

Mackenzie County

Title	Staff Training and Professional Development	Policy No:	HR005
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Purpose

Mackenzie County recognizes the importance of investing in the learning and development of staff and encourages the opportunity to enhance their education skills that relate directly to their position. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for employees that receive training and professional development opportunities.

Definitions

- a.) **“Conference/Convention”** - an activity related to a professional association or a municipal organization that relates to the employee’s position.
- b.) **“Cost-Share Agreement”** - an agreement where Mackenzie County 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.
- c.) **“County”**- Municipality of Mackenzie County.
- d.) **“Development”** – a program or activity designed to raise an employee’s performance for future job responsibilities.
- e.) **“Educational Course”** - a program or course offered by an accredited educational institution that Mackenzie County recognizes as contributing to improving the skills and knowledge of an employee.
- f.) **“Employee-Initiated”** – a request by an employee for permission to participate in training and development activities with or without assistance from Mackenzie County.
- g.) **“Employer-Initiated”** – a request by Mackenzie County 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.

- h.) **“Employee Training Authorization Form”** – required for any training or professional development requests that will be authorized by the Supervisor/Manager/Director of the department.
- i.) **“Return Service Agreement”** - an agreement requiring a work commitment of continued employment with Mackenzie County as a condition of financial assistance.
- j.) **“Training”** - a program or activity designed to prepare an employee to the level of competence required for job related responsibilities.
- k.) **“Training Summary”** – after the completion of a course, conference, seminar, convention or educational term, the employee will summarize the training and submit to their Supervisor/Manager/Director.
- l.) **“Work Commitment”** - 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 Mackenzie County and the employee.

Guidelines/Responsibilities:

1. Directors, Managers and Supervisors are encouraged to discuss training and professional development goals and plans with each employee during their annual performance evaluations.
2. Directors, Managers and Supervisors will review all requests from employees in their respective departments to attend job-related courses, conferences, seminars, workshops or conventions.
3. All requests initiated by employees for training require a request to be made to the employee’s Supervisor, Manager or Director in writing with a completed “Employee Training Authorization Form”.
4. Employees will receive written and prior approval from the requested level of authorization prior to attending any courses, conferences, seminars, workshops or conventions.
5. Any employee who attends any course, conference, seminar, workshop or convention without obtaining prior approval of their Supervisor, Manager or Director and the Chief Administrative Officer where required, will do so at their own expense, and will not be reimbursed for costs they incurred, provided it is on their own time.

6. Mackenzie County will pay course fees and all reasonable travel costs according Mackenzie County policies and the Collective Agreement, if applicable.
7. All courses, conferences, seminars, workshops or conventions must be in the current years' budget prior to attending.
8. Courses that require educational leave will be dealt with in accordance with Mackenzie County's policies and procedures, and/or in accordance with the individual's Cost-Share Agreement or Return Service Agreement.
9. All Cost-Share Agreements and Return Service Agreements will be approved by the head of the department and the Chief Administrative Officer.
10. Upon completion of a course, conference, seminar, workshop or convention or after completing an educational term, the employee must complete a "Training Summary" and may be requested to present to staff in the same job-related field.
11. Mackenzie County will pay the employee's membership fees for associations directly related to their job, if approved and is included in the current year's budget.
12. An employee travelling to courses, conferences, seminars, workshops or conventions is required to use an available county vehicle. If no county vehicle is available, the employee will be issued a fuel card or be reimbursed for actual fuel costs on receipts received. Reimbursement for meals will be paid according to the current Honorarium & Expense Reimbursement Bylaw.
13. If the employee does not attend an authorized event fully, it may be considered as abuse of privilege and any further privilege may be lost.
14. A Cost-Sharing or Return Service Agreement will be mandatory from the discretion of the Director and Chief Administrative Officer for a college diploma, university bachelor's degree, masters, or doctorate degree, professional certificate, or designation.
15. Chief Administrative Officer training or conference attendance is subject to Council approval during the annual budget process and any additional training or conferences thereafter will need Council's approval.

16. Employees may not be entitled to automatic pay increases upon completion of courses, conferences, seminars, workshops or conventions.

Financial Assistance and Educational Courses

1. To qualify for financial assistance, the employee must be in the same permanent full-time position for a minimum of two (2) years and the employee has demonstrated their commitment to their position and Mackenzie County and it is a part of the employee and County's mutual goals.
2. Mackenzie County may agree to fund, wholly or in part, an employee's request to complete a college diploma, university bachelor's degree, masters or doctorate degree, professional certificate, or designation. This will require entering into a Cost-Share Agreement or a Return Service Agreement with the Director and/or the Chief Administrative Officer.
3. Tuition fees that are directly related to the employee's current job may be eligible for 50% of the course costs. The employee may be eligible for reimbursement for the remainder of the course costs with a Return Service Agreement after completion of the course.
4. A Return Service Agreement requiring a work commitment of continued employment with Mackenzie County 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 consider whether the employee retained full-time employment while completing the course of study and prorate the work commitment accordingly.
5. When an employee leaves the employment of Mackenzie County, whether voluntary or not, prior to fulfilling the work commitment stipulated in their Return Service Agreement, the outstanding commitment amount will be allocated to an Accounts Receivable account.
6. Should an employee fail a course, the employee will be required to reimburse the County for all course costs. Mackenzie County and the employee may enter into an agreement to establish a payment plan within a reasonable time frame. If the employee leaves the employment of Mackenzie County, any outstanding commitments will be allocated to an Accounts Receivable account.
7. The Supervisor, Manager or Director may allow employees to take the course a second time at the employee's expense, upon successful

completion the employee will be reimbursed for the course cost and expenses.

Conference and Seminar Attendance

1. Requests to attend Conferences and Seminars must be made with the "Employee Training Authorization Form". Approval is required from the Director of the department.
2. Council approval is required for any out of province courses, training or conferences for the Chief Administrative Officer with the exception of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference.
3. Conference attendance and allocated budget should be discussed annually during the employee's performance evaluation.
4. Attendance at workshops and seminars that have no associated costs, but occur during business hours, require the approval of the employee's Supervisor.

Responsibilities

1. Employee Responsibilities:
 - a) Prepare an annual learning and development plan that identifies their training and educational needs. This shall be discussed during the annual performance evaluation.
 - b) Making a personal commitment to any associated learning and developing pertaining to job-related enhancement.
 - c) Selecting the most cost-effective options. (ie. optional virtual meetings, courses closest to the region, carpooling, etc.)
 - d) Accounting for all expenses incurred for professional development.
 - e) Representing Mackenzie County in a positive manner during training.
 - f) Providing a statement of grades and certificate of completion to the department Director and submitting the designated professional development feedback form for management to review.
2. Supervisor, Manager and Director Responsibilities:
 - a) Review and approve requests for professional development for employees within their departments.
 - b) Ensuring that 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 to the Human Resources personnel file for the employee.
3. Chief Administrative Officer Responsibilities:
 - a) Review and approval of professional activities under their scope of approval.
 - b) Review, 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 certification, diploma or designations.

Apprenticeship Training/Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) Program

1. To qualify for financial assistance for the Apprenticeship Training/MELT Program, the employee must be in the same permanent full-time position for a minimum of two (2) years and the employee has demonstrated their commitment to their position and Mackenzie County and it is a part of the employee and County's mutual goals.
2. Mackenzie County recognizes that sessions for the completion of Journeyman status under the apprenticeship program, normally require the apprentice to attend training 8 weeks per year up to 4 years and that a MELT requires 113 hours plus the 8.5 hours for the air brake training.
3. Mackenzie County will decide during the annual budget discussion if there is a need for an apprenticeship or MELT opportunity. The County may provide income support to an employee (Section 9) when attending technical training courses as below:
 - a.) Mackenzie County may pay for the employee's registration, tuition and book fees for the required courses.
 - b.) Mackenzie County may pay for the employee's lodging at the nearest technical institute while attending the 8-week apprenticeship program or the MELT program.
3. Apprenticeship and MELTS employee attendance at technical training depends on the operational requirements of Mackenzie County.
4. The apprentice or MELT employee will work and cooperate with Mackenzie County management in obtaining advance approval for the time necessary to attend technical training courses.

5. Prior to the County providing approval for an employee to attend an apprenticeship or MELT program, the employee is to provide the confirmation of acceptance for such training at a recognized technical institute or Licensed Driver Training School in Alberta.
6. The employee is required to successfully complete the courses for the apprenticeship or MELT training and Road Test. Shortly after each session of the technical training attended, evidence of successful completion of the apprenticeship courses or MELT program will be provided to Mackenzie County by the employee for their Personnel File.
7. An employee who plans on attending technical courses will endeavour to take the courses at a technical training institute closest to Mackenzie County.
8. When the employee is attending apprenticeship or MELT training they will be authorized for an unpaid leave of absence. The apprenticeship leave of absence will qualify for up to an 8-week period. The MELT leave of absence will qualify for up to a 3-week period. Mackenzie County will continue to provide group benefits to the employee during the time away from work. Employees are responsible to pay their share of the costs for such benefits and will be invoiced accordingly.
9. A Return Service Agreement will be required prior to the employee attending the technical training program and will outline the requirements as per Section 2.
10. Completing the apprenticeship or MELT program does not guarantee a licensed trade or an Equipment Operator II position with Mackenzie County nor does it guarantee an increase in wages for the current position.

Related Policies/Procedures

Collective Agreement – Local 118 Chapter 008
ADM042 – General Safety Policy
ADM054 – Fuel Usage Policy
HR001 – Employee Code of Conduct
HR002 – Drug and Alcohol Use

	Date	Resolution Number
Approved	2022-11-29	22-11-857
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