

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – NOV 15, 2011**

### **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services and City Solicitor, and the Director of Human Resources, in conjunction with the Senior Management Team, recommend:

1. That the Learning and Development Policy be adopted, and
2. That the revised Educational Assistance Policy (formerly Continuous Learning Policy) be adopted.

#### **Sustainability**

Regular reviews and where necessary, updates of the City's policies ensure that the City is in a position to be able to achieve its goals and objectives leading to a sustainable forward thinking organization.

#### **Economic Impact**

There is no cost associated with implementing the recommendations.

#### **Communications Plan**

The revised policy will be made available on VOL, in the Employee Handbook and through the Clerk's Department.

#### **Purpose**

This report introduces the new Learning and Development Policy and provides information on the updated Educational Assistance Policy (formerly Continuous Learning Policy) which complements the Learning & Development Policy.

#### **Background and Analysis**

The Vaughan Vision 2020 establishes strategic initiatives in support of the City becoming a lifelong learning organization. In 2008 a Human Resources Strategy was developed which included the creation of a Learning and Development section within the Human Resources department to support the implementation of the related Vaughan Vision 2020 initiatives.

In March 2010 the Learning and Development Strategy was presented to SMT. The Learning and Development Strategy supports the commitment to encourage and support lifelong learning and participation in a wide variety of staff events and in the standardization of a focused corporate learning approach to staff education to encourage service excellence. The Learning and Development Strategy supports a variety of learning throughout an employee's career. Policies and procedures have been developed to support the implementation of the strategic initiatives in accordance with the Policy on Corporate Policy Development.

High performing organizations invest in and embrace learning and development resulting in a high level of employee engagement. Investing in learning and development produces positive results such as increased productivity, greater innovation, higher employee morale and increased attraction and retention of staff and impacts the City's ability to achieve service excellence, staff excellence and management excellence.

Developing staff is closely linked with other strategic initiatives detailed in Vaughan Vision 2020 such as;

- Pursuing Excellence in Service Delivery;
- Value and Encourage a Highly Motivated Workforce;
- Attracting, Retaining, and Promoting Skilled Staff; and
- Supporting the Professional Development of Staff.

Learning and development is an essential business investment that enables the City to maintain and extend our employee's knowledge and skills as the City evolves. The investment that the City makes in partnership with employees in their continuing career development allows us to achieve maximum flexibility in meeting our current and future skills requirements thereby assisting the City in achieving operational excellence and becoming a recognized Employer of Choice organization.

#### Learning and Development Policy

The purpose of this policy is to support and provide robust solutions enabling lifelong learning and development of our leaders and employees in achieving the City's Vision and Mission. These learning and development opportunities, which are offered internally through the Human Resources Department, will support the implementation of the City's Learning and Development Strategy and support the achievement of the City's strategic initiatives.

#### Educational Assistance Policy

The purpose of the Educational Assistance Policy is to outline the opportunities for financial assistance for tuition fees for employees participating in self-initiated, external, educational opportunities, resulting in a diploma, degree or academic certificate, on their own time, which is directly related to their current position or a realistic future career path. These educational opportunities occur at an institution of higher learning including but not limited to colleges and universities.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

In a constantly changing and evolving municipal environment and with Vaughan Vision 2020 in mind, which places "people first," the Learning & Development Policy and the Educational Assistance Policy will assist us in increasing the skill set of our staff base to keep up with the ever changing demands and needs of our citizens resulting in the City being able to achieve operational excellence.

#### **Regional Implications**

There are no regional implications to the implementation of the revisions.

#### **Conclusion**

The development and implementation of these policies demonstrates to employees that we value them and therefore we provide a supportive and informed work environment with a goal of achieving operational excellence.

**Attachments**

- I – Learning & Development Policy
- II – Educational Assistance Policy

**Report Prepared By**

Janet Ashfield, Director of Human Resources

Respectfully submitted,

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Janice Atwood-Petkovski  
Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services  
and City Solicitor

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Janet Ashfield  
Director of Human Resources

**CITY OF VAUGHAN  
POLICY MANUAL**

<b>SECTION:</b> LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	<b>POLICY NO:</b>
---	-------------------

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> HUMAN RESOURCES	<b>SUBJECT:</b> LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY
---------------------------------------	--

**The Learning & Development Policy shall be implemented in accordance with the Learning and Development Strategy and complements the Educational Assistance Policy.**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Learning & Development is an essential business investment that enables the City to maintain and extend our employee's knowledge and skills as our City evolves. The investment that the City makes in partnership with employees in their continuing career development allows us to achieve maximum flexibility in meeting our current and future skills requirements.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to support and provide robust solutions enabling lifelong learning and development of our leaders and employees in achieving the City's Vision and Mission. These learning & development opportunities will support the implementation of the City's Learning & Development Strategy and support the achievement of the City's strategic initiatives.

**APPLICATION:**

This policy applies to all learning and development opportunities offered to employees of the City.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Career Development                      A strategic investment to broaden and prepare employees for future career enhancement or lateral enhancement through training and other various learning activities and programs.

Learning                                      An experience that occurs within an individual that results in a change in the way the employee perceives, understands, and acts.

**CITY OF VAUGHAN  
POLICY MANUAL**

<b>SECTION:</b> LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	<b>POLICY NO:</b>
---	-------------------

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> HUMAN RESOURCES	<b>SUBJECT:</b> LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY
---------------------------------------	--

**Lifelong Learning Organization**      An organization where knowledge is valued at all levels, where learning and adaptation to learning is continuous, interactive, and encouraged and is built around people, their knowledge, skills, and ability to innovate.

**Training**      Is an organized, conscious, and deliberate effort to transfer knowledge or skills that are required for successful performance of a job and is about changing uninformed employees to informed employees and from unskilled employees to skilled employees.

**External Training**      An opportunity to attend a training program offered outside of the City.

**Internal Training**      Training opportunity offered through or by the Human Resources Department.

**POLICY**

1. The City is committed to creating and fostering a learning model based on “excellence” that facilitates and enhances the skills and career development of all employees to ensure continued service excellence.
2. The City of Vaughan believes it is important to include a variety of learning and development activities that will target different objectives for employees, departments, and the City overall.
3. The City is committed to the ongoing training and development of its employees as a means of maintaining a progressive and competitive workforce, by preparing employees to meet future organizational needs and as a corporate retention strategy for valued employees.
4. This policy supports the Learning & Development strategy which provides a variety of learning strategies targeting specifically;

**CITY OF VAUGHAN  
POLICY MANUAL**

<b>SECTION:</b> LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	<b>POLICY NO:</b>
---	-------------------

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> HUMAN RESOURCES	<b>SUBJECT:</b> LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY
---------------------------------------	--

- Leadership and Management Development to ensure that the City of Vaughan has leaders that are fully equipped to meet the challenges of a growing City and to ensure they have the ability to lead their teams.
  - Staff Development to ensure that the City of Vaughan has employees that are engaged and achieve service excellence when delivering service to the citizens of Vaughan.
5. The City values continuous learning and self-improvement and will strive to meet the employee's lifelong learning needs by providing accessible and high quality learning opportunities.
  6. The City will promote "Employer of Choice" initiatives in an open, challenging, and inclusive environment encouraging individual, departmental and corporate-wide development inspired by shared values.
  7. The City reserves the right to review and/or decline funding for learning and development if there is no demonstrated mutual benefit for both the employee and the City.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Everyone in the City will have a role to play in ensuring the City achieves its goal of life long learning. Learning is a shared responsibility as follows:

Employees are responsible for:

1. Taking ownership of their learning and development and in managing their careers.
2. Consulting with their manager and discussing learning opportunities to acquire and maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their present job.

**CITY OF VAUGHAN  
POLICY MANUAL**

<b>SECTION:</b> LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	<b>POLICY NO:</b>
---	-------------------

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> HUMAN RESOURCES	<b>SUBJECT:</b> LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY
---------------------------------------	--

3. Completing the Application for Learning and Development Request prior to registering for any program and discussing with their manager the appropriateness of the program.
4. Developing with their manager and in consultation with Human Resources, an Individual Learning Plan that will meet current and future career path expectations.
5. Selecting learning opportunities that align with career and business goals as identified in the Individual Learning Plan.
6. Maintaining up to date skills and knowledge to meet changing workplace needs and ongoing skills enhancement as required in their present position.
7. Making productive use of learning & development opportunities and transferring/applying the learning to their job function.
8. Ensuring they are aware of the personal commitment needed to satisfy the assigned course work and study time required in order to achieve success.

Management is responsible for:

1. Identifying and discussing with their employees their learning needs for current or future career path development.
2. Developing a mutually agreed on Individual Learning Plan for their employees for training and career development. This may form part of the performance appraisal.
3. Providing job-specific training to enable employees to acquire skills and knowledge based on the operational requirements of the department.
4. Supporting and providing employees with appropriate learning opportunities to acquire skills or experience which would enhance employees' engagement and ability to make a positive contribution to the work of the City of Vaughan.

**CITY OF VAUGHAN  
POLICY MANUAL**

<b>SECTION:</b> LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	<b>POLICY NO:</b>
---	-------------------

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> HUMAN RESOURCES	<b>SUBJECT:</b> LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY
---------------------------------------	--

5. Ensuring appropriate funds are included in the annual budget to meet the learning & development needs of the department.
6. Ensuring the Application for Learning & Development Request is fully approved prior to registration, for any mutually approved learning & development requests.
7. Discussing with employee reasons for denying requests for learning & development opportunity and providing appropriate feedback and information related to alternate opportunities if any.

Human Resources Department is responsible for:

1. Assessing corporate learning needs.
2. Co-ordinating, developing, facilitating and budgeting for learning opportunities.
3. Reviewing, amending and recommending changes to the Learning & Development Policy, as necessary, to continue to meet the objectives of the City's strategic plan.
4. Measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of training, learning & development programs and adjusting accordingly.
5. Responding and providing support to departmental requests for assistance and advice in identifying learning & development opportunities and making recommendations to meet the needs of the department.
6. Reviewing Application for Learning & Development Request to ensure that the City's interests are safeguarded in that the learning & development opportunity relates to the Individual Learning Plan.
7. Providing career counselling to employees upon request.
8. Ensuring that proper records are established and maintained with respect to participation in learning & development opportunities.



**CITY OF VAUGHAN  
POLICY MANUAL**

<b>SECTION:</b> LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	<b>POLICY NO:</b>
---	-------------------

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> HUMAN RESOURCES	<b>SUBJECT:</b> EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY
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**The Educational Assistance Policy shall be implemented in accordance with the Learning and Development Strategy and complements the Learning & Development Policy.**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The Learning & Development Strategy outlines a systematic and comprehensive plan for training and developing City of Vaughan staff. Its main objective is to support and provide robust solutions enabling lifelong learning and development of our leaders, employees and the Corporation in achieving the City’s Vision and Mission. In support of this objective the City provides tuition assistance reimbursement to employees.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the opportunities for financial assistance for tuition fees for employees participating in self-initiated, external, educational opportunities, resulting in a diploma, degree or academic certificate, on their own time, which is directly related to their current position or a realistic future career path. These educational opportunities shall occur at an institution of higher learning including but not limited to colleges and universities.

**APPLICATION:**

1. This policy applies to permanent employees who have been employed with the Corporation for at least two years.
2. This policy does not apply to any learning opportunities provided by or through the Human Resources Department.
3. Distance learning and correspondence courses from accredited educational institutions may also be acceptable.

**POLICY**

1. The City believes that academic upgrading resulting in a degree, diploma, certificate or achievement of a professional designation is a worthwhile

**CITY OF VAUGHAN  
POLICY MANUAL**

<b>SECTION:</b> LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	<b>POLICY NO:</b>
---	-------------------

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> HUMAN RESOURCES	<b>SUBJECT:</b> EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY
---------------------------------------	--

investment in its employees who have demonstrated solid potential.

2. The City is committed to a work environment that encourages continuous learning as a means of maintaining a competent workforce which provides excellence in service delivery to the citizens of Vaughan.
3. The City supports staff who take the responsibility for their own learning and will assist financially in their educational endeavours provided that such programs are directly relevant to the employee's current position or realistic future career path with the City and is deemed valuable to both the employee and the City.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Employee is responsible for:

1. Identifying educational opportunities in discussion with their manager that meet their career path expectations and obtain approval for these educational opportunities.
2. Enrolling and paying the cost of the course once approval has been obtained.
3. Providing proof of final transcripts to the manager so that reimbursement may be obtained. The cost of books or pre-qualifying exams (e.g. LSAT, GMAT) will not be reimbursed
4. Remaining employed with the City for a minimum period of time or repaying the City the cost of the education on a pro rated basis.

Management is responsible for:

1. Developing a learning and development plan for departmental staff which allows for educational opportunities in their current or potential future positions with the City.
2. Discussing with the employee the appropriateness and value of any proposed

**CITY OF VAUGHAN  
POLICY MANUAL**

<b>SECTION:</b> LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	<b>POLICY NO:</b>
---	-------------------

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> HUMAN RESOURCES	<b>SUBJECT:</b> EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY
---------------------------------------	--

educational opportunity, taking into consideration the employee's Individual Learning Plan, current job and future career path.

3. Determining if request is consistent with current or future needs of the organization and the employee's Individual Learning Plan, if any.
4. Having ongoing dialogue with employees about their career paths and Individual Learning Plan to continue to identify learning opportunities.
5. Determining if budget funds are available and obtaining approval of educational requests and communicating with the employee as to the status of the request.
6. Reviewing proof of successful completion and submitting paperwork for reimbursement in a timely fashion.

Human Resources is responsible for:

1. Developing and maintaining a current policy and revising when necessary to continue to meet the City's goals and objectives.
2. Working with employees and management in relation to career planning and maintenance and development of Individual Learning Plans.
3. Identifying educational opportunities that may be available to support plans.
4. Monitoring the interests of our employees, the cost and the return on investments by maintaining appropriate databases of courses taken by staff.
5. Exploring the possibility of providing programs in-house.