

City of St. John's Corporate and Operational Policy Manual

Policy Title: Employee Training and Learning Policy	Policy #: 03-13-01
Last Revision Date: April 9, 2025	Policy Section: Human Resources> Education and Training
Policy Sponsor: Deputy City Manager, Finance and Administration	

1. Policy Statement

The City of St. John's recognizes the importance of a skilled and educated workforce. We need to support Employees to achieve the highest organizational and individual performance; and create a culture that values Training, Learning, and continuous improvement.

The City is committed to providing Employees with access to Training and Learning opportunities that enable a safe work environment and meet the current and emerging needs of the organization with a goal of providing excellent service to our residents and customers.

This policy details the City's position on Training and Learning and the funding mechanisms used for activities such as:

- Training that is specified in a job description; required due to the nature of the work; governed by the collective agreement, legislation, occupational health and safety regulations, and/or standards, etc.;
- Training identified and planned by the organization to advance corporate strategic directions; and/or
- Learning for professional development and performance.

2. Definitions

"Department Head" means all Deputy City Managers (DCMs) and the City Manager or their designate.

“Employee” means any person employed by the City of St. John’s as a permanent, term, part-time, casual, contract, seasonal, temporary, or student worker.

“Permanent Employee” means an Employee who is actively working for the City of St. John’s in a permanent position or attached to a permanent position, that is, full-time permanent, part-time permanent, or seasonal permanent.

“Training” means activity that provides required skills and/or required knowledge which applies to present job duties. Training is not discretionary. It is mandated by the organization and meets requirements specified in a job description, legislation, collective agreements, occupational health and safety regulations and/or government standards, etc.

Reasons for Training may include:

- a) occupational health and safety training that is mandated by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through Workplace NL such as: confined space entry, traffic control, fall protection, etc.;
- b) job-specific occupational health and safety training that is required as part of one’s job to perform tasks safely such as: forklift, overhead crane and rigging, scaffolding, etc.; and/or
- c) corporate training that is linked to the City’s overall strategic directions, goals, and core values such as: respectful workplace, continuous improvement, etc.

“Learning” means activity that enhances skills or competencies that have application to present duties or performance, and/or to maintain a designation for a specialized field, trade or profession, or provide opportunity for personal growth. Learning may be driven by the Employee or by a need to improve performance. It may include knowledge or skills gained through post-secondary courses, conferences, webinars, seminars, and/or informal means.

Reasons for Learning may include:

- a) requirements to maintain professional designations, for example, Professional Engineers (PENG), Chartered Professionals in Human Resources (CPHR), Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA), etc.;

- b) courses towards a post-secondary college diploma or university degree; and/or
- c) to update or advance professional knowledge and/or skills through workshops, conferences, seminars, webinars, etc.

3. Policy Requirements

3.1 Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide the application of this policy:

- a) We commit to providing an environment where Training and Learning are valued;
- b) Investment in effective Training and Learning advances strategic directions;
- c) We commit to providing Training and Learning in a fiscally responsible manner;
- d) Learning is a shared responsibility between the City and its Employees;
- e) We will share our Learning with others;
- f) This policy shall take precedence over any existing policies and shall be read in accordance with applicable legislation. Any Training or Learning provisions in current collective agreements of the City of St. John's shall supersede the relevant provisions found herein.

3.2 General Policy Requirements for Training and Learning

- a) All Training and Learning shall conform to procurement legislation and policy.
- b)** The City may consider opportunities to arrange and organize Training and Learning with partners so that costs are minimized and resources maximized.
- b)c)** The City will use its online learning system to make Training and Learning available and will use this tool where possible to minimize Training and Learning costs.

3.2.1 Policy Requirements for Training

- a) Managers shall plan annually for their Training needs and identify Training for budgeting purposes.
- b) Training does not require an Employee to complete an application

form.

3.2.2 Policy Requirements for Learning

- a) All Learning shall consider the City's overall strategy and goals, departmental priorities and performance, and/or individual Employee professional development.
- b) Learning requires completion of an application and appropriate approval as outlined in the procedures (link to procedures). In situations where Learning is a credit course initiated by the Employee, Section 3.3 of this policy applies.
- c) Employees shall be actively working at the time of application and completion of Learning.
- d) Learning shall be subject to budgetary review and operational and/or organizational need.
- e) The City reserves the right to impose budgetary limits to ensure equitable and fair distribution of funds.

3.3 Learning through Tuition Reimbursement (credit courses through tuition reimbursement)

- a) The City recognizes the importance of Learning through post-secondary education and offers tuition reimbursement to eligible Employees who are pursuing courses;
- b) Funding for tuition reimbursement shall be open to all Permanent Employees who are past their probationary period and have worked a minimum of 12 cumulative months.
- c) Tuition reimbursement shall be cost-shared between the City and the Employee;
- d) The City will consider reimbursing 50 percent of tuition fees per course per Employee per semester for up to a maximum of \$1,500 (Canadian dollars before taxes) per calendar year;

3.3.1 Tuition Reimbursement Consideration for Approval

- a) Funding preference may be given to first-time eligible applicants;
- b) The City may consider tuition reimbursement for courses towards one post-secondary program during a Permanent Employee's career unless it is determined, at the sole discretion of the Department Head, that exceptional circumstances exist;
- c) The City shall not reimburse for any associated fees including books, materials, application fees, student union fees, recreation fees, semester fees, exam fees, etc.;

- d) A blanket approval for funding is not available for a full degree or diploma program; approvals shall be made on a course-by-course basis;
- e) Approval and funding for tuition reimbursement shall be managed by Organizational Performance and Strategy (OPS) Division;
- f) Permanent Employees shall be responsible for enrolling and paying up front for their courses and shall provide documentation to the City for consideration of tuition reimbursement. Enrollment does not guarantee approval.

3.3.2 Conditions for Tuition Reimbursement

- a) Requests for tuition reimbursement shall be initiated by the Permanent Employee;
- b) Permanent Employees completing post-secondary courses shall do so on their own time;
- c) The Learning requested shall be consistent with the career goals related to the Permanent Employee's current position or upon approval by the City, for future career goals;
- d) Learning through tuition reimbursement shall be delivered through an accredited educational institution or organization. Eligible courses include post-secondary credit courses through colleges and universities; accreditations; and specializations related to vocations and/or professional designations. Such courses require a formal evaluation and/or testing component;
- e) The Permanent Employee shall disclose funding from other sources, if applicable. The City shall not provide tuition reimbursement if the Permanent Employee is receiving reimbursement from another source such as grants, scholarships, or other governmental funds;
- f) If the course requested is available at a local public, post-secondary institution, but is being completed through an institution outside of the province, the Permanent Employee shall receive tuition reimbursement based on the fee structure at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) and College of the North Atlantic (CNA), as per Section 3.3(d);
- g) Permanent Employees shall provide proof of successful completion within thirty days of the course end date.
- h) If the Permanent Employee is unsuccessful in the course, they shall reimburse the City in full within six months unless it is determined, at the discretion of the Department Head and Director of Human Resources, that exceptional circumstances exist and an extension may be granted.

4. Application

This policy applies to all Employees as it relates to Training. Learning applies to Permanent Employees only.

Requests for Learning from the Office of the City Internal Auditor shall be reviewed and approved by the Audit Standing Committee and funded through that Office's Divisional Budget.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Department Heads are responsible for:

- a) supporting the Employee Training and Learning Policy, including allocation of funds to meet the annual Training and Learning needs of the organization;
- b) identifying corporate Training and Learning needs;
- c) ensuring managers plan annually for their Training needs;
- d) ensuring managers identify and recommend Learning that supports the City's strategic directions, goals, departmental priorities, and/or individual Employee professional development.

5.2 Managers are responsible for:

- a) ensuring Training needs are planned for and proper authorization and budget approval have been received;
- b) valuing Employee Training and Learning as an essential part of building a skilled, well-trained, and professional workforce;
- c) using the Corporate Strategic Plan, legislative requirements, core values, and staffing plans to identify and plan for current and future departmental Training and Learning needs;
- d) ensuring the investment in Training and Learning is benefiting their Employees and the organization;
- e) engaging in conversation with Employees about their Training or Learning.

5.3 Employees are responsible for:

- a) participating in Training as required for their positions as specified in a job description; as required due to the nature of the work; or governed by the collective agreement, legislation, or occupational health and safety standards, regulations, etc.;
- b) actively identifying their Learning needs and bringing these to the attention of their supervisor and managing their own professional development plans;
- c) discussing with, and seeking support from, their manager regarding their Learning to determine suitability;
- d) ensuring they complete the necessary application for Learning and not commit themselves to any Learning activity without prior agreement from their supervisor and appropriate approval as outlined in the procedures (if the Employee is applying for funding). For requests for tuition reimbursement, Section 3.3.1(f) also applies.

5.4 The Organizational Performance and Strategy Division is responsible for:

- a) working with departments, in consultation with Human Resources, to assess, plan, and budget for Training and Learning that advances strategic directions;
- b) providing support, advice, and recommendations to departments in identifying and planning Training and Learning opportunities;
- c) reviewing and assessing applications to ensure they are consistent with the policy, the City's overall strategy and goals, departmental priorities, and budget availability;
- d) reviewing and assessing applications to ensure they meet the Learning objectives of the Employee and that they support performance and growth;
- e) reviewing, amending, and recommending changes to the Employee Training and Learning policy, as necessary, to continue to meet the City's objectives; and
- f) communicating the policy and process to Employees.

5.5 Human Resources is responsible for:

- a) maintaining Employee records of Training;

- b) planning for and funding occupational health and safety job-specific and regulatory Training.

6. References

- Guidelines for Training and Learning

7. Approval

- Policy Sponsor: Deputy City Manager, Finance and Administration
- Policy Writer: Manager, Organizational Performance and Strategy
- Date of Approval from
 - Corporate Policy Committee: June 11, 2019
 - Senior Executive Committee: October 25, 2019
 - Committee of the Whole: October 30, 2019
- Date of Approval from Council: November 12, 2019

8. Monitoring and Contravention

The monitoring of this policy shall be done as per the responsibilities outlined in Section 5 of this policy.

Any contravention of the policy may be brought to the attention of the DCM, Finance and Administration; Department of Human Resources; the Office of the City Solicitor; and/or the City Manager for further investigation and potential follow up disciplinary or legal action, up to and including dismissal.

9. Review Date

The recommended time period is three to five years and to be in line with any updates to the Corporate Strategic Plan, where possible.