

Chapter 8: CONTINUING EDUCATION/TRAINING

The City of St. Charles reserves the right to interpret and deviate from all City policies. Both the City and employee have the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause and/or notice.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

APP: ALL EMPLOYEES

The City, in an effort to advance the skills and professionalism of its staff, encourages employees to pursue both individual and professional development opportunities. The various departments within the City offer periodic in-service training opportunities, as well as outside training offered by professional associations, colleges, and universities. Employee growth and development is key to the success of the City's service delivery and is expected of every employee.

Goals

1. To continually improve the level of service to the City's constituents;
2. To support an efficient, safe, and effective work force;
3. To improve the overall level of motivation and job satisfaction;
4. To enhance the City's ability to respond to turnover with internally trained candidates;
5. To aggressively respond to work place and work force changes in regulations;
6. To promote tolerance for disabilities, minorities, other cultures, and other people that are unjustly disadvantaged by societal norms and precepts.

Objectives

1. To appropriately orient all employees to the City's mission, values, expected behaviors, policies, and practices;
2. Conduct annual career development counseling for all employees;
3. Maintain an inventory of each employee's training history;
4. Create and annually review a career development plan for each employee;
5. Annually provide most full-time employees with a minimum of sixteen (16) hours of training and part-time employees with eight (8) hours.

INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING

APP: ALL EMPLOYEES

Orientation

The most basic function of any training and educational program is to orient employees to the organization's history, mission, values, expected behaviors, policies, and practices. In addition, especially for a public agency, it is important for those employees who communicate directly with the public to possess the special skills necessary to effectively deliver their message. Therefore, the following practices shall be followed with regard to orientation training.

Mentoring Program

The purpose of the mentoring program is to speed up the process of orienting new hires and employees moving from part-time to full-time status and provide them with a key resource during their learning phase, thereby increasing job satisfaction, productivity, and retention. The mentoring program is also designed to encourage knowledge and skill sharing.

Each employee will be assigned a mentor by the Human Resources Department. Mentors are current employees in good standing who have been with the City long enough to be familiar with the organization, may be considered a peer, have volunteered to be a mentor, and have been approved by the respective department director. Mentors may be in the same department/division or in a different department/division, but they will be in a peer position, as opposed to a position level significantly above or below the new employee.

The mentor's responsibilities are as follows:

1. Establish contact with the new employee within forty-eight (48) hours of being assigned and provide introductions, background, etc.
2. Be available for questions, concerns, etc.
3. Meet personally with the new employee at least once a month.
4. Contact the department director or Human Resources if something arises that the mentor does not feel comfortable handling.

Mentors are encouraged to cover the following with the new employee:

1. Building procedures (security, hours, alarms/drills, meal arrangements, building use, etc.).
2. Access to resources (budget and requisition process, equipment use, meeting room scheduling, records management, requests for maintenance, etc.).
3. Upcoming wellness, social, and educational activities (Wellness Team events, participation on teams, LEAD program, association meetings, etc.).
4. Professional development (work experiences, life balance, celebrate successes, introductions to key internal and external contacts, etc.).

Pre-Assignment

During the first month at the City (in addition to normal wage and benefit information), provide the employee with information about:

1. City and department mission statement;
2. City history and organization;
3. Department history and organization;
4. City policies and procedures;
5. Applicable training, i.e. phone/voice mail, etc.

First Two (2) Years of Employment

Within the first two (2) years of employment, employees shall receive any applicable safety training. Until safety training is provided (unless provided by a previous employer), employees shall not be expected to perform any duties for which they have not received proper instruction or training. Training will vary among divisions. Examples of training are lifting techniques, confined space entry, defensive driving, and bloodborne pathogens.

ON-GOING CAREER DEVELOPMENT

APP: ALL EMPLOYEES

In-Service Training

The City must continually train its employees in order to meet ever-changing technologies, reinforce safety practices, enhance and maintain job skills, explain new or revised work rules, explain new laws and regulations, and adapt changes in the delivery of services. The City also provides training regarding personal enhancement. The Human Resources Department distributes a year-long training calendar in fall of each year.

Continuing Education

The City will support continuing education initiated by employees whenever such education is relevant to their duties and to provide qualified internal candidates for future opportunities within the City.

TRAINING NEEDS/RECORDS

APP: ALL EMPLOYEES

Work Standards

Whenever possible, work standards shall be identified and employees tested against those standards. Where the test results are lower than the standard, then training shall be conducted to improve the employee's competence in order to meet the standard.

Annual Review

The annual review of an employee shall include a discussion and notation of their skill level relative to their job duties and possible training that will improve any areas of deficiency.

Individual Training Inventory

An inventory of the training provided to all non-public safety employees shall be maintained by Human Resources. Public safety employee training shall be maintained by police and fire.

SEMINAR/CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

APP: ALL EMPLOYEES

Expenses of attending a seminar/conference may be reimbursed to full-time and part-time employees. This permits attendance at certain job-related seminars and conferences. Eligible employees must have satisfactory work and attendance records. The course(s) taken must be of benefit to the City of St. Charles.

Eligibility Requirements

The following are general eligibility guidelines that will be considered by the department director when reviewing requests to attend seminars or conferences:

1. The seminar(s) or conference(s) selected must be directly related to the employee's present position, or work that he/she may reasonably be expected to perform for the City in the future.
2. All seminar(s) or conference(s) must be budgeted and approved in advance of registration by the employee's supervisor and/or department director. Seminars and conferences with a total cost of over \$300 require a Pre-Approval of Estimated/Actual Costs form (available on iNet).
3. Only employees with a satisfactory work record will be eligible to attend seminars or conferences.

Registration and Reimbursement

The employee must:

1. Complete a Pre-Approval of Estimated/Actual Costs for Seminars/Conferences form (available on iNet) if the estimated total cost (including travel, per diem, etc.) exceeds \$300. A voucher should be submitted directly to the finance department for total expenses \$300 and under. The pre-approval form should be completed at least one (1) month before a one-day seminar and at least three (3) months before a multiple-day conference or seminar. Submit the completed form to employee's supervisor and department director for approval and forward it to the human resources department before attending the seminar(s)/conference(s).
2. Within five (5) days following the seminar or conference, the employee should complete the Summary of Training form (available on iNet) and forward the signed form to the human resources department. This form updates supervisors about the training and also allows human resources to track the number of training hours an employee has accrued.
3. Within five (5) days following the seminar or conference, prepare a Seminar/Conference Reconciliation form (available on iNet) if any reimbursement is required, either to the employee or back to the City from what was advanced prior to the travel. If the reimbursement on the reconciliation form differs from expenses on the pre-approval form by less than ten (10%) percent, the reconciliation form may be submitted directly to accounts payable for processing. If the expenses differ by more than 10%, the form should be submitted to human resources for review and approval prior to processing by accounts payable.

(Please refer to the Travel section of this chapter for details on business travel, required forms and documentation, expenses, and completing the reconciliation form.)

Follow Up

After an employee returns from a seminar, conference or other training, he/she should complete a "Summary of Seminar, Conference, Training, Meeting" form (access forms on the City iNet). This form updates supervisors about the training and also allows Human Resources to track the number of training hours an employee has accrued.

COURSE/TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

APP: ALL FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

The City of St. Charles offers tuition reimbursement, if approved in the annual budget process, for courses conducted by state, public, or private accredited college/universities, adult education centers, and vocational/trade schools. Undergraduate degrees may be earned online at an accredited institution; online master's degrees will not be reimbursed. This permits financial assistance to those employees who wish to pursue a formal course of study directed toward acquiring skills and knowledge directly related to the employee's present position. Attending a state school is strongly encouraged. Eligible employees must have satisfactory work and attendance records and have successfully completed their introductory/probationary period. The course(s) taken must be of benefit to the City of St. Charles. All course work must be done outside of work hours.

Courses taken may or may not lead to a degree, diploma, or certificate. In certain cases, courses not related to an employee's work may be approved when necessary to complete requirements for a planned degree program in a field that has applicability to City business.

Eligibility Requirements

The following eligibility requirements shall govern all requests for tuition reimbursement:

1. The course(s) selected must be directly related to the employee's present position, or work that he/she may reasonably be expected to perform for the City in the future, or in certain cases not directly related to an employee's position when required for a planned degree program in a field that has direct applicability to their position.
2. All course(s) must be approved in advance of registration by the department director and forwarded to Human Resources. Reimbursement for courses must be requested during the budgeting process and approved in the budget for the fiscal year the courses will be reimbursed. Human Resources will administer this policy once approval is obtained by the department director.
3. Eligible employees are those employees who have a satisfactory work record and have completed their introductory/probationary period.

Registration and Reimbursement

Employee Responsibilities:

1. Complete a "Course Application" form (access forms on the City iNet).
2. Submit the completed form to his/her department director for approval and forward it to the Human Resources Department before taking the course(s).
3. Submit a "Tuition Reimbursement for Course" form (access forms on the City iNet) and a "Voucher/Authorization for Payment" form (access forms on the City iNet) to his/her department director for approval and then to Human Resources once the course(s) is completed.
4. Be actively employed by the City at the time of course completion.

Reimbursement Limits

An employee will be reimbursed for actual tuition and registration fees only, up to a maximum of \$4,000 per fiscal year. Books will not be reimbursed. If an undergraduate student receives a grade of C or better, or a "pass" in a pass/fail course, 100 percent (100%) of the cost will be reimbursed. If a graduate student receives a grade of B or better, 100 percent (100%) of the cost will be reimbursed.

Courses are eligible for reimbursement in the fiscal year in which the course ends. Employees who are receiving grants, scholarships or veterans' benefits are eligible to be reimbursed, but only to the extent that the employee's course costs are not covered by these external grants. Only those courses beginning after a

new employee's introductory/probationary period ends will be considered for reimbursement. For non-exempt employees, only those courses requiring attendance during off-work hours will be considered for reimbursement.

Reimbursement Upon Termination

If the employee leaves the City within two (2) years of completing courses for which the City has paid, the City's share of costs in the twenty-four (24) months preceding termination will be deducted from the final payment of salary, wages, bonuses, or accrued vacation. If the amount of the final payment is not sufficient to cover costs, the individual will be required to reimburse the City for the amount due at the time of termination.

EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

*APP: ALL EMPLOYEES
UNLESS OTHERWISE
STIPULATED IN A
COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING AGREEMENT*

The City, in an effort to advance the training and professionalism of its staff, authorizes attendance at certain job-related seminars/conferences requiring travel outside the City.

The objectives of this policy are to allow travel arrangements that conserve funds, provide uniform treatment for all employees, allow employees to carry out functions of their positions that require or benefit from such travel, and obtain appropriate documentation to justify travel expenditures.

Same Day Travel

Pre-Approval Required

Any employee contemplating attendance at a conference or seminar that involves travel must first discuss with and obtain approval from his/her immediate supervisor and/or department director at least one month before a one-day seminar and adhere to the seminar/conference attendance policy in this chapter. For one-day travel with costs up to \$300, costs may be charged to a City credit card or submitted directly to accounts payable for payment and reimbursement. For one-day travel with costs over \$300, use the Pre-Approval of Estimated/Actual Costs for Seminars/ Conferences form ([available on iNet](#)).

Payment of Travel and Transportation Expenses

Privately owned vehicles used for travel on City business are subject to the City's Personal Vehicle Use Policy in Chapter 10. Mileage reimbursement shall be at the rate determined by the IRS.

If the travel occurs on a regularly scheduled work day, the miles the employee would have traveled to and from home and work each day should be deducted from the total miles submitted for reimbursement.

Employees should exercise care by selecting travel options (parking, routes, times, etc.) that offer the most economical rates.

Mileage, tolls, parking, and similar travel expenses will be reimbursed following the travel and must be submitted within five (5) days of the travel in one of the following ways:

- If no other travel costs (tolls, parking, etc.) will be submitted for reimbursement at the same time, mileage may be entered on the employee's time sheet by entering the number of miles in the

appropriate row and include the date of travel, mileage calculation, location to/from, and a brief explanation of the reason for the travel (seminar, travel between City buildings, etc.) in the required Notes box.

- Transportation expenses of \$30 or less may be reimbursed through petty cash.
- Expenses over \$30 must be submitted on a voucher or through the requisition system directly to accounts payable to issue a check.
- If a travel reconciliation form is required, (see [Travel Follow-Up](#)) all travel expenses should be included on the form.

When two (2) or more employees travel in the same vehicle, reimbursement shall be made to the owner of a private car only. The passenger shall not be reimbursed for mileage but only for any direct expenses en route. City staff who receive a monthly car allowance will be reimbursed for the miles driven over 75 miles, round trip, to seminars, conferences, training, or other work related events.

Payment for Meals

A per diem for a full day or specific meals must be received prior to leaving for the conference. Lunch per diem will be reimbursed for a full day seminar that falls within the employee's normal work day and does not include lunch. Additional meal per diems will be reimbursed for a full day seminar if the meals are not included and travel is required in excess of two (2) hours each way.

Payment of Travel Time for Non-exempt (Hourly) Employees

Training, conferences, and seminars attended during regular working hours constitute work time and will be compensated as such, according to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employees will be compensated at their normal rate of pay.

An employee who must drive to another city and return on the same day will be paid for time spent driving above and beyond the employee's normal commuter time. Also, the employee's usual meal periods will be deducted from hours worked. Non-exempt hourly employees who travel as a passenger outside of their regular work time will not be compensated unless they are required to perform work while a passenger.

After-hours training will not be compensated, according to the Fair Labor Standards Act, if attendance is outside normal working hours, is voluntary, is not directly related to the employee's current job, and the employee does not do any productive work related to his or her job during the program.

Overnight Travel Pre-Approval Required

Any employee contemplating attendance at a conference or seminar that involves travel must first discuss with and obtain approval from his/her immediate supervisor and department director through the Pre-Approval of Estimated/Actual Costs for Seminars/Conferences form and adhere to the seminar/conference attendance policy ([See Seminar/Conference Attendance](#)). Conference attendance and travel are authorized as funds and conditions permit through the budget process. Pre-approval allows supervisors and department directors to ensure appropriate funds will be available ahead of time for all related expenses or to make adjustments as needed.

- Pre-approval must be completed at least one (1) month before a one-day seminar and at least three (3) months before a multiple-day seminar.
- The pre-approval form must include attached documentation to support all expenses and calculations included on the pre-approval form.
- All non-refundable reservations must be pre-approved before they are booked; however, refundable expenses or holds prior to pre-approval are allowed.
- The original, completed pre-approval packet is forwarded to the Human Resources office for review. Once approved, the original pre-approval form is placed in the employee's personnel file. A copy of the pre-approval form and original packet is then forwarded back to the employee.
- A copy of the completed, approved, and signed pre-approval form must be attached to all vouchers or requests for payment run through the City's accounts payable system.
- An employee is expected to use the same good judgment in regard to costs as he/she would if traveling at his/her own expense.
- Employees should provide their supervisor with a copy of their itinerary before leaving on business travel.

Pre-Travel Payment of Expenses

Most travel expenses, including registration, per diems, and airfare, must be pre-paid prior to leaving for the conference.

Employees should use a City credit card, instead of their personal card, as the primary method of travel expense payment, as the City receives benefits from the charges. If the traveling employee was not issued a City credit card in his/her name, he/she may use the department director's credit card or a general use card available in the Account Payable office. Department directors may approve exceptions to allow business travel charges on personal credit cards. As with all travel expenses exceeding \$300, a copy of the pre-approval packet along with any additional backup materials or receipts must be attached to the credit card statement.

All pre-approved meal per diem expenses must be requested and received by the employee traveling prior to leaving for the seminar or conference. Meal per diem expenses in excess of \$30 must be requested through the City's accounts payable system by noon on Wednesday for the check to be disbursed on Friday. Per diem expenses \$30 and under may be requested through petty cash. As with all travel expenses exceeding \$300, a copy of the pre-approval packet along with any additional backup materials or receipts must be attached to the request.

Payment of Travel Time for Non-exempt (Hourly) Employees

For overnight travel, the employee will be paid for the corresponding normal work hours on regular and non-work days, less usual meal periods. For example, if the employee's normal work day is 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with a half hour lunch and the employee will be traveling to a conference on a Sunday, the employee will be paid for travel, conference attendance, and work performed during the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, along with payment for his or her regular work hours on the weekdays of the conference.

An employee's normal work week may be temporarily changed to an alternate schedule to accommodate for travel time and conference attendance.

In the case of travel across time zones, actual time must be counted, and not the artificial time indicated by the clock changes.

Travel Follow-Up

A Seminar/Conference Reconciliation Form (available on iNet) must be completed within five (5) working days after returning from the trip if (1) actual expenses differ from what was detailed on the pre-approval form and/or (2) if actual expenses differ from what was pre-paid. This reconciliation form will detail the pre-approved estimated costs versus the actual costs and serve as a voucher either for the employee to request reimbursement from the City for costs incurred but not pre-paid or for the employee to reimburse the City for expenses pre-paid but not incurred. Any unused portion of the travel advance over the amount of the actual trip expense is to be refunded at that time. If actual expenses exceed the travel advance, they will be paid to the employee after the expense report has been reviewed and approved. Receipts for all expenses other than meals must be attached to the reconciliation form when submitted, as well as a copy of the pre-approval packet. The reconciliation form with supporting documentation may be sent directly to accounts payable once it has been reviewed and approved by the immediate supervisor and department director. Approval of the reconciliation form by the director of human resources will be required only if amounts for reimbursement on the reconciliation form exceed ten (10%) percent of the pre-approved estimate.

Travel and Transportation Guidelines

Transportation

The least expensive mode of transportation should be selected. If an employee chooses a more expensive mode, the City will only reimburse up to the equivalent of the least expensive mode. The City will not reimburse for car rentals. Exceptions must be detailed in the pre-approval packet and authorized by the department director.

Travel to and from airports, hotels, and home must be by the most cost-efficient means. If a privately owned vehicle is used, costs for mileage and parking must not exceed the cost of an airport shuttle or taxi.

Air Travel

Air travel must be scheduled at least three (3) months in advance of a conference or as soon as reasonably practical. The least expensive direct flight should be selected and is limited to coach or economy fares. Travel times should be reasonable. If you choose to use a particular airline you must reimburse the City for the difference between that flight and the least expensive flight available.

Lodging Guidelines

An employee is expected to make hotel/motel reservations well in advance whenever possible and request government employee discounts.

You may stay at the hotel where the conference is held or you may stay at a hotel of your choice if the cost does not exceed that of the conference hotel.

Sharing of rooms is not required.

Reimbursement for lodging shall be limited to the minimum number of nights required to conduct the assigned City business. If an employee chooses to arrive earlier or stay later, the additional lodging and other related expenses are his/her personal responsibility and he/she should request separate bills for those personal expenses.

A hotel room will not be covered by the City if the conference is within two (2) hours of normal travel time from home or the City or the cost of paying travel time for non-exempt employees is equal to or less than the cost of lodging. Exceptions must be detailed in the pre-approval packet and authorized by the department director.

For the safety of all employees who stay overnight in a hotel for City business, he/she will be required to stay in a facility that is equipped with an automatic sprinkler system throughout the building.

Meal Allowances

Meals are reimbursed at the per diem amount as established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) (see <http://www.gsa.gov>) and must be reimbursed before an employee leaves for the conference, seminar, or training.

Employees do not receive per diem reimbursement for meals already included with the conference, seminar, or training or added onto the registration fee.

Allowances for partial days or days when one or two meals are provided will be pro-rated based upon the number of meals required away from home and reimbursed at the individual breakfast, lunch, and dinner meal amounts as established by the GSA and found on their website at <http://www.gsa.gov>. Per diems for first and last days of travel will be reimbursed at 75% as established by the GSA and found on their website at <http://www.gsa.gov>.

A City credit card may not be used to pay for meals, snacks, beverages, or any food products.

Miscellaneous Travel Expenses

The full day per diem amount as established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) (see <http://www.gsa.gov>) includes a set amount for incidental expenses such as tips. If you will not using the full day per diem amount and are instead requesting individual meal reimbursements, one incidental expense amount may be added to the total for each day. Additional baggage charges and personal services (laundry, room service, laundry, etc.) will not be reimbursed.

Accompaniment by Family Members

The City does not encourage family members to accompany the employee on a business related trip; however, there is no objection if their presence does not interfere with the employee carrying out his or her duties, responsibilities, and purpose for the trip. Family members travel at their own expense and risk. All costs and expenses attributable to the family member(s) must be paid out of the employee's personal funds. No City funds will be expended or advanced for costs incurred by a family member. If an employee's family member shares lodging, the City will pay or reimburse only for the single occupancy rate.

Conduct

Every employee is a representative of the City of St. Charles at work-related conferences, seminars, training, and events and as such is expected to represent the City with professionalism, courtesy, and respect. Any applicable work policies should be adhered to while attending a seminar, conference, or event as a City employee.

CREDIT CARDS USAGE

APP: ALL DEPARTMENTS

Credit cards cannot be used for personal use. The City must previously approve all travel and seminar expenses charged to credit cards. Credit cards should not be used for per diem rates. Per diem travel allocations should be issued to the employee prior to the conference or seminar in the form of an accounts payable voucher or petty cash form. Supporting documents must be kept for all credit card purchases.

LEAD

APP: ALL EMPLOYEES

LEAD is a collaborative learning initiative developed by the cities of Batavia, Elgin, and St. Charles to provide opportunities for personal and professional development for their employees to help fulfill its mission: developing leaders through collaborative learning to build a stronger community.

LEAD understands that leadership comes from all levels of the organization and extends throughout the community. At its core, LEAD's focus is to build strong leaders at every level in the organization in order to build a stronger community through networking with other communities and addressing topics that strengthen us as individuals and leaders.

LEAD was developed around a number of core concepts:

- Improving Relationships
- Modeling Behaviors
- Personal Development = Leader Development
- Strengthening Culture
- Succession Planning
- Creating a Learning Culture
- Personal and Professional Development
- Learning, NOT Training(*)

* This is a key characteristic of LEAD. It is a transfer of knowledge and networking opportunity enabling our attendees to supplement institutional and organizational training with continuous self-development to become better people and better leaders. Self-development is intrinsically linked to self-awareness. By being aware of ourselves, including our traits, feelings, and behaviors, we will become the agile and adaptive individuals that influence others in a positive manner in our work and community environments.

LEAD provides a variety of learning opportunities for its participants. The two (2) main components are annually represented by:

1. Two (2) professional speaker events. These are workshops (typically three (3) hours) sometimes followed by an informal lunch with the speaker. LEAD speaker events feature professional speakers whose leadership sessions are meant to be engaging, informative, and thought-provoking. The LEAD Curriculum Planning Team works throughout the year to screen potential speaker candidates from across the nation, ensuring we deliver relevant content to our attendees.
2. Three (3) leadership book clubs. The leadership book club presents an opportunity for municipal colleagues to discuss leadership concepts presented in a featured book in an informal small group over breakfast. LEAD book clubs have proven to be a very popular forum for informal discussion, relationship-building, and idea sharing.

The program is administered by a LEAD coordinator who is an independent contractor and is paid by each of the three (3) participating communities. An executive committee oversees the program, program budget, and provides administrative direction. The director of human resources is the City of St. Charles' representative on this committee. A curriculum committee coordinates the annual schedule of programs, including speakers, topics, and times. Three (3) representatives from St. Charles sit on this committee. The senior administrative assistant in the human resources department assists the LEAD program coordinator as needed.

The program is open to all regularly scheduled part- and full-time employees, and attendance is voluntary. Employees are asked to communicate with their supervisors prior to signing up for events so that shifts may be covered appropriately. It is highly recommended for all supervisors to attend as they are able.

The City of St. Charles values LEAD as an important educational opportunity and personal development program available to all employees to support leaders at all levels within our organization.