

MEMORANDUM

09/12/2023

TO: Rich Wallen, General Manager/Chief Executive Officer

VIA: Julie Pyper, Chief Administration Officer
Thomas Stredwick, Senior Manager of Employee Experience

875

FROM: Scott Sundberg, Organizational Development Supervisor
Annette Hernandez, Employee Experience Specialist

SUBJECT: To provide notification to the General Manager regarding proposed changes to the Educational Reimbursement Policy per Resolution #8613.

Purpose: The purpose of this memo is to provide notification to the Commission regarding proposed changes to the Educational Reimbursement Policy per Resolution #8613.

Discussion: Grant PUD Strategic Plan’s Objective #2, states that Grant PUD will deliver an “industry-leading educational reimbursement program”. This guidance from our strategic plan informs our ongoing talent development efforts as an organization. This policy reconciles both a desire to grow local talent with the recognition that many of the job opportunities at Grant PUD require some form of advanced education. Given that only 12% of Grant County’s population holds a bachelor’s degree¹, this significantly limits the talent pool the utility has access to when sourcing local candidates for open positions. This lack of access to a highly skilled workforce is a challenge shared by many employers in this region and continues to remain an area of focus for both Grant PUD and all other employers in the central Washington region. This policy enables the utility to meet this challenge associated with being a rural employer and grow local talent into advanced career pathways.

After implementing the revised education reimbursement policy in 2020, several elements of the policy design and administration were found to be insufficient as highlighted by a review from the internal audit team. Based on the rigor associated with the audit process, as well as feedback from the executive leadership team, a number of opportunities for improvement were identified and are now reflected in the revised policy version before Commission. These updates reflect a commitment to: 1.) ensure greater compliance with internal controls and applicable state laws, 2.) preserve the existing high-impact elements of the program, and 3.) a desire to simplify, streamline, and automate the ongoing administration of the program.

Justification: Commissioners have articulated a desire to develop current talent within the organization while also increasing our competitiveness from a recruitment standpoint and this policy supports those ends. Ongoing workforce challenges facing the utility include expenses associated with employee turnover, position vacancy rates due to recruiting difficulties for certain disciplines, the need for upskilling/reskilling of the

¹ Grant County Trends 2021 item 3.

existing workforce, and attracting new talent in the competitive Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) fields emerging from regional colleges, trade schools, and universities. This policy not only increases our competitiveness from a recruiting standpoint, but it also reflects a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging (DEIB) by removing barriers to education through reduced costs, increasing opportunities for participation in advanced professional roles, and increasing the retention rates of our talent pool.

Financial Considerations:

Funding for the Educational Reimbursement program is capped annually. For the 2024 budget period \$302,000 is set aside to support the education reimbursement program. The annual budgetary cap will change annually and is subject to the financial condition of the Utility and subsequent Executive Team allocation. There is currently \$302,000 allocated for educational reimbursement in the 2023 Leadership & Organizational Development budget.

Recommendation:

In accordance with Resolution #8613, this information is provided for Commission review.

Legal Review: See attached e-mail.

AH

Attachments:

- Resolution #8613
- Auditor Notification
- Legal Review
- Proposed Education Reimbursement Policy
- Current Educational Reimbursement Policy

Effective Date:
X/X/2023

Version: 3
Supersedes: 2

Related Documents: See Section 6



DISTRICTWIDE POLICY

Approved by: Executive Management

Regulation:

Policy Owner: Senior Manager Employee Experience

Policy Category: Employment, Benefits and Workplace

OD-DW-POL-100 – EDUCATIONAL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

1. Scope

~~Grant PUD supports both non-degree related education (courses, licenses, credentials, or certifications directly associated with an individual's current or desired position) and degree-related education (courses in pursuit of a degree).~~

~~This policy applies to all full-time regular Grant PUD employees.~~


2. Policy Statement

As an organization that values innovation and continuous learning, Grant PUD encourages employees to continue their education and further their professional development. The educational reimbursement policy is designed to eliminate barriers to continued professional development, and financially support employees pursuing courses of study. This includes ~~industry, trade or professional credentials, apprenticeships, or licenses~~ degree programs which are directly related to present or future job interests within Grant PUD. ~~Trainings, degrees, certifications, licenses and credentials~~ Degrees must be obtained via an accredited institution ~~or association.~~

3. Eligibility

~~All full-Full-time, regular or part time, regular employees are eligible to apply for educational reimbursement. Employees on a performance improvement plan at the time of application are ineligible for reimbursement. Employees that are currently in the middle of an approved term, then go on a PIP, are allowed to finish their term and/or loan forgiveness. Other employees with benefits (management and limited assignment bargaining unit) then their participation will be on hold. Participants could re-apply after they are no longer on a PIP but would be subject to the approval process. Grant PUD's FERC license Article 417 considerations may also be eligible. allow for other plan participation at the pre-approval of the General Manager/CEO.~~

Approval of educational reimbursement ~~and/or loan forgiveness will be made by a Senior Manager or by any member of Executive Management, depending upon the respective~~ shall be made in accordance with the requirements of the applicable tier identified in Section 6. (see Appendix A).

Effective Date: 9/28/2020 X/X/2023	Version: 23 Supersedes: 04/09/20122	Related Documents: See Section 6
		<h1>DISTRICTWIDE POLICY</h1>
Approved by: Executive Management		Regulation:
Policy Owner: Thomas Stredwick Senior Manager Employee Experience		Policy Category: Employment, Benefits and Workplace

Applications for reimbursement must be submitted and approved in accordance with the applicable procedure prior to course registration. Programs must be on a fulltime basis unless the participant is only needing a few classes to graduate. All terms must be pre-approved in a single application that covers the entire degree program.

~~Reimbursement of tuition cost, including mandatory course fees and associated books and/or manuals, shall be made upon acceptable completion of program as clarified in Section 7 below. Documentation of such supplemental costs and fees must be submitted along with the application. Travel, and other associated costs such as application fees are not covered.~~

~~Employees on a performance improvement plan at the time of application for educational reimbursement are ineligible for reimbursement.~~

Ongoing funding is subject to the financial condition of the utility & executive team and Executive Management funding allocation on an annual basis.


Any deviation from an approved program schedule (for example: skipping of terms or changing degrees) will require a new application to be completed and new approvals to be obtained with no guarantee of acceptance back into the program.

Employees are limited to one degree per degree type (Associates, Bachelors, Masters), for the duration of their career at Grant PUD.

4. Reimbursement

The maximum reimbursement per year is up to \$~~5020,000.00~~ and is based on a tier system (see [Section 6 Appendix A](#)). Employees should note that the educational reimbursement amount is first subject to any IRS exclusion and then is subject to tax withholding and other appropriate deductions and will be reported on the W-2 form as part of the employee's total compensation. Additional information about IRS exclusion and tax withholding can be obtained by contacting the program administrator or at www.IRS.gov and referencing Publication 970.

~~In consideration of the educational reimbursement provided by the employer, the employee shall commit to 2 to 4 years of service (depending on the respective tier identified in Section 6) from the date which Grant PUD Accounts Payable issues the final educational reimbursement. If employment ends (voluntarily or involuntarily) prior to completing the associated time commitment, the employee shall repay Grant PUD the entire amount disbursed (See repayment~~

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~~terms in Section 6). Employee termination due to reduction in force will not require the employee to pay the reimbursement back.~~

~~Reimbursement of tuition cost, including mandatory course fees and required books and/or manuals called out in the course syllabus, shall be made upon acceptable completion of the program. Documentation of such supplemental costs and fees must be submitted along with the application. Travel, mileage, meals, equipment (such as laptops), calculators, and other associated costs are not covered.~~


Approval of tuition reimbursement does not constitute a promise of continued employment for any specific period, nor does it change the at-will nature of non-union employment with Grant PUD. Bargaining unit employees remain subject to all provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. ~~Reimbursements must be submitted via the SharePoint process no later than 30 days after term completion date or the date term grades are posted, whichever is later. Exceptions to the reimbursement submittal date must have two levels of approval within the employee's chain of command (e.g., supervisor and manager, manager and senior manager, senior manager and managing director), up to the General Manager.~~

In certain instances, ~~a member of~~ Executive Management may also approve ~~a percentage up to 5%~~ of an employee's time on the job toward coursework completion, allowing the employee to study during part of their workday. This request should be formally made within the educational reimbursement application. ~~Participants in the program with study on work time must add applicable attributes on their time sheet, as approved, using activity code AC124. Per the Technology Acceptable Use Policy, IT resources are for conducting Grant PUD business only, therefore use of PUD equipment/resources (computers, printers, etc.) is not allowed for completing courses under this program.~~

~~5. Educational Recognition Credit~~

~~Employees that have:~~

- ~~a. Completed a course of study or certification, prior to the start of employment at Grant PUD (Only for new recruits that follow the date of this adopted policy and currently have outstanding student loan debt.) OR;~~
- ~~b. Completed a course of study or certification, via Grant PUD's Tuition Reimbursement program, within the last 4 years of the effective date of this policy AND;~~

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- ~~c. Have paid for education not previously covered by this policy during that time AND;~~
- ~~d. Are not currently on a performance improvement plan;~~

~~5. are eligible to apply for a one-time educational recognition credit of up to \$10,000.00.~~

Employment Commitment

~~In consideration of the educational recognition credit reimbursement provided by the employer, the employee Grant PUD, employees choosing Tier 1 (as shown on Exhibit A) shall commit 3 to two years of service and employees choosing Tier 2 (as shown on Exhibit A) shall commit to four years of service from the date which Grant PUD Accounts Payable issues the each educational reimbursement.~~

~~If the individual's employment ends (voluntarily or involuntarily) prior to completing the associated time commitment, the employee shall repay Grant PUD the entire amount disbursed (see payback terms in Section 6) educational reimbursement received within the preceding two or four year period, as applicable. This look back period begins the day after the date of separation. For example, under Tier 1, any reimbursements received by the employee within two years (730 days) of the separation date are to be paid back.~~

~~Employee participation in the educational reimbursement program and acceptance of funding constitutes authorization for the payroll deduction or deduction from employee's personal leave to repay Grant PUD the amounts owed.~~

Employee termination due to a reduction in force will not require the employee to pay the reimbursement back.

6. Tier Table

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
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DISTRICTWIDE POLICY

Approved by: Executive Management	Regulation:
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Any program that relates to current or desired roles within Grant PUD.	Courses of study backed up with a business case for how they will benefit Grant PUD.	Courses of study which Executive Management has deemed difficult to recruit, develop and/or retain when taking the following factors into consideration:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turnover frequency and existing vacancies;
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labor market factors, staffing patterns within the industry;
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results of previous recruitment/retention methods;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific qualifications for a position and relative difficulty in attaining such qualifications 		

Eligible types of credentials: Associate of Arts; Bachelors Degree; Masters Degree; Doctoral Programs; Professional/Trade Certification

Up to: \$12,000.00 Max/Yr	Tier 1 coverage plus 50% reimbursement for remaining education (Max \$20,000.00/Yr)	Tier 1 coverage plus 90% reimbursement for remaining education (Max 50,000.00/Yr)
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~~Approval Authority: Sr. Manager~~ Approval Authority: Executive Management Member

Note: 2 year employment commitment	Note: 3 year employment commitment	Note: 4 year employment commitment
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Requires a minimum GPA of "2.0" or "Pass" when grades are awarded (Per course)	Requires a minimum GPA of "2.5" or "Pass" when grades are awarded (Per course)	Requires a minimum GPA of "3.0" or "Pass" when grades are awarded (Per course)
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Upon ending employment prior to meeting the 2 year commitment:	Upon ending employment prior to meeting the 3 year commitment:	Upon ending employment prior to meeting the 4 year commitment:
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~~If the outstanding amount to be paid back ranges from 1\$ to \$30,000.00, then the payback will be in the form of a 5-year loan (including the fixed Federal Student Loan interest rate declared at the time the loan is established).~~

~~If the amount to be paid back exceeds \$30,000.00, then the payback will be in the form of a 10 year loan (including the fixed Federal Student Loan interest rate declared at the time the loan is established).~~

7. Procedure

Application & Approval:

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- ~~1. In the event of employee prepares the Educational Reimbursement/Educational Recognition Credit Application form fatality, the survivors will not have to reimburse the District for any payments due.~~
- ~~2. The employee submits the application to his or her supervisor and/or department manager prior to the employee enrolling in the desired course of study.~~
- ~~3. The supervisor and/or department manager reviews and approves/rejects application.~~
- ~~4. If approved, the supervisor and/or department manager forwards the recommended application to the Senior Manager and/or Executive Management Member (see Section 6).~~
- ~~5. The Senior Manager and/or Executive Management Member reviews and approves/rejects application.~~
- ~~6. If approved, the Senior Manager and/or the Executive Management Member forwards the signed application to Leadership & Organizational Development.~~
- ~~7. Leadership & Organizational Development reviews application for compliance with policy and obtains Executive Management's approval if necessary. If approved, a copy of the approved application will be returned to the employee and the original will be placed in the employee's educational reimbursement file.~~
- ~~8. If applying for Educational Recognition Credit, then please submit the following items with your application form:

 - ~~• Statement of Expense AND,~~
 - ~~• Proof of payment~~~~

Reimbursement (Upon Course Completion):

- ~~1. Employee submits the following items to Leadership & Organizational Development:

 - ~~• Statement of Expenses (for the approved term) AND,~~
 - ~~• proof of payment (receipt) AND,~~~~

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- ~~• copy of grades showing satisfactory completion of course (see Tier Table for additional details) AND,~~
- ~~• a print-out from the institution's course catalog or website illustrating the cost and/or cost per credit for the course.~~


- ~~2. Leadership & Organizational Development reviews submitted documentation and approves the invoice for payment if information is complete.~~
- ~~3. Leadership & Organizational Development then follows the established Accounts Payable processes for processing the reimbursement.~~

~~The rights and obligations of Grant PUD and the employee shall be governed by the laws of the State of Washington. Venue of any action filed to enforce or interpret the provisions of this agreement shall be exclusively in the Superior Court, County of Grant, State of Washington or the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Washington at Grant PUD's sole option. In the event of litigation to enforce the provisions of this agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to reasonable legal fees in addition to any other relief allowed.~~

6. Risk/Risk Owners

~~A. This policy, along with other control mechanisms, is intended to mitigate the following risks:~~


- ~~• Human Capital Risk – Failure to effectively attract, develop, retain, and properly align the skilled people necessary to conduct, sustain and grow the business may hinder the company's ability to execute, manage and monitor key business activities.~~
- ~~• Performance Risk – Lack of clear, measurable, relevant, and attainable performance goals that are aligned with strategies may result in employee actions and performance that do not consistently meet the company's expectations.~~
- ~~• Leadership Risk – The risk that the people responsible for the important business processes do not or cannot provide the leadership, vision, and support necessary to help employees execute the current strategic plan to be effective and successful in their jobs.~~
- ~~• Financial Risk - Risk that demand for education reimbursement out strips supply of funding leading to too little benefits or budget exceedances.~~

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		DISTRICTWIDE POLICY
Approved by: Executive Management		Regulation:
Policy Owner: Thomas Stredwick <u>Senior Manager</u> <u>Employee Experience</u>		Policy Category: Employment, Benefits and Workplace

B. Risk Owners includes Organizational Development, members of Executive Management, supervisors, and employees applying for and receiving reimbursement under this policy.

8.7. Review/Revision History

Date	Description
<u>4/9/2012</u>	<u>v1 Effective Date</u>
<u>9/28/2020</u>	<u>v2 Effective Date. Increase reimbursement amount based on a tier system, incorporate educational recognition credit.</u>
<u>X/X/2023</u>	<u>v3 Effective Date. Revise reimbursement tiers, remove educational recognition credit and loan provisions, added new Risk section, incorporate new procedures and forms.</u>

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Appendix A – Tier Table

	<u>Tier 1</u>	<u>Tier 2</u>
<u>Program Requirements</u>	<u>Any degree program that relates to current or desired roles within Grant PUD.</u>	<u>Any degree program that supports a position deemed hard to fill as outlined by HR’s process for hard to fill positions.</u>
<u>Eligible Credentials</u>	<u>Associate of Arts; Bachelor’s Degree; Master’s Degree</u>	
<u>Maximum Reimbursement</u>	<u>100% up to \$10,000 (maximum \$10,000 per year)</u>	<u>100% up to \$10,000 then 90% of costs over \$10,000 (up to a maximum \$20,000 per year).</u>
<u>Approval Requirements</u>	<u>Senior Manager (if the applicant is a Senior Manager, the next level of authority must approve).</u> <u>Must also have approval from a member of Executive Management if applicant is requesting study on work time.</u>	<u>Member of Executive Management</u>
<u>Employment Commitment</u>	<u>2 years</u>	<u>4 years</u>


Effective Date: <u>9/28/2020</u> <u>X/X/2023</u>	Version: <u>23</u> Supersedes: <u>04/09/20122</u>	Related Documents: <u>See Section 6</u>
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DISTRICTWIDE POLICY

Approved by: Executive Management	Regulation:
Policy Owner: Thomas Stredwick <u>Senior Manager</u> <u>Employee Experience</u>	Policy Category: Employment, Benefits and Workplace

<u>Grade Requirements</u>	<u>Minimum GPA of "2.5" or "Pass" when grades are awarded (per course).</u>	<u>Minimum GPA of "3.0" or "Pass" when grades are awarded (per course).</u>
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		DISTRICTWIDE POLICY
Approved by: Executive Management		Regulation:
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OD-DW-POL-100 – EDUCATIONAL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

1. Scope

This policy applies to all full-time regular Grant PUD employees.

2. Policy Statement

As an organization that values innovation and continuous learning, Grant PUD encourages employees to continue their education and further their professional development. The educational reimbursement policy is designed to eliminate barriers to continued professional development, and financially support employees pursuing courses of study. This includes degree programs which are directly related to present or future job interests within Grant PUD. Degrees must be obtained via an accredited institution.

3. Eligibility

Full-time regular employees are eligible to apply for educational reimbursement. Employees on a performance improvement plan at the time of application are ineligible for reimbursement. Employees that are currently in the middle of an approved term, then go on a PIP, are allowed to finish their term and then their participation will be on hold. Participants could re-apply after they are no longer on a PIP but would be subject to the approval process. Grant PUD’s FERC license Article 417 considerations may allow for other plan participation at the pre-approval of the General Manager/CEO.

Approval of educational reimbursement shall be made in accordance with the requirements of the applicable tier (see Appendix A).

Applications for reimbursement must be submitted and approved in accordance with the applicable procedure prior to course registration. Programs must be on a fulltime basis unless the participant is only needing a few classes to graduate. All terms must be pre-approved in a single application that covers the entire degree program.


Ongoing funding is subject to the financial condition of the utility and Executive Management funding allocation on an annual basis.

Any deviation from an approved program schedule (for example: skipping of terms or changing degrees) will require a new application to be completed and new approvals to be obtained with no guarantee of acceptance back into the program.

Employees are limited to one degree per degree type (Associates, Bachelors, Masters), for the duration of their career at Grant PUD.

4. Reimbursement

The maximum reimbursement per year is up to \$20,000 and is based on a tier system (see Appendix A). Employees should note that the educational reimbursement amount is first

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subject to any IRS exclusion and then is subject to tax withholding and other appropriate deductions and will be reported on the W-2 form as part of the employee’s total compensation. Additional information about IRS exclusion and tax withholding can be obtained by contacting the program administrator or at www.IRS.gov and referencing Publication 970.


Reimbursement of tuition cost, including mandatory course fees and required books and/or manuals called out in the course syllabus, shall be made upon acceptable completion of the program. Documentation of such supplemental costs and fees must be submitted along with the application. Travel, mileage, meals, equipment (such as laptops), calculators, and other associated costs are not covered.

Approval of tuition reimbursement does not constitute a promise of continued employment for any specific period, nor does it change the at-will nature of non-union employment with Grant PUD. Bargaining unit employees remain subject to all provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Reimbursements must be submitted via the SharePoint process no later than 30 days after term completion date or the date term grades are posted, whichever is later. Exceptions to the reimbursement submittal date must have two levels of approval within the employee’s chain of command (e.g., supervisor and manager, manager and senior manager, senior manager and managing director), up to the General Manager.

In certain instances, a member of Executive Management may also approve up to 5% of an employee’s time on the job toward coursework completion, allowing the employee to study during part of their workday. This request should be formally made within the educational reimbursement application. Participants in the program with study on work time must add applicable attributes on their time sheet, as approved, using activity code AC124. Per the Technology Acceptable Use Policy, IT resources are for conducting Grant PUD business only, therefore use of PUD equipment/resources (computers, printers, etc.) is not allowed for completing courses under this program.

5. Employment Commitment

In consideration of the educational reimbursement provided by Grant PUD, employees choosing Tier 1 (as shown on Exhibit A) shall commit to two years of service and employees choosing Tier 2 (as shown on Exhibit A) shall commit to four years of service from the date which Grant PUD issues each educational reimbursement. If employment ends (voluntarily or involuntarily) prior to completing the associated time commitment, the employee shall repay Grant PUD the educational reimbursement received within the preceding two or four year period, as applicable. This look back period begins the day after the date of separation. For example, under Tier 1, any reimbursements received by the employee within two years (730 days) of the separation date are to be paid back.

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		<h1>DISTRICTWIDE POLICY</h1>
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Employee participation in the educational reimbursement program and acceptance of funding constitutes authorization for the payroll deduction or deduction from employee's personal leave to repay Grant PUD the amounts owed.

Employee termination due to a reduction in force will not require the employee to pay the reimbursement back. In the event of employee fatality, the survivors will not have to reimburse the District for any payments due.

The rights and obligations of Grant PUD and the employee shall be governed by the laws of the State of Washington. Venue of any action filed to enforce or interpret the provisions of this agreement shall be exclusively in the Superior Court, County of Grant, State of Washington or the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Washington at Grant PUD's sole option. In the event of litigation to enforce the provisions of this agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to reasonable legal fees in addition to any other relief allowed.

6. Risk/Risk Owners

A. This policy, along with other control mechanisms, is intended to mitigate the following risks:

- Human Capital Risk – Failure to effectively attract, develop, retain, and properly align the skilled people necessary to conduct, sustain and grow the business may hinder the company's ability to execute, manage and monitor key business activities.
- Performance Risk – Lack of clear, measurable, relevant, and attainable performance goals that are aligned with strategies may result in employee actions and performance that do not consistently meet the company's expectations.
- Leadership Risk – The risk that the people responsible for the important business processes do not or cannot provide the leadership, vision, and support necessary to help employees execute the current strategic plan to be effective and successful in their jobs.
- Financial Risk - Risk that demand for education reimbursement out strips supply of funding leading to too little benefits or budget exceedances.

B. Risk Owners includes Organizational Development, members of Executive Management, supervisors, and employees applying for and receiving reimbursement under this policy.

7. Review/Revision History

Date	Description
4/9/2012	v1 Effective Date


Effective Date: X/X/2023	Version: 3 Supersedes: 2	Related Documents: See Section 6
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DISTRICTWIDE POLICY


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9/28/2020	v2 Effective Date. Increase reimbursement amount based on a tier system, incorporate educational recognition credit.
X/X/2023	v3 Effective Date. Revise reimbursement tiers, remove educational recognition credit and loan provisions, added new Risk section, incorporate new procedures and forms.

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 <h1 style="margin: 0;">DISTRICTWIDE POLICY</h1>		
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Appendix A – Tier Table

	Tier 1	Tier 2
Program Requirements	Any degree program that relates to current or desired roles within Grant PUD.	Any degree program that supports a position deemed hard to fill as outlined by HR's process for hard to fill positions.
Eligible Credentials	Associate of Arts; Bachelor's Degree; Master's Degree	
Maximum Reimbursement	100% up to \$10,000 (maximum \$10,000 per year)	100% up to \$10,000 then 90% of costs over \$10,000 (up to a maximum \$20,000 per year).
Approval Requirements	<p>Senior Manager (if the applicant is a Senior Manager, the next level of authority must approve).</p> <p>Must also have approval from a member of Executive Management if applicant is requesting study on work time.</p>	Member of Executive Management
Employment Commitment	2 years	4 years
Grade Requirements	Minimum GPA of "2.5" or "Pass" when grades are awarded (per course).	Minimum GPA of "3.0" or "Pass" when grades are awarded (per course).

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OD-DW-POL-100 – EDUCATIONAL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

1. Scope

Grant PUD supports both non-degree related education (courses, licenses, credentials, or certifications directly associated with an individual’s current or desired position) and degree-related education (courses in pursuit of a degree).


2. Policy Statement

As an organization that values innovation and continuous learning, Grant PUD encourages employees to continue their education and further their professional development. The educational reimbursement policy is designed to eliminate barriers to continued professional development, and financially support employees pursuing courses of study. This includes industry, trade or professional credentials, apprenticeships, or licenses which are directly related to present or future job interests within Grant PUD. Trainings, degrees, certifications, licenses and credentials must be obtained via an accredited institution or association.

3. Eligibility

All full time, regular or part time, regular employees are eligible to apply for educational reimbursement and/or loan forgiveness. Other employees with benefits (management and limited assignment bargaining unit) may also be eligible. Approval of educational reimbursement and/or loan forgiveness will be made by a Senior Manager or by any member of Executive Management, depending upon the respective tier identified in Section 6.

Applications for reimbursement must be submitted and approved in accordance with the applicable procedure prior to course registration.

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Reimbursement of tuition cost, including mandatory course fees and associated books and/or manuals, shall be made upon acceptable completion of program as clarified in Section 7 below. Documentation of such supplemental costs and fees must be submitted along with the application. Travel, and other associated costs such as application fees are not covered.

Employees on a performance improvement plan at the time of application for educational reimbursement are ineligible for reimbursement.


Ongoing funding is subject to financial condition of utility & executive team allocation.

4. Reimbursement

The maximum reimbursement per year is up to \$50,000.00 and is based on a tier system (see Section 6). Employees should note that the educational reimbursement amount is first subject to any IRS exclusion and then is subject to withholding and other appropriate deductions and will be reported on the W-2 form as part of the employee's total compensation.

In consideration of the educational reimbursement provided by the employer, the employee shall commit to 2 to 4 years of service (depending on the respective tier identified in Section 6) from the date which Grant PUD Accounts Payable issues the final educational reimbursement. If employment ends (voluntarily or involuntarily) prior to completing the associated time commitment, the employee shall repay Grant PUD the entire amount disbursed (See repayment terms in Section 6). Employee termination due to reduction in force will not require the employee to pay the reimbursement back.

Approval of tuition reimbursement does not constitute a promise of continued employment for any specific period, nor does it change the at-will nature of non-union employment with Grant PUD. Bargaining unit employees remain subject to all provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Effective Date: 9/28/2020	Version: 2 Supersedes: 04/09/2012	Related Documents:
 <h1 style="margin: 0;">DISTRICTWIDE POLICY</h1>		
Approved by: Executive Management		Regulation:
Policy Owner: Thomas Stredwick		Policy Category: Employment, Benefits and Workplace

In certain instances, Executive Management may also approve a percentage of an employee’s time on the job toward coursework completion, allowing the employee to study during part of their workday. This request should be formally made within the educational reimbursement application.


5. Educational Recognition Credit

Employees that have:

1. Completed a course of study or certification, prior to the start of employment at Grant PUD (Only for new recruits that follow the date of this adopted policy and currently have outstanding student loan debt.) OR;
2. Completed a course of study or certification, via Grant PUD’s Tuition Reimbursement program, within the last 4 years of the effective date of this policy AND;
3. Have paid for education not previously covered by this policy during that time AND;
4. Are not currently on a performance improvement plan,


are eligible to apply for a one-time educational recognition credit of up to \$10,000.00. In consideration of the educational recognition credit provided by the employer, the employee shall commit 3 years of service from the date which Grant PUD Accounts Payable issues the reimbursement.

If the individual’s employment ends (voluntarily or involuntarily) prior to completing the associated time commitment, the employee shall repay Grant PUD the entire amount disbursed (see payback terms in Section 6). Employee termination due to reduction in force will not require the employee to pay the reimbursement back.

Effective Date: 9/28/2020	Version: 2 Supersedes: 04/09/2012	Related Documents:
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6. Tier Table


Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Any program that relates to current or desired roles within Grant PUD.	Courses of study backed up with a business case for how they will benefit Grant PUD.	Courses of study which Executive Management has deemed difficult to recruit, develop and/or retain when taking the following factors into consideration:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover frequency and existing vacancies;
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor market factors, staffing patterns within the industry;
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of previous recruitment/retention methods;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific qualifications for a position and relative difficulty in attaining such qualifications 		
Eligible types of credentials: Associate of Arts; Bachelors Degree; Masters Degree; Doctoral Programs; Professional/Trade Certification		
Up to: \$12,000.00 Max/Yr	Tier 1 coverage plus 50% reimbursement for remaining education (Max \$20,000.00/Yr)	Tier 1 coverage plus 90% reimbursement for remaining education (Max 50,000.00/Yr)
Approval Authority: Sr. Manager	Approval Authority: Executive Management Member	
Note: 2 year employment commitment	Note: 3 year employment commitment	Note: 4 year employment commitment
Requires a minimum GPA of "2.0" or "Pass" when grades are awarded (Per course)	Requires a minimum GPA of "2.5" or "Pass" when grades are awarded (Per course)	Requires a minimum GPA of "3.0" or "Pass" when grades are awarded (Per course)
<i>Upon ending employment prior to meeting the 2 year commitment:</i>	<i>Upon ending employment prior to meeting the 3 year commitment:</i>	<i>Upon ending employment prior to meeting the 4 year commitment:</i>
<i>If the outstanding amount to be paid back ranges from 1\$ to \$30,000.00, then the payback will be in the form of a 5 year loan (including the fixed Federal Student Loan interest rate declared at the time the loan is established).</i>		
<i>If the amount to be paid back exceeds \$30,000.00, then the payback will be in the form of a 10 year loan (including the fixed Federal Student Loan interest rate declared at the time the loan is established).</i>		

Effective Date: 9/28/2020	Version: 2 Supersedes: 04/09/2012	Related Documents:
 <h1 style="margin: 0;">DISTRICTWIDE POLICY</h1>		
Approved by: Executive Management		Regulation:
Policy Owner: Thomas Stredwick		Policy Category: Employment, Benefits and Workplace

7. Procedure

Application & Approval:

1. The employee prepares the Educational Reimbursement/Educational Recognition Credit Application form.
2. The employee submits the application to his or her supervisor and/or department manager prior to the employee enrolling in the desired course of study.
3. The supervisor and/or department manager reviews and approves/rejects application.
4. If approved, the supervisor and/or department manager forwards the recommended application to the Senior Manager and/or Executive Management Member (see Section 6).
5. The Senior Manager and/or Executive Management Member reviews and approves/rejects application.
6. If approved, the Senior Manager and/or the Executive Management Member forwards the signed application to Leadership & Organizational Development.
7. Leadership & Organizational Development reviews application for compliance with policy and obtains Executive Management's approval if necessary. If approved, a copy of the approved application will be returned to the employee and the original will be placed in the employee's educational reimbursement file.
8. If applying for Educational Recognition Credit, then please submit the following items with your application form:
 - 1) Statement of Expense AND,
 - 2) Proof of payment

Effective Date: 9/28/2020	Version: 2 Supersedes: 04/09/2012	Related Documents:
 <h2 style="text-align: center;">DISTRICTWIDE POLICY</h2>		
Approved by: Executive Management		Regulation:
Policy Owner: Thomas Stredwick		Policy Category: Employment, Benefits and Workplace

Reimbursement (Upon Course Completion):

1. Employee submits the following items to Leadership & Organizational Development:
 - 1) Statement of Expenses (for the approved term) AND,
 - 2) proof of payment (receipt) AND,
 - 3) copy of grades showing satisfactory completion of course (see Tier Table for additional details) AND,
 - 4) a print-out from the institution’s course catalog or website illustrating the cost and/or cost per credit for the course.

2. Leadership & Organizational Development reviews submitted documentation and approves the invoice for payment if information is complete.

3. Leadership & Organizational Development then follows the established Accounts Payable processes for processing the reimbursement.

8. Review/Revision History

Date	Description
	Effective Date

Attorney review see email
Auditor review _____
Manager review CB

RESOLUTION NO. 8613

A RESOLUTION RESTATING THE DISTRICT'S BENEFITS AND AMENDING
RESOLUTION NO. 7953

Recitals:

1. The District had previously adopted a tuition reimbursement policy revised pursuant to Resolution No. 6569;
2. The District consolidated the tuition reimbursement policy and superseded Resolution No. 6569, into a benefit policy pursuant to Resolution No. 7322, which was subsequently superseded by Resolution No. 7540;
3. The District revised the benefit policy pursuant to Resolution No. 7953 which then became the Management Benefits Policy, although the District has continued to provide benefits not included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement to bargaining unit employees; and
4. The District's General Manager has requested that he be delegated authority to modify the tuition reimbursement policy as he deems to be in the District's best interest subject only to the limitations set forth below.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Commission of Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington that:

Section One: The Tuition Reimbursement Policy attached as Exhibit A is hereby adopted.

Section Two: The General Manager is hereby authorized to modify the District's tuition reimbursement policy from time to time subject to the following limitations:

1. The policy shall at all times be subject to and consistent with the requirements of all applicable laws and regulations.
2. Any proposed changes to the tuition reimbursement policy shall be submitted to the District's Commission and Auditor at least twenty (20) days prior to being put into effect.

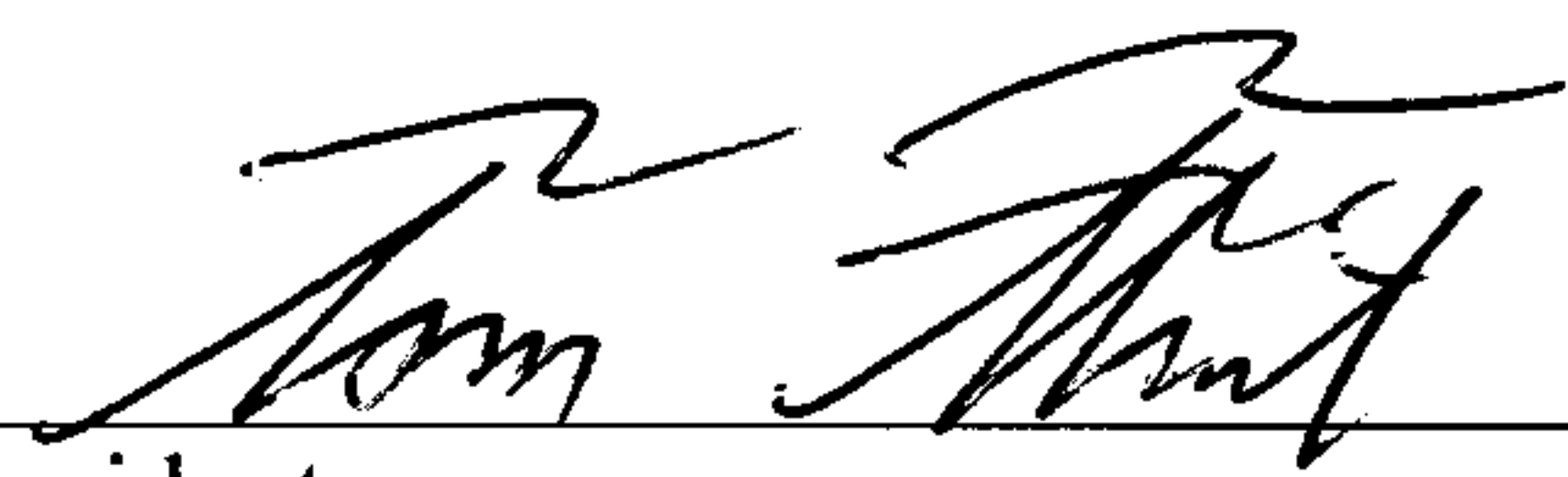
Section Three: The following benefit programs are available to all eligible employees, including Commissioners and Appointees:

1. Retirement Plan – Individuals in eligible positions are required to participate in the Washington State Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). The costs of this program are apportioned between the District and the individual as specified by state law. Employees employed prior to February 1970 may also receive retirement benefits under an Aetna Insurance Company program.

2. Official Travel AD&D - The District provides accidental death and dismemberment insurance coverage of \$150,000 for individuals traveling on official District business. The premium cost is paid entirely by the District
3. Frequent Flyer Miles - All District employees are allowed to retain any Frequent Flyer Miles earned on official travel so long as they have purchased their airline tickets in the most prudent and economical manner.
4. Section 125 Cafeteria Plan - Eligible employees may participate in the District's Flexible Benefits plan during open enrollment at the beginning of each calendar year. This plan provides for eligible employees to set aside a specific amount from their paycheck for un-reimbursed health care expenses or dependent child care for the tax year.

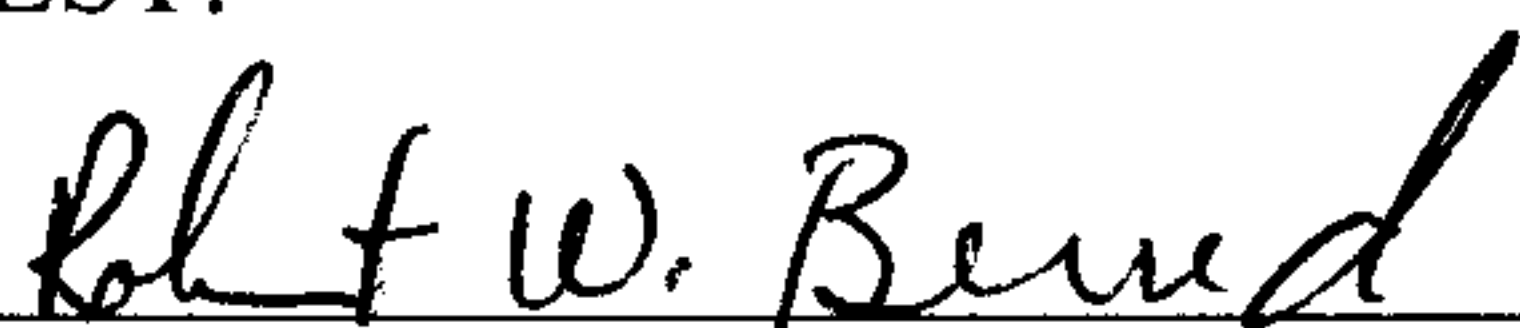
Section 4: Resolution No. 7953 is amended to remove Sections 4, 6c, 9, and 13 from the Management Benefits Policy.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Commission of Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County, Washington, this 9th day of April, 2012.

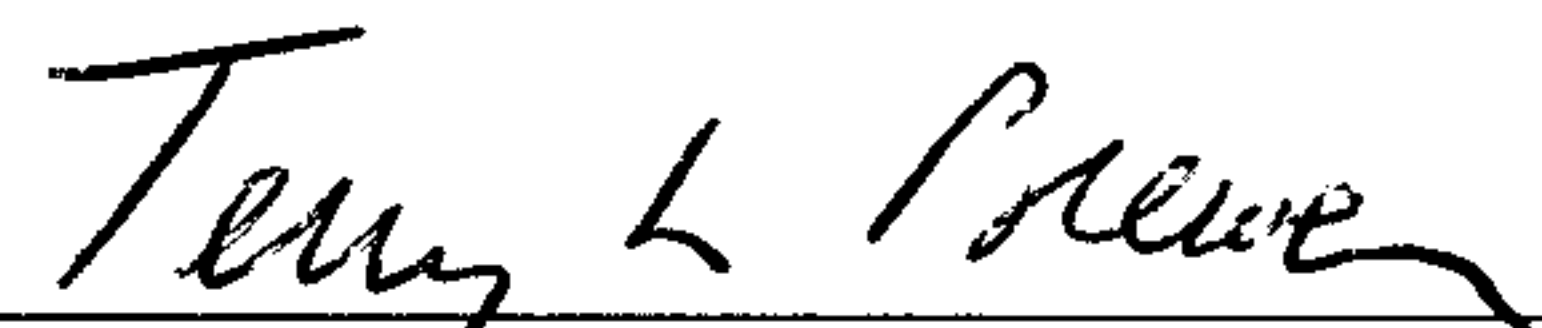


President

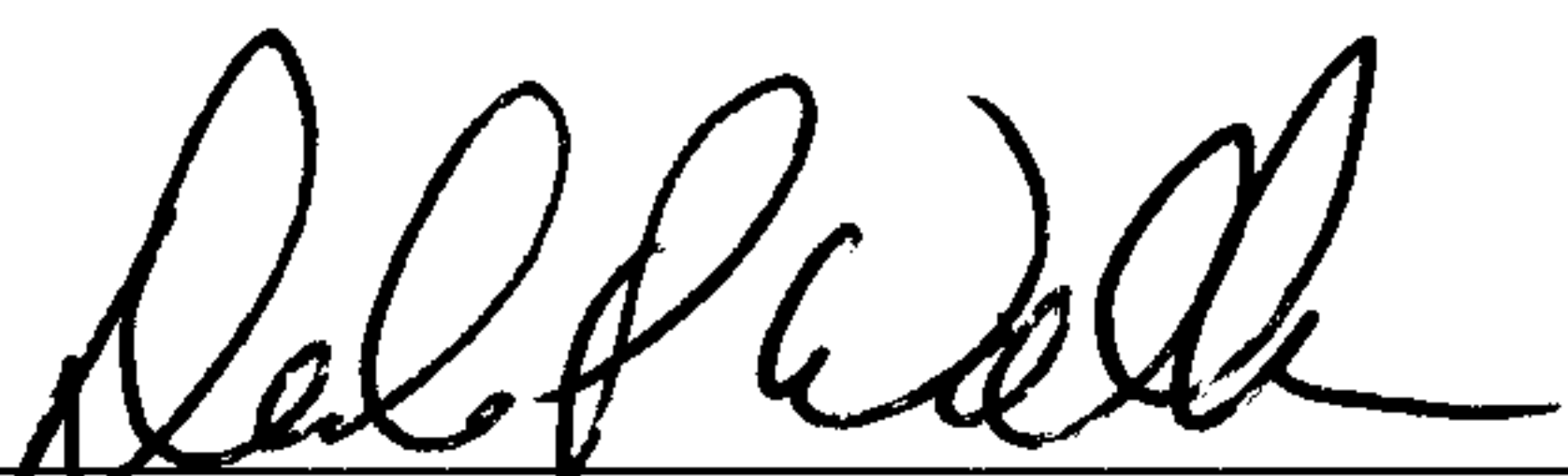
ATTEST:



Secretary



Vice President



Commissioner



Commissioner

EXHIBIT A

Resolution No. 8613
Revised: 04/09/2012¹

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

1.0 Policy

The District encourages employees to continue their education in order to further their professional development. The tuition reimbursement program is sponsored by the District to aid employees who, on their *own* time, are pursuing courses of study which are directly related to present or anticipated job duties and are taken at or sponsored by an approved educational or professional institution.

2.0 Scope

2.1 The District supports two types of programs:

- a. Direct Job Related Education. These are courses that can be directly associated with an individual's current position.
- b. Degree Related Education. An individual may pursue a four-year degree that will benefit the District. On a *limited basis*, the District will consider reimbursement of tuition for post-graduate education.

3.0 Eligibility

- 3.1 All regular full time District employees are eligible to apply for tuition reimbursement, provided that they have completed at least one full year of employment with the District. Other employees with benefits (management and limited assignment bargaining unit) may also be eligible. Applications must be submitted and approved in accordance with the applicable procedure **prior to** course registration.
- 3.2 Reimbursement of tuition cost, including mandatory course fees, will be made by the District upon satisfactory completion of approved courses. Books, travel, and any other costs such as applications to attend the school or graduation are not covered.
- 3.3 Degree programs or coursework must be job-related. "Job-related" means a degree program satisfying the educational requirements for a job to which the employee could reasonably aspire during his/her foreseeable tenure with the District. For individual coursework outside of an approved degree program, "job-related" means coursework that improves functional skills required by the employee's current position. Job relatedness will be determined by those approving the degree program or coursework.

4.0 Reimbursement Amounts

4.1 The maximum reimbursement per year for tuition reimbursement and continuing

education is \$5,000.

- 4.2 For specialized courses that require *several years* of study, the Manager may approve reimbursement in excess of the above amount, as long as the average does not exceed \$5,000 per year. In exceptional circumstances, the Manager may authorize partial tuition reimbursement prior to completion of a course, which lasts over one year. Amounts over \$5,000 per year must have Commission approval.
- 4.3 In consideration for this tuition payment, the employee agrees to continue working for the District for at least one year after the date the course(s) is/are paid. If the individual's employment is terminated (voluntarily or involuntarily) within one year from the date the course(s) is/are paid, then the employee shall repay the District the entire amount that the District has paid the employee for his/her educational assistance during the twelve month period before employment was terminated. Termination due to reduction in force will not disqualify an employee from receiving payment. When it is in the best interest of the District, the Manager can waive or lessen this requirement.

Approval of tuition reimbursement does not constitute a promise of continued employment for any specific period of time, nor does it change the at will nature of non-union employment with the District. Bargaining unit employees remain subject to all provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Randalynn Hovland

From: Mitchell Delabarre
Sent: Friday, March 30, 2012 5:16 PM
To: Randalynn Hovland; Kim Justice
Subject: RE: Resolution-All Benefits

The resolution appears legally sufficient.
Mitch

From: Randalynn Hovland
Sent: Friday, March 30, 2012 5:09 PM
To: Kim Justice; Mitchell Delabarre
Subject: Resolution-All Benefits

The attached will be in the packet for action on April 9. Please provide legal/audit concurrence. Thanks!