



Professional Development Policy for Elected Officials

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for professional development activities for the Mayor and Council.

Policy

The city council is encouraged to participate in professional development and training. The city's annual operating budget includes funding for professional development for the Mayor and Council to assist them in developing and maintaining the skills and knowledge required to effectively perform their role and duties.

This policy covers reimbursement for attendance at conferences, educational seminars, meetings, programs, events, and training programs hosted by local government associations or relevant to local government. This includes related events or activities by the city council performing their official duties on matters relevant to city business. Some examples include activities and programs sponsored by the National League of Cities, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Dane County Cities and Villages, and other groups that sponsor programs relevant to local government.

Elected officials can be reimbursed for professional development activities within the following guidelines:

- Must be used by the elected official themselves
- Directly related to official duties as an alderperson, such as:
 - Attending budget seminar as a member of Finance Committee
 - New elected officials class from the League
- Directly related to government process and/or city business
- Directly related to an event or program hosted by an association or organization in which the city is a member
- Attending meetings, seminars, conferences, or events as a city representative
- Directly related in improving a personal capacity to function effectively in their role as elected official
 - Examples may include:
 - Rotary dues



- Toastmasters or public speaking courses
- Municipal Clerk school
- Short-term courses or seminars
- Consistent with adopted budget and legislative priorities or policies

Specifically excluded under this section are ongoing or long-term course work (i.e. a semester-long course) and training on topics not directly related to their capacity as an elected official (i.e. woodworking).

Funding

Funds allocated are to be distributed equally amongst all members. Any request for training above and beyond the allocated amount requires a budget amendment or initiative for council approval. Funds will not roll over and any unspent funds return to fund balance, per city policy. All travel and expenses, including reimbursement, are subject to all City Policies (see Travel Policy).

During campaign season:

- Funds are not available to elected officials during campaign season who are not seeking reelection.
- Funds are not available to elected officials who are not yet sworn into the office.

Beginning in January of an election year, funds are prorated for the four months preceding the April election. This ensures that newly elected members have access to an equitable share of the funds during their first year in office.

All professional development and training funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis after the event occurs. The city requires appropriate documentation and/or receipts for expense reimbursement requested under this policy. Elected officials are responsible for keeping a detailed record of all reimbursable expenses incurred and must be submitted on the city's Expense Reimbursement Form to the City Administrator's Office. If an official may benefit from a group rate by coordinating attendance with another organization, they may request that the outside organization be directly reimbursed.



Process

To participate in a professional development or training activity, elected officials must submit their training request via email or the Professional Development Request form (Appendix A) for approval at least 30 days prior to the activity to allow time for the approval and appeal process, if necessary. Authorization for all activities and events for council members and mayor require approval of the council president. Authorization for all activities and events for the council president require approval of the vice council president. Upon submission of a Professional Development Request, the council president or vice council president must make every effort to review the request and complete the approval process within five business days using the guidelines as outlined in the policy. All training costs must be within the authorized budget as approved by the council.

Upon completion, elected officials are asked to report back on learnings and key takeaways within 60 days of the end date. This can be achieved through written submission via e-mail to the council or a presentation at an upcoming council meeting.

Elected officials have the following recourse in the event of a dispute:

- If an elected official's request is denied by the council president or vice council president, the decision may be appealed to the Common Council within 30 days of the decision. The item would then be placed on a future agenda of the Committee of the Whole for discussion and consideration.
- The Common Council may override the council president or vice council president's decision with a simple majority vote.
- Any decision by the Common Council is final.



Please submit the form at least 30 days prior to the start of the event/training.

Event/Training Name: _____

Event/Training Location: _____

Professional Development /Requested Reimbursements

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Denied (see below)

Vice Council President Signature: _____ Date: _____

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