



Workforce Development Program Policy

The Workforce Development Program (WDP) 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 among qualifying 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.
 - (a) 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 225 Guaranteed Credit Hours and/ or Open-Seat models

B) Active, Unclassified Employees

- 1) Must be in good standing.
 - (a) 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 in order for dependent to be eligible
 - 3) Can apply for the Open-Seat model only

III. SELECTION PROCESS

- A) 225 Guaranteed Credit Hours
 - 1) Priority of credit hours will go first to a job related course
 - (a) Related to job duties currently being performed by the employee
 - (b) Related to job duties that will be performed by the employee, consistent with the City's program objectives
 - (c) Taken by the employee to reinforce basic knowledge, or to develop skills that are a required part of the employee's current job duties
 - (d) Provides additional knowledge or skills needed by the employee to meet changes in the City's programs
 - (e) Teaches knowledge or skills related to a position in the present career ladder of the employee at the time class is taken
 - 2) 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.
 - 3) The Director of Human Resources has the authority to make changes to the selection process in order to maximize the benefit to the City.
- B) Open-Seat Model
 - 1) Classes do not have to be job related
 - 2) Seats are not guaranteed
 - 3) Availability for classified, unclassified employees, and qualified dependents will be determined two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester
 - 4) Classes for personal enrichment and/or seeking a degree or certificate are available
- C) Process for Determining Eligibility and Selection
 - 1) Classified City of Akron Employee with a current City of Akron employee identification badge
 - 2) Is the course selection, certificate, or degree job related?
 - 3) Date Participation Intake form received
 - 4) To qualify for future courses, employee must present proof of satisfactory completion of prior courses provided under the WDP
 - 5) Available seats under the Open-Seat model are determined by Stark State College



IV. FEES

- 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) 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
 - (a) Processing fee (one-time charge only): \$95
 - i Maintenance and campus security fee: \$35/semester
 - per individual semester, four or more hours
 - 2) Other Fees as determined by Stark State College

V. ENROLLMENT PROCESS

- A) Employees interested in enrolling in the City's Workforce Development Program through Stark State College **must complete and return the Applicant Intake Form prior to the start of the semester (April 15th for both summer and fall 2020 semesters).**

**Completed forms should be submitted to:
Department of Human Resources
City of Akron
166 South High Street, Room 103
Akron, Ohio 44308**

- B) Stark State College will contact the employees interested in enrolling in the City's Workforce Development Program to determine the necessary application process.

VI. COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS

- A) Once the Department of Human Resources has received notification from Stark State College office of the city employee or QD enrollment status, the employee or QD will be notified of their approval/disapproval and will be advised of the "next steps" to enroll and pay applicable fees from Stark State College.
- 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.



VII. WITHDRAWAL/DROP CLASSES

Participants in the Workforce Development Program (WDP), 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.

VIII. MINIMUM GRADE REQUIREMENT

In order to qualify for the WDP program in subsequent semesters, a grade of "C" or higher must be achieved each semester that a participant is enrolled, except for those courses/programs that require "B" or better to progress forward. Failure to do so may result in a 12 month postponement of participation from the program.

For questions or additional information, contact **Myra Snipes**, Diversity/Training Manager at **330-375-2704** or send an email to **cityworkforcedevelopment@akronohio.gov**.

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 WDP 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 WDP program.