



# Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation

**Police Officers' Tuition Reimbursement Program  
2017 Academic Year Guidelines**

# POLICE OFFICERS' TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

## PURPOSE

The Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation is committed to the Agency's growth and development. To support this commitment, a Tuition Reimbursement Program has been established to reimburse education expenses to those Palm Beach Gardens Police Officers interested in obtaining a degree from an accredited higher education institution. The program is designed to assist Officers who elect to improve their job performance or increase their skills through education. Participation should be mutually beneficial to both the Police Officer and the Palm Beach Gardens Police Department. This program is established to assist in providing higher educational opportunities for Police Officers who meet the necessary criteria.

## PROCEDURES

This document is designed to guide Police Officers through the stages of the program by providing information on applying for reimbursement, determining Police Officer eligibility, determining course eligibility and reimbursement to the Police Officer.

### 1. Eligibility

- a. **Officer Eligibility** – Palm Beach Gardens Police Officers are eligible for tuition reimbursement if:
  - i. Officer is employed in a regular full-time position
  - ii. Officer has completed the Agency's probationary period
  - iii. Officer is not under any type of probation, suspension or prolonged administrative leave at the time of submission of application or at the time of dispersal of funds
  - iv. Officer agrees to continue full-time employment with the Agency for no less than three (3) additional years following the reimbursed semester by signing the Service Agreement included in the reimbursement application.
  - v. Officer is working toward his or her first Bachelor's degree from a university regionally accredited through the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). To search for the accreditation information for the school you are considering go to the link: <http://www.chea.org> and type in your school name.  
*NOTE: There are many schools that claim to be accredited, but are not regionally accredited*
  - vi. Officer maintains a 3.0 GPA for the semester in which he or she is requesting reimbursement
  - vii. Officer attains a B or higher grade in the specific course for which reimbursement is being requested.
- b. **Course Eligibility** – all courses offered by a regionally accredited university as determined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges are eligible for tuition reimbursement if all of the following criteria are also met:
  - i. Course will increase the Officer's job applicable skills and ability.
  - ii. Course is included in a degree seeking program that will enhance the skills and knowledge of the Police Officer.

- c. **Application eligibility** – all applications must be submitted by set deadlines and should be filled out completely. Eligible applications will be:
- i. Received, stamped and dated by the Foundation on or before set deadline
  - ii. Completely and accurately filled out to include all necessary signatures.
  - iii. Accompanied by all requested receipts, grade reports and other documentation. Attachments should be legible and easy to understand.

## 2. General Guidelines

- a. Discretionary nature of benefit:
- i. Funds for tuition reimbursement are provided by the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation. They are distributed based on availability, and on the application process described herein. Recommendations of approval are made at the discretion of Foundation's Tuition Reimbursement Committee. Final decisions regarding reimbursement are made by the Board of Directors of the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation. Submission of a tuition reimbursement application does not guarantee reimbursement.
  - ii. Applicants are required to follow all application instructions and submit their documents to the Foundation by the published deadlines.
  - iii. The Tuition Reimbursement Program is funded annually to provide tuition reimbursements to PBGPD Officers. In 2017, the funding will be distributed between the Spring, Summer and Fall Semesters according to the schedule below. (dates may vary slightly by university)
    - 2017 Spring Semester (classes between January 1 – April 30, 2017)
      - Deadline for application is May 19.
    - 2017 Summer Semester (classes between May 1 – July 31, 2017)
      - Deadline for application is August 18.
    - 2017 Fall Semester (classes between August 1 – December 31, 2017)
      - Deadline for application is January 19, 2018.
  - iv. Funds not allocated in one semester will be rolled over into the next semester and may be rolled over to the next year at the Board of Directors discretion.
  - v. The Foundation Tuition Reimbursement Committee will make all final decisions regarding reimbursements, and reserves the right to make adjustments to this and other program guidelines (such as maximum reimbursement allowances) based on circumstances and availability of funds.
- b. Benefits Allowance:
- i. Reimbursements are permitted for out of pocket tuition expenses only. Expenses that are covered by outside grants, scholarships or other financial aid that the student is not required pay back will not be eligible. Fees, books, transportation and other education related expenses incurred are not eligible for reimbursement.
  - ii. Full-time sworn Officers are eligible for up to the annual maximum reimbursement not to exceed \$2,500.00 contingent upon the availability of funds each calendar year. If the total amount requested exceeds the total amount available there will be a percentage reduction to all requests to accommodate each participant. For example, if 10 valid request are received for \$300 and there is only \$2,000 available, all 10 approved participants will receive a maximum reduced amount of \$200.00 each
  - iii. All Officers receiving tuition reimbursement are required to agree to a commitment of three (3) years of continuous service after receipt of

reimbursement. If the Officer does not complete three (3) years of service, the Officer must repay the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation the full amount of the reimbursement within in 180 days of their separation date.

c. Loss of Tuition Reimbursement Benefits

- i. Officers will not be reimbursed for tuition expenses if they do not complete the course or, upon course completion, they are no longer employed by the City of Palm Beach Gardens Police Department.

### **3. Application Process**

Officers may obtain an Application for Tuition Reimbursement from the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation website ( [www.pbgpf.org/reimburse](http://www.pbgpf.org/reimburse) )

The requesting Officer must complete the reimbursement application and forward it to his or her immediate supervisor for review and approval signature. The application must then be signed by the Palm Beach Gardens Chief of Police or his/her designee.

Required documentation to be attached to the application includes:

- Verification of grades (by class and overall GPA)
- Receipt for payment of tuition

Once approved by the Chief of Police, the application is then forwarded to the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation Tuition Reimbursement Committee.

The Tuition Reimbursement Committee is responsible for insuring that the application meets all the requirements of the program and then forwards it to the Foundation Board of Directors with a recommendation as to the amount to be reimbursed per Officer.

Once approved by the Board of Directors, a check representing the total funding, along with a list of Officers to be reimbursed, will be forwarded to the City of Palm Beach Gardens Finance Department for payment to the individual Officers via their normal payroll procedures.

## DEFINITIONS

**Annual Maximum Reimbursement:** The amount of benefit available to an Officer on an annual basis, as determined by the availability of funds in the Palm Beach Gardens Police Foundation budget.

**Eligible Costs:** Costs eligible for reimbursement under the Program. i.e. tuition only.

**Final Grade Report:** A grade report issued by an accredited educational institution that shows the number of hours and the titles of the courses in which the Police Officer was enrolled and completed.

**Ineligible Costs:** A number of items fall into the category of costs that are ineligible for reimbursement under the program. Those include:

- Tuition costs covered by grants, scholarships or any other non-repayment funding.
- Costs for books, supplies, fees, distance learning fees, travel or parking.
- Tuition costs for grades of “fail” if the class is of a pass/fail type.
- Course grades below a “B”
- Tuition Reimbursement will be denied if the Officer fails to comply with the guidelines of the Tuition Reimbursement Program

**Officer:** A Sworn Police Officer employed in a regular full-time position with the Palm Beach Gardens Police Department.

**Paid Fee Receipt:** An itemized receipt issued by an accredited educational institution that shows the total amount of tuition and fees the Officer paid.

**Foundation Tuition Reimbursement Committee:** Individuals designated by the Police Foundation to receive, administer and evaluate the Tuition Reimbursement Program applications.

## CHANGE LOG

1/26/2017: Eliminated the requirement for the student to maintain a 3.0 overall GPA (Requirement to attain a 3.0 GPA for the semester being reimbursed remains).

2/28/2017: Further defined Benefits Allowance to add the word “maximum” in paragraph 2 b ii.

2/28/2017: Removed the sentence about collection agencies from paragraph 2 b iii.

2/28/2017: Added “Distance Learning Fees” to the list of Ineligible Costs definitions.

2/28/2017: Added the word “Sworn” to the definition of Officer.

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