



Workforce Development Program Policy

The Workforce Development Program (WFD) is a partnership between the City of Akron (City) and Stark State College (SSC), whereby employees may have access to education on a tuition free basis based on the elements of the program contained within this policy. Stark State College will guarantee the City of Akron a total of 225 tuition free credit hours to be distributed through a Guaranteed Seat Model to eligible classified employees over the course of the academic year. In addition, classified and unclassified employees and IRS-qualified dependents (QD) of eligible city employees may apply for tuition free education through a seat-available or Open Seat Model as defined in this policy.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this program is to support employees and their qualified dependents who desire to attend classes at Stark State College and who meet the eligibility requirements as set forth in this policy. Further, this program is intended to encourage personal and professional development for active employees and their IRS-qualified dependents. This program is not tuition reimbursement and is not applicable to attendance at any other college or university other than Stark State College.

II. ELIGIBILITY

A) Active, Classified Employees

- 1) Must be in good standing.
 1. Good standing is defined as no disciplinary action in the 12 months prior to application.
- 2) Must have completed all City-mandated training, if applicable
- 3) Courses cannot be scheduled or taken during the employees normally scheduled work hours.
- 4) Cannot be on an unpaid leave of absence, unauthorized leave of absence or injury leave throughout the period for which the tuition assistance has been approved.
- 5) Can apply for the Guaranteed Seat or Open-Seat Models

B) Active, Unclassified Employees

- 1) Must be in good standing.
 1. Good standing is defined as no disciplinary action in the 12 months prior to application.
- 2) Must have completed all City-mandated training, if applicable
- 3) Courses cannot be scheduled or taken during the employees normally scheduled work hours.
- 4) Cannot be on an unpaid leave of absence, unauthorized leave of absence or



injury leave throughout the period for which the tuition assistance has been approved.

5) Can apply for the Open-Seat Model only.

C) IRS-Qualified Dependents of Active Employees

- 1) Must be seeking a certificate and/or degree.
- 2) City employee must meet all eligibility criteria listed previously for dependent to be eligible.
- 3) Can apply for the Open-Seat model only.

III. APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS

A) Employees interested in enrolling in the City's Workforce Development Program through Stark State College must complete and return the appropriate Applicant Intake Form before each semester's due dates.

- 1) Forms may be found on the Training & Leadership Development page under the Human Resources Section of the City Intranet.
- 2) Forms may be submitted to CityWorkforceDevelopment@akronohio.gov or turned into the Department of Human Resources

**Department of Human Resources
Leadership Development
City of Akron
166 South High Street,
Room 703
Akron, Ohio 44308**

B) Guaranteed Seat Model

- 1) The Department of Human Resources will allocate approximately one-third of the 225 tuition free credit hours to each semester with adjustments due to employee interest.
- 2) Classified employees must complete and turn in the Guaranteed Seat Model Applicant Intake Form to the Department of Human Resources by the due date for each semester they wish to receive credit hours under the model.
- 3) Approval of credit hours will be prioritized based upon the Course, Degree or Certificate's benefit to job related duties and then awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.
 1. The Course is necessary for a job-related degree or certificate in which the employee has already enrolled.
 2. The Course/Degree/Certificate develops knowledge or skills that will improve the employee's performance of current job duties.
 3. The Course/Degree/Certificate develops knowledge or skills for potential future positions in the employee's present career ladder.
- 4) Any classified employee is limited to no more than four (4) guaranteed credit hours per semester; not to exceed twelve (12) guaranteed credit hours per



academic year.

- 5) To qualify for future courses, employee must present proof of satisfactory completion of prior courses provided under the WFD program.
- 6) The Director of Human Resources has the authority to make changes to the selection process in order to maximize the benefit to the City.

C) Open-Seat Model

- 1) Applicants for the Guaranteed Seat Model will automatically be considered for the Open Seat Model and do not have to turn in an additional application for the semester.
- 2) Classified and Unclassified Employees and Qualified Dependents must complete and turn in the Open Seat Model Applicant Intake Form to the Department of Human Resources by the due date for each semester they wish to attend.
- 3) Available seats under the Open Seat Model are determined by SSC two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester.
- 4) Employees and QD may register for any available courses under the open seat model up to the full course load determined by SSC.
- 5) Classes do not have to be job related.
- 6) Seats are not guaranteed.
- 7) Program participants may only register for classes under the Open Seat Model within the two weeks prior to classes beginning.

IV. FEES AND OTHER COSTS

- A) This program covers tuition costs only, which are made up of the Instructional and General fees. Any additional fees, books, and other miscellaneous costs will be the responsibility of the employee and/or IRS-qualified dependent. Potential fees can be viewed on the Stark State College website at: www.starkstate.edu.
- B) Eligible employees and QD who receive assistance from outside sources (scholarships, grants, military discounts, union discount, fellowships, and other stipends) are eligible for the tuition assistance after federal aid or other tuition awards are applied.
- C) The following additional fees are effective with Stark State College as of August 1, 2019, and are subject to change (please review potential fees as noted above on Stark State College website, for current information):
 - 1) Required Fees
 1. Processing fee (one-time charge only): \$95
 2. Maintenance and campus security fee: \$35/semester
 - per individual semester, four or more hours
 - 2) Other Fees as determined by Stark State College
- D) Employees and QD who do not receive approval from the Department of Human Resources to register for guaranteed credit hours classes, or who



register for classes outside of the two-week window for the Open Seat Model, may be held fully responsible for tuition costs.

V. ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCESS

Once the Department of Human Resources has verified an employee's selection and approval or disapproval for the WFD program with Stark State College, the employee or QD will be notified and advised of the "next steps" to enroll, register for classes and pay applicable fees from Stark State College.

Special Note: If you qualify for a federal Pell Grant award, please contact Stark State College - Akron's Gateway Student Services FIRST before enrolling in the City's WFD program. They are located at 360 Perkins St. or can be contacted at 330-494-6170, ext. 4670 to determine if you need to participate in the City's WFD program.

VI. WITHDRAWAL/DROP CLASSES

Participants in the Workforce Development Program, who drop or withdraw from a course, must complete the drop or withdrawal procedures as outlined by Stark State College. If you withdraw from the course after the first week of class, your fees and course materials **will not** be fully refundable. Additionally, withdrawing after the semester begins may impact your eligibility for future participation in the City of Akron's Workforce Development Program. Eligibility would resume after a 12-month postponement of participation from the program.

VII. MINIMUM GRADE REQUIREMENT

To qualify for the WFD program in subsequent semesters, a minimum of a 2.0 grade point average must be achieved each semester. Any course with an "F" grade may result in a warning or probation. Failure to meet these minimum requirements will result in an employee probation period up to a 12-month postponement of participation from the program.

For additional information, contact the Department of Human Resources Leadership Development team at **330-375-2704** or email CityWorkforceDevelopment@akronohio.gov.