGIBILITY OF COURSEWORK:**

Guidelines for establishing eligible coursework are as follows:

- (a) Degree and certification programs at accredited institutions which relate directly to career opportunities within Miami-Dade County are eligible for approval.
- (b) For those employees who have been approved for a degree program, all general education courses specifically required by the school will be approved.
- (c) All other coursework will be considered on a course by course determination.
- (d) Employees who have applications on file on the effective date of this Administrative Order, and who otherwise meet eligibility requirements, shall have their applications considered herewith.
- (e) All courses must be taken outside of working hours unless the employee's Department Director approves the use of annual leave, compensatory time, or holiday leave. If Administrative Leave is granted to take a course during working hours, no Tuition Refund will be granted.
- (f) On-line Internet courses and programs provided by accredited Florida-based educational institutions are eligible for tuition reimbursement. For on-line Internet courses and programs at accredited educational institutions not based in Florida, the Tuition Refund Appeal Board will review requests for reimbursement on a

case-by-case basis. The Employee Relations Department must receive such requests at least 30 days prior to the start of the course or program.

**TUITION REFUND COORDINATOR:**

The Employee Relations Department Tuition Refund Coordinator shall maintain program oversight responsibilities to include the following:

- (a) Resolve any problems or discrepancies with the interpretation of Administrative Order 7-4.
- (b) Review all supporting documents submitted by the departments to ensure proper accountability for refund disbursement.
- (c) Calculate the 50% refund.
- (d) Approve and submit all refund requests for final disbursement.
- (e) Resolve problems and issues affecting the program.
- (f) Process appeals as required.

**DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR:**

The Department Directors shall be responsible for verifying that all approved coursework is in compliance with Administrative Order 7-4, as well as all other aspects of the program. Department Directors shall approve or disapprove all reimbursements for degrees, programs, and coursework for employees within their departments in accordance with Tuition Reimbursement Program policies and procedures.

**OBLIGATION:**

All employees receiving reimbursement under this program will be obligated to remain in the employ of the County for a minimum of one (1) year following completion of the coursework. Employees terminating from the County service prior to the expiration of this period will reimburse the County for refunds received during the final year of employment through deductions from their final payroll check. If the final paycheck is insufficient, the employee will still be responsible for the reimbursement. No reimbursement will be required of those employees who have been laid off and have been previously approved for coursework. If the employee is deceased, no reimbursement will be required from the family of the employee.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE:**

Unless otherwise indicated in this Administrative Order, employees desiring to participate in the Tuition Refund Program shall submit to their Department Director an application for coursework/degree approval no later than thirty days following the start of classes.

**COURSEWORK DEGREE REVIEW AND APPROVAL:**

The Department Director shall approve or disapprove the employee's request after verifying the employee's eligibility for participation in the program.

**(a) For Approval**

After the Department Director approves the request, a copy of the original application is returned to the employee advising them of the approval.

**(b) For Disapproval**

If the Department Director disapproves the application, he or she shall advise the employee of the reason for the rejection no later than 30 days from the date of the receipt of the application.

**REIMBURSEMENT:**

All approved applicants will submit a request for reimbursement, along with tuition receipts, official grade notifications, and all supporting documentation, to their Department Director no later than thirty days from the receipt of the grades. The Departments shall submit to the Tuition Refund Coordinator all applications, whether approved or disapproved, with the supporting documents for final review and reimbursement approval.

**PENALTIES:**

Should an employee submit documentation which the employee knows is false or intentionally misleading in order to receive benefits for which the employee is not entitled, the employee will be deemed ineligible to continue to participate in the tuition reimbursement program and must repay Miami-Dade County for any tuition reimbursements received while in the County's employ. The employee may be subject to further disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, dismissal from the County service.

**APPEALS:**

Any applicant may appeal the action taken by the Tuition Refund Coordinator or the Department Director by submitting a written statement to the Coordinator within 30 days from the day of the action describing how and why the course in question is in compliance with the guidelines and intent of the program. The Tuition Refund Appeal Board will convene on a monthly basis as necessary to review all appeals. This committee shall consist of three permanent members: a representative from the Employee Relations Department Career Development Division; Personnel Services Division; and Administrative Services Division. The Coordinator shall be responsible for notifying the applicant of the Appeal Board's decision.

This Administrative Order is hereby submitted to the Board of County Commissioners of Miami-Dade County, Florida.

George M. Burgess  
County Manager

**TUITION REFUND PROGRAM  
APPLICATION FOR COURSEWORK/DEGREE APPROVAL**

Last Name	First Name	Initial	Social Security #	Work Ph. Number	School Name
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Department	Dept./Div./Loc.#	Employee Status Code	Date of Hire	Date Classes Start	Date Classes End
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Attach a copy of the curriculum listing all degree requirements if this is the initial request for degree approval. If degree approval has been received on prior tuition refund application, please provide date of approval \_\_\_\_\_.

**TITLE OF DEGREE/PROGRAM SOUGHT** \_\_\_\_\_ **MAJOR** \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated Program Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_ Department Director Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION A  
DEGREE APPROVAL

SECTION B  
COURSEWORK APPROVAL

To be completed by the employee (complete this section for all coursework)						Department use only				Employee Relations Department use only						
Course Code #	Complete Course Title	Credit Hrs.	Tuition Cost (TC)	Financial Aid Amount (Attach award letter)		Course*			County Related (Circle One)	Coursework Approval		Dept. Dir./ Designee Initials	Date	Grade	Refund Amount (50% of TC minus Grants)	Refund Date
				Loan	Grant	U	G	O		App.	Dis.					

\*U - Undergraduate, G - Graduate, O - Other

**TOTAL COST** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL REFUND** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Explain how this coursework or attainment of this degree will further the achievement of your career goals within Miami-Dade County. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

**STATEMENT OF DISCLOSURE**

It is my intent to remain employed with Miami-Dade County for a minimum of one year following completion of this coursework. If I terminate prior to the expiration of this period, I will reimburse the County for funds received during the final year of employment through my final paycheck. If the final paycheck is insufficient, a repayment schedule will be established. No reimbursement will be required for lay-off situations. Also, in signing this form, I certify that no other educational financial assistance (excluding student loans) such as scholarships, fellowships, grants, and/or veterans benefits is being applied toward payment of the tuition costs indicated above, and I authorize Miami-Dade County to obtain access to my Financial Aid records at \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Educational Institution). I understand that failure to **strictly comply with these mandatory financial disclosures and any misrepresentation of any of the information contained in this application shall result in the denial of tuition refund and may result in criminal prosecution and/or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the County service.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**VERIFICATION OF SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

This is to certify that the above-mentioned employee is a full time career employee with the completion of 13 pay periods of full time employment with the County and an overall performance evaluation of "Satisfactory" or higher on the latest performance evaluation preceding the beginning of classes applied for on this application. In the event an employee has not received at least a "Satisfactory" evaluation, explain briefly how course will improve their performance.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Immediate Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ **REFUND DISBURSEMENT APPROVAL**  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_ **INCOMPLETE (PENDING INFORMATION)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SIGNATURE OF COORDINATOR**



**PLEASE SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS**

**DISTRIBUTION: WHITE - EMPLOYEE RELATIONS DEPARTMENT • YELLOW - DEPARTMENTAL TUITION REFUND LIAISON • PINK - EMPLOYEE**

## TUITION REFUND PROGRAM

### POLICY

In accordance with Administrative Order 7-4, the Tuition Refund Program was established to encourage County employees to improve their effectiveness by obtaining additional training. The program provides 50% of tuition costs for approved coursework which will enable employees to improve their performance in their current positions and prepare them for increased responsibilities.

### ELIGIBILITY

All full-time career employees with six months of employment that have an overall performance evaluation of "satisfactory" or higher during the rating period prior to the beginning of classes. Exception: an employee whose overall evaluation is less than "satisfactory" may be eligible if coursework is related to specific area of weak performance. Exempt employees must have received a satisfactory rating from their supervisors on the latest performance review.

### QUALIFICATIONS

All employees who take "approved" coursework and achieve a grade that is "C" or higher and is acceptable by the school as a passing grade, will be entitled to a refund of 50% of tuition costs upon completion of the course. Where no grade is given, a certificate of "passing", "satisfactory", or "completed" will be accepted. Employees receiving financial assistance including scholarships, fellowships, grants, and/or Veteran's benefits will be eligible for 50% of tuition costs after the financial assistance has been applied to the tuition cost.

### TUITION COST

Tuition is the fee for instruction and does not include textbooks, exams, audit fees, or any other expenses.

### HOW TO OBTAIN REFUND?

1. Complete the reverse side of this form and submit with attachments (Degree program requirements, coursework schedule, deferred payment and financial aid documents when applicable) to your immediate supervisor no later than 30 days following the start of classes.
2. No later than 30 days from the receipt of your grades, submit your tuition payment receipt and official grade notification to your Departmental Personnel Officer.
3. You will receive reimbursement within four weeks after all requirements are satisfied and documents are received by the Program Coordinator, Personnel Department.

Contact your Departmental Personnel Officer for any questions related to the program.



**TUITION REFUND PROGRAM  
APPLICATION FOR COURSEWORK/DEGREE APPROVAL**

**Section A  
Degree Approval**

Last Name	First Name	Initial	Social Security #	Work Phone Number	Application Submittal Date
Department	Dept./Div./Loc.# ____/____/____	Employee Status Code	Date of Hire	School Name	Date Classes Start
<p>Complete Section A only for the initial request for degree approval, and attach a copy of the curriculum listing all degree requirements. If degree approval has been received on prior tuition refund application, please give date of approval. DATE OF PRIOR APPROVAL _____</p> <p>TITLE OF DEGREE SOUGHT _____ MAJOR _____</p> <p>Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Department Director Signature _____</p>					

**Section B  
Coursework Approval**

Complete Section B for all coursework

COURSE CODE #	COMPLETE COURSE TITLE	CREDIT HOURS	Department use only				Personnel Department use only				
			WORK RELATED <small>Circle One</small>	COURSEWORK APP.	DIS	DIRECTOR'S INITIALS	DATE	GRADE	TUITION COST	REFUND % OF COST	REFUND DATE
			YES/NO								
			YES/NO								
			YES/NO								
			YES/NO								
			YES/NO								
									TOTAL COST	TOTAL REFUND	

IS COURSEWORK GRADUATE LEVEL YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Explain how this coursework or attainment of this degree will further the achievement of your career goals within Dade County. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

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**STATEMENT OF INTENT**

It is my intent to remain employed with Metro-Dade County for a minimum of one year following completion of this coursework. If I terminate prior to the expiration of this period I will reimburse the County for funds received during the final year of employment through my final paycheck. If the final paycheck is insufficient, a repayment schedule will be established. No reimbursement will be required for lay-off situations. Also, no other educational financial assistance including scholarships, fellowships, and/or veterans benefits is being applied toward payment of the tuition costs indicated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant                      Date

**VERIFICATION OF SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

This is to certify that the above mentioned employee has received a "Satisfactory" or better performance evaluation prior to the beginning date of the coursework applied for on this application. In the event an employee has not received at least a "Satisfactory" evaluation, explain briefly how course will improve their performance.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Immediate Supervisor Signature                      Date

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ REFUND DISBURSEMENT APPROVAL

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ INCOMPLETE (PENDING INFORMATION)

\_\_\_\_\_  
COORDINATOR SIGNATURE

**PLEASE SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTION**

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## Tuition Refund Program

Miami-Dade County Tuition Refund Program - It is established County policy, approved by the Board of County Commissioners on August 27, 1963, to promote a program encouraging County employees to improve their effectiveness by obtaining additional training.

- ☛ [Tuition Refund Program- Administrative Order No. 7-4](#)
- ☛ [Tuition Refund Appeal Board \( 8 KB PDF\)](#)
- ☛ [Tuition Refund Form \( 40 KB PDF\)](#)
- ☛ [Tuition Refund Processing Check List \( 50 KB PDF\)](#)
- ☛ [List of Accredited Colleges, Universities, Career, and Trade Schools.](#)
- ☛ [Frequently Asked Questions \( 18KB PDF\)](#)
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