COUNTY OF ORANGE, VIRGINIA
PERSONNEL POLICIES MANUAL

EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, AND TRAINING INCENTIVES

POLICY NO.: 4.12 **EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/1/96**
REVISED: 7/1/04

OVERVIEW: It is the intent of Orange County to encourage the professional development of its employees in areas that directly contribute to their effectiveness performing their job and create a benefit to County citizens. This policy identifies the circumstances under which an employee may receive salary adjustments for achieving increased skill levels within their field and/or tuition reimbursement for work-related educational classes.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all regular employees.

PROVISIONS:

A. Certification and Training Incentives:

1. General

a. The certification and training incentive program is designed to recognize with increased pay, professional certifications attained by County employees that enhance their productivity and effectiveness in tangible ways. Typically, certifications that are eligible for recognition under this program are those that are recognized by the State of Virginia or professional associations/certification boards. Locally established "certifications" are not eligible. This program also is designed to recognize completion of certain training that directly enhances an employee's ability to perform his or her job. To be eligible for these incentive programs, employees must have a current performance evaluation that rates them as "satisfactory" or better.

b. Incentive programs may be established that provide for salary adjustments upon successful completion of incremental steps that result in a certification or for completion of the certification itself. In the case of training incentives, salary adjustments may be made upon the completion of a training course or block that results in the acquisition of a significant new skill.

c. Achievement of certifications that are eligible for incentives through the State Compensation Board or that result in a promotion to a different pay grade are not eligible for incentives under this policy.

d. In general, incentives will be awarded in increments of 0.5% of an employee's salary for completion of a certification step or training course, depending on the significance of the step or duration of the course of training. The maximum total increase for a certification will be 5%. No single employee will receive a combination of step increases or training course completions that exceed 2% of his or her salary in a given fiscal year.

e. Employees who receive incentive pay raises under this program agree to continue service with the County for no less than 6 months for each 0.5% of salary increase after receiving such an increase. For example, an employee who receives a 1% incentive increase incurs an obligation of 1 year of service. An employee who does not complete the obligatory service, either through voluntary termination or termination from disciplinary action, agrees to reimburse the County, on a prorated basis, the total cost of the increase (including FICA, VRS, and VRS life insurance). Part-time employees who receive increases incur a similar obligation adjusted by their average monthly hours at the time of the increase. For example, an employee who works 20 hours a week and receives a 1% incentive increase would incur a 6 month obligation. Obligations incurred under this policy will be served consecutively. For example, an employee who receives a 1% increase and 6 months later receives a 0.5% increase would, on the date of the second increase have a service obligation of 12 months. The service obligations incurred under this policy are in addition to any service obligations incurred under Policy 2.5. Employees will complete Orange County Form 4.12.1 acknowledging their responsibilities under this program.

2. Each Constitutional Officer or Department Director who believes his/her department has certifications/training that meets the intent of this policy should submit a plan through Human Resources to the County Administrator for approval. Plans should include the following:

a. The position(s) eligible for the incentive.

b. What certification(s) or training are proposed for incentives. Include information about the time required to complete the activity proposed for an incentive and the activity/training involved.

c. The benefit to County citizens to be realized by completion of the certification or training.

d. The amount of the incentive proposed for each certification, certification step, or training course/block completed.

3. Following County Administrator approval, the Department of Human Resources will maintain a file of all approved incentive programs. Any changes to these programs must be approved by the County Administrator.

4. The Department of Human Resources will maintain the budget for this program and authorize payment of incentives upon recommendation by the Constitutional Officer/Department Director. Each budget cycle, departments will provide projected funding requirements to Human Resources for inclusion in the new fiscal year budget.

5. Prior to allowing an employee to embark on a program that will result in award of a salary adjustment incentive, Constitutional Officers/Department Directors will confirm the availability of funding from Human Resources. Once the program is initiated, funds will be earmarked for that purpose.

B. Tuition Reimbursement:

1. General

a. Employees must be employed by the County for one year before being eligible for tuition reimbursement and have a current performance evaluation that rates them as “excellent” or better.

b. An employee is eligible for reimbursement for classes attended which are directly related to his/her current job or are applicable to positions of increased responsibility with the County government for which the employee seeks to become qualified.

c. Prior to enrolling in an eligible class, the employee must obtain approval for tuition reimbursement eligibility from the Director of Human Resources upon the recommendation of the Constitutional Officer/Department Director. The department recommendation should include an assessment of the applicability of the course to department business and an evaluation of the potential of the employee for increased responsibilities. HR review will verify the availability of funds, the current evaluation report, and the

applicability of the course to County business. Employees are eligible for a maximum of one course per semester/quarter.

d. The Department of Human Resources will maintain the budget for this program and authorize payment upon receipt of the information required in the paragraph on "reimbursement." Each budget cycle, departments will provide projected funding requirements to Human Resources for inclusion in the new fiscal year budget.

2. Reimbursement Procedures. The employee must initially pay all costs associated with the approved course. After successful completion (proof of grade C or higher) , the employee must submit a request for reimbursement accompanied by proof of successful completion and will be reimbursed in a manner consistent with normal reimbursement procedures.

3. Expense Eligibility. Costs eligible for reimbursement include tuition and textbooks only.

4. Service Obligation. Employees who receive reimbursement for tuition under this program will incur a service obligation of 4 months for every credit hour for which he/she receives reimbursement. Employees who depart prior to fulfilling their obligation, either through voluntary termination or termination resulting from disciplinary action, will be required to reimburse the County for a prorated amount depending on the amount of unfulfilled obligation. Obligations incurred under this policy will be served consecutively. Employees will complete Orange County Form 4.12.2 acknowledging their responsibilities under this program.

ORANGE COUNTY
CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING INCENTIVES REPAYMENT AGREEMENT

I, _____ (print name), understand that by accepting the incentive pay raise of _____% I incur a service obligation to the County of Orange of _____ months. If I choose to voluntarily terminate my employment with Orange County or am terminated due to a disciplinary action before completion of that service agreement, I agree that I will repay to Orange County a prorated amount of the total cost of the incentive. Orange County will provide me with a statement of this cost, compute my prorated liability, and will subtract this amount from my final check. In the event that my final check is not sufficient to cover the amount owed, I agree to pay Orange County the balance owed within 30 days of termination of employment.

_____ _____
Employee's Signature Date

_____ _____
Director of Human Resources Date

_____
Date placed in Personnel File

ORANGE COUNTY
EDUCATION REIMBURSMENT INCENTIVE REPAYMENT AGREEMENT

I, _____ (print name), understand that by accepting the reimbursement for _____ credit-hours completed on _____, I incur a service obligation to the County of Orange of _____ months. If I choose to voluntarily terminate my employment with Orange County, or am terminated due to disciplinary action, before completion of that service agreement, I agree that I will repay to Orange County a prorated amount of the total cost of the payment. Orange County will provide me with a statement of this cost, compute my prorated liability, and will subtract this amount from my final check. In the event that my final check is not sufficient to cover the amount owed, I agree to pay Orange County the balance owed within 30 days of termination of employment.

_____ _____
Employee's Signature Date

_____ _____
Director of Human Resources Date

_____
Date placed in Personnel File