



Human Resources Department

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: 2015 April 13

FROM: HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: EXTERNAL LEARNING AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

We are pleased to provide the Financial Management Committee with information about a new initiative endorsed by Management Committee to provide staff with opportunities and support for enhancing their formal education such as acquiring certificates, diplomas and degrees and to develop our workforce for the future.

The City of Burnaby is recognized as being the best run city in Canada and delivers a high level of quality service to its citizens and business. The City also has an incredibly diverse workforce and multitude of positions requiring formal and professional designations along with specialized skill sets. Workforce demographics identify that approximately 25% of all regular staff are over the age of 55 and the City needs to be prepared for impending retirements as staff move into positions requiring new skill sets and designations. The challenges of workforce demographics and skill shortages are trends that all employers are experiencing now and into the foreseeable future.

To help us prepare our future workforce, this new initiative "External Learning and Education Program" provides staff with opportunities to apply for financial support in pursuing post-secondary education that will help prepare them for a future role at the City or to meet current or anticipated skills shortage.

An "External Learning and Education" Policy has been prepared which sets out the purpose of the program, scope (eligibility) and the level of City contribution to the program (50% up to a maximum of \$8,500). Employees participating in this program will also be required to make a substantive commitment of time and dollars towards developing both specialized skills and formal education. A copy of the policy is attached for your reference and funding for the program is included in the operating budget.

We believe this new "External Learning and Education" program to develop our internal staff will support the City into the future as we continue to deliver a broad range of high quality services to the community. A formal announcement to staff about this exciting new initiative will take place in the next few weeks and this is for the information of Council.

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This report is provided for information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Tennant". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "P" and a cursive "Tennant".

Pat Tennant, CHRP
Human Resources Director

cc: City Manager

Attachment: External Education and Learning Program

External Learning and Education Policy

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|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| SOURCE: | Human Resources | | |
| APPROVED BY: | City Manager | | |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: | TBA | REVISION DATE: | April 2015 |

Purpose

The City of Burnaby believes that a continuous improvement approach to employee development is central to Burnaby's success and to the personal success of each employee. Delivering excellent services to the residents of Burnaby is dependent on our individual and collective commitment to continual learning.

By providing financial assistance to staff to access external formal education the City of Burnaby will:

Maintain a skilled workforce qualified for future vacancies

Increase the breadth and depth of current job competencies

Increase staff options and resilience when faced with organizational change

Scope

This policy applies to all:

- regular full-time and regular part-time employees who have worked the equivalent of one full year
- temporary full-time employees who have worked the equivalent of 2 years full time where the department can confirm the intention of ongoing employment
- auxiliary employees who have worked the equivalent of 2 years in the past five years where the department can confirm the intention of a similar work schedule in the future

Who wish to receive assistance from the City in taking recognized programs of study (e.g. trades certification, certificates, diplomas, degrees, advanced degrees, professional designations, professional certifications etc.) for the mutual benefit of the employee and employer and addresses skills needs and skills shortages in the organization.

Policy

Assistance for External Education and Learning will take the form of direct financial aid at 50% of total program costs up to a maximum of \$8,500 for a complete program of study reimbursed upon proof of successful completion as in accordance with the City of Burnaby Finance Policy.

All staff wishing to apply for funding must apply in writing prior to commencement of their program of study. Applications for funding

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must be received prior to the following review dates: May 1, September 1, or January 1 of each year. All employees who undertake a Program of Study must sign a Learning Agreement.

Requests for financial assistance from the External Learning and Education fund shall be made in writing to The External Learning and Education Review Committee comprised of two Human Resources staff and two Departmental Directors or designate and will include:

- the name of the program of study
- the name of the institute offering the program
- outlines of the course content
- a letter indicating why this program is of mutual benefit to the employee and the employer and how it enhances the employees career plans and the strategic objectives of the City
- the expected duration of the program, and a time frame for completion
- the anticipated cost of completing the program in each calendar year
- an up-to-date resume

Approved course registration fees and course materials shall be reimbursed as negotiated and stipulated in the Learning Agreement.

Funding amount will be based upon a complete program of study. (i.e. a staff enrolled in a 2 year program regardless of total costs may receive \$8,500 in total financial aid distributed over the period of study reimbursed upon proof of successful course completion as stipulated in The City of Burnaby expense policy)

To ensure equity all Post Secondary and Professional Program costs will be determined by the total program costs based on full time attendance (i.e. staff enrolled in a 2 year diploma program but taking one course at a time will receive the equivalent of 50% of total program costs up to the maximum of \$8,500 distributed over the entire time it takes to complete reimbursed upon proof of successful course completion.)

All assistance from the External Learning and Education fund will be in the form of financial support only. Attending the program of study is to take place during the employees own time. If required, scheduling time away from work is the responsibility of the employee and must be negotiated with the department with the intention of the employee using banked and holiday time.

Staff who have taken the initiative to apply for grants, scholarships and

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bursaries are entitled to keep the funding.

All staff development requests are subject to budget availability and approval of such requests shall be at the discretion The External Learning and Education Review Committee based on established criteria.