

Title: Staff Training and Professional Development

Policy No: 2014

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Purpose: Greenview recognizes the need for and importance of investing in the learning and development of its workforce to increase employee engagement, career growth, high performance and innovation in municipal government. Greenview supports training and development of its staff with levels of financial support which vary depending on the relevancy of the training opportunity to a current position or future need within the organization. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines on how employees may receive training and pursue professional development opportunities.

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. **CAO** means the Chief Administrative Officer of Greenview.
- 1.2. **Conference/Convention** means an activity related to a professional association or municipal organization or related to the employee's work with a Board or Committee.
- 1.3. **Cost-Share Agreement** means an agreement where Greenview agrees to pay part of the enrollment costs in a college diploma, university degree, masters, doctorate, professional certificate or designation, but does not require a work commitment as a condition of financial assistance.
- 1.4. **Cross-training** means training an employee to do a different job, or portion of a job, in another area of the organization.
- 1.5. **Development** means a program or activity designed to raise an employee's performance for future job responsibilities.
- 1.6. **Employee-Initiated** means a request by an employee for permission to participate in training and development activities with or without assistance from Greenview.
- 1.7. **Employer-Initiated** means a request by Greenview for employee participation in training and development activities as a requisite for maintaining or increasing individual performance levels in accordance with municipal goals, objectives and needs.
- 1.8. **Educational Course** means a program or course offered by an accredited educational institution that Greenview recognizes as contributing to improving the skill and knowledge of an employee.

- 1.9. **Educational Leave of Absence** means a leave of absence, whether paid or unpaid, from job duties on a part-time or full-time basis for the purpose of advancing an employee's abilities or supplementing professional or skill training.
- 1.10. **Greenview** means the Municipal District of Greenview No. 16.
- 1.11. **In-House Training and Development** means a program or course offered or sponsored by the municipality that is available or required for Greenview employees. This includes, but is not limited to, instruction, seminars, courses or required health and safety training.
- 1.12. **Return Service Agreement** means an agreement requiring a work commitment of continued employment with Greenview as a condition of financial assistance.
- 1.13. **Training** means a program or activity designed to prepare an employee to the level of competence required for present job responsibilities.
- 1.14. **Work Commitment** means the period of work obligation an employee is required to undertake as a condition of receiving financial assistance granted under the terms of this policy or a Return Service Agreement entered into between Greenview and the employee.

2. GENERAL GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

- 2.1. Managers and Directors are encouraged to develop professional development goals and plans with each employee annually during performance appraisals.
- 2.2. When considering professional development, Managers and Directors should reflect on education and training needs within their departments, and succession planning within the organization as a whole.
- 2.3. Managers and Directors will review all requests from employees in their departments, to attend direct and indirect job-related courses, conferences, seminars, workshops, or conventions.
- 2.4. All employee-initiated training requires a request to be made to the employee's Manager and Director in writing with a completed "Professional Development Request Form".
- 2.5. Employees will receive written and prior approval from the required level of authorization in accordance with Section 2.15 prior to attending any courses, conferences, seminars, workshops or conventions.
- 2.6. Any employee who attends any course, conference, seminar, workshop, or convention without obtaining prior approval of their Manager, Director, and CAO where required, will do so at their own expense, and will not be reimbursed for costs they incurred.
- 2.7. Greenview will pay all registration, travel, hotel, meals and related costs for employees to attend approved courses, conferences, seminars, workshops, or conventions, in accordance with Greenview's policies and procedures.
- 2.8. Sufficient funds must be in the current years' budget to offset all related costs for employees attending courses, conferences, seminars, workshops or conventions.

- 2.9. Courses requiring educational leave will be dealt with in accordance with Greenview's policies and procedures, and/or in accordance with the individual's Cost-Share Agreement or Return Service Agreement.
- 2.10. All Cost-Share Agreements and Return Service Agreements will be approved by the CAO.
- 2.11. Employees are required to submit a "Learning Evaluation Form" after attending any course, conference, seminar, workshop, convention, or after completion of their diploma, degree, masters, doctorate, professional certificate or designation.
- 2.12. Greenview will reimburse the enrollment expenses and all costs directly related to an approved course or course of study, upon the employee's successful completion of the course(s), the submission of receipts, and submission of a "Learning Evaluation Form".
- 2.13. Greenview will pay the employee's membership fees for associations directly related to their job.
- 2.14. If authorized attendance is not used as an opportunity to learn and participate on behalf of Greenview, and an employee does not attend an authorized event fully, it may be considered as abuse and any further privilege may be lost.
- 2.15. Approval Thresholds:
 - A) **Employee requested In-house training:** Manager
 - B) **Conferences/Seminars under \$1999.00:** Manager and Director
 - C) **Individual Courses under \$1999.00:** Manager and Director
 - D) **College diploma, university bachelor's degree, masters or doctorate degree, professional certificate, or designation, or any course, conference, seminar over \$2000.00:** Director and CAO approval. A Cost-Sharing or Return Service Agreement may be required at the discretion of the CAO for a college diploma, university bachelor's degree, masters or doctorate degree, professional certificate, or designation.
- 2.16. CAO training or conference attendance is subject to Council approval during the annual budget process. Additional training or conference attendance for the CAO beyond what is captured in the annual budget requires Council approval.

3. IN-HOUSE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. Training activities may vary from short, informal, on-the-job instruction and guidance to more structured programs, courses, workshops, and seminars offered internally to employees, or sponsored directly by the municipality either during or after work hours. In-house training may also include cross-training or health and safety training.
- 3.2. Participation in in-house training and development activities may be requested by the employee or assigned by the employee's Supervisor or Manager.
- 3.3. Requests by the employee to participate in in-house training or development must be submitted on the "Professional Development Request Form" and approved by the employee's Manager.

- 3.4. All costs for in-house training and development activities are to be assumed by the appropriate departmental budget, unless otherwise specified.

4. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATIONAL COURSES

- 4.1. To qualify for financial assistance, an employee must be a permanent employee, have completed their probationary period prior to enrolling in a particular course of study, and costs must be in the appropriate departmental budget.
- 4.2. Greenview may agree to fund, wholly or in part, an employee's pursuit of a college diploma, university bachelor's degree, masters or doctorate degree, professional certificate, or designation. This may require entering into a Cost-Share Agreement or a Return Service Agreement at the discretion of the CAO.
- 4.3. Tuition fees that are either directly related to the employee's current job or create a mutual advantage to both the employee and the department would be eligible for funding for 100% of course costs. For Example:
 - A) Individual courses taken independently of enrolment in a degree, certificate, or diploma program; or
 - B) Courses leading to a college diploma, university bachelor's degree, masters or doctorate degree, professional certificate, diploma or designation.
- 4.4. Tuition fees that are related to the organization's function but not directly related to the employee's current job or division/department function may be eligible for funding for 50% of course costs at the discretion of the department Director and the CAO.
- 4.5. For employee-initiated education, the employee must submit the "Professional Development Request Form" and obtain the appropriate approval signatures prior to enrollment.
- 4.6. A Return Service Agreement requiring a work commitment of continued employment with Greenview may be required as a condition of financial assistance. The period of the work commitment will be outlined in the Return Service Agreement and shall generally begin upon completion of the course of study. The work commitment may take into account whether the employee retained full-time employment while completing the course of study and prorate the work commitment accordingly.
- 4.7. When an employee leaves the employment of Greenview, whether voluntary or not, prior to fulfilling the work commitment stipulated in their Return Service Agreement, the outstanding commitment will be become and Account Receivable by Greenview.
- 4.8. Non-tuition related fees are ineligible for assistance, except where permitted in other Greenview policies. These fees include, but are not limited to:
 - A) Deferred or late payments;
 - B) Fees for extensions;
 - C) Cancellation fees;
 - D) Course credit transfer fees;
 - E) Student medical insurance; or
 - F) Capital projects;
- 4.9. Should an employee fail a course, the employee will be required to:

- A) Successfully complete the course within one year at their own expense; or
- B) Reimburse Greenview for all expenses incurred on the employee's behalf in accordance with the terms of an applicable Return Service Agreement or Cost-Share Agreement. The employee may enter into an agreement with Greenview to establish a payment plan. If the employee leaves the employment of Greenview, any outstanding commitments will become an Account Receivable by Greenview.

5. CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR ATTENDANCE

- 5.1. Greenview shall assume allowable costs associated with attendance at approved conferences and seminars in accordance with Greenview policies, including registration fees, transportation costs, accommodation, meals, and incidental expenses.
- 5.2. Requests to attend Conferences and Seminars must be made with the "Professional Development Request Form". Approval from the employee's Manager and Director is required for all conferences in the prescribed form. In addition, CAO approval is required for any conference that is anticipated to cost over \$2000.00, as well as any conference that is out of province or country.
- 5.3. Council approval is required for any out of country courses, training, or conferences for the CAO.
- 5.4. Conference attendance should be discussed annually during the employee's performance appraisal.
- 5.5. Attendance at work shops and seminars that have no associated costs, but occur during business hours, require the approval of the employee's Supervisor.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1. Employee Responsibilities:
 - A) Prepare an annual learning and development plan that identifies their training and educational needs to be reviewed and discussed at the employee's annual performance appraisal with their Manager or Director. Once reviewed by the Manager, the appropriate forms should be submitted for Manager, Director or CAO approval, where needed, to allow for the budgeting of professional development expenses.
 - B) Making a personal commitment to career planning and any associated learning and development.
 - C) Using long-range planning to determine future requests.
 - D) Selecting the most cost-effective options.
 - E) Accounting for all expenses incurred for professional development.
 - F) Providing a statement of grades and certificate of completion to the department director and submitting the designated professional development feedback form for manager and director review.
- 6.2. Manager and Director Responsibilities:
 - A) Reviewing and approving requests for professional development for employees within their departments.
 - B) Ensuring there is appropriate budget allocation to undertake all approved and anticipated employee training.
 - C) Ensuring all professional development activities are done in accordance with this policy.

D) Ensuring all required documentation is completed and submitted.

6.3. CAO Responsibilities:

- A) Review and approve professional development activities under their scope of approval.
- B) Negotiate and approve Return Service Agreements or Cost-Share Agreements with employees for tuition assistance for college diploma, university bachelor's degree, masters or doctorate degree, professional certificate, diploma or designations.