



## EL PASO COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

### Professional Development Policy

**Adopted Date: November 8, 2010**

**Revised Date: July 9, 2018**

It is the policy of the County of El Paso to develop and foster a professional workforce that supports effective County government. The County recognizes a responsibility to enhance the employee's opportunity to develop skills and abilities for effective performance within the position, and for career advancement within the County. For development purposes, employees may need to attend training seminars or workshops conducted off-site, or join professional associations that will enable them to remain abreast of best practices in their respective fields. The following policy provides guidelines which outline the County's procedures concerning training, membership, and professional certification requests for County employees.<sup>1</sup>

All requests must be made to the employee's supervisor, and are subject to approval by the Department Head, or designee.

#### I. Requirements

- A. All County employees must engage in a minimum of 20 (twenty) hours of training credit per fiscal year relevant to the employee's position. (New employees are subject to this same requirement at a pro-rated amount.)
- B. This requirement is included in the employee's annual performance evaluation and must be completed by August 31<sup>st</sup> of each fiscal year. Any training hours submitted after August 31<sup>st</sup> will be applied to training credits for the following year. Submissions for training credit are made in accordance with section III below.

#### II. Professional Development Requests

- A. In support of this policy, the County offers a training benefit to full-time employees who have been employed by the County for six (6) months. The benefit can be used for costs associated with:
  1. **In-house training** – Employees may attend training as provided/hosted by County departments within a County facility. Employees shall sign-in to receive credit, and general certificates may be obtained at these trainings. **\*\*Note:** Generally, these trainings are coordinated via the County's Training Manager system and employees may obtain additional information and enroll for these courses via <http://intranet/hr/training.htm>.
  2. **Online/e-Learning** – Employees may participate in training using technology via online webinars or e-Learning systems.
  3. **Local training** – Employees may attend training as provided/hosted by local organizations and firms outside of a County facility, but within El Paso county limits and the general surrounding area.
  4. **Travel training** – Employees may travel out of town to attend various trainings and conferences that are not located within the El Paso city limits and the general surrounding area.
  5. **College courses** – Subject to the approval of the Department Head, college coursework taken during the relevant training period may satisfy a portion of required training hours.
  6. **Membership** – Employees may seek to join one (1) membership in a professional association, at the County's cost, that will enhance the employee's career development and

---

<sup>1</sup> See the County's Use of County Funds by State, County, and Precinct Officials When They Have Not Sought or Secured Re-Election Policy for additional guidelines.

are in line with the County's mission.

7. **Professional Certification** – Employees required to assume, or maintain professional certification relevant to their respective position may utilize County funds for professional exams and preparation material.

## B. Training Costs

Training that requires travel costs, whether locally or out of town, will be processed according to the procedures found within the County's Travel Policy and Procedures.

## C. Employee Training and Professional Certification Agreement

Training and Professional Certification Agreements will be used to document a training agreement between an employee and the County for County funded travel or professional certification expense that is **in excess of \$1,000**. These agreements are required for all County employees and Department Heads traveling to receive training and development, or for certification efforts that increases their personal knowledge and value which benefits them professionally. Further, the agreement shall explain the process for repayment of funds if an employee voluntarily terminates his/her employment within a certain time based on the following Monetary Range Scale:

- | <u>Monetary Range Scale:</u> | <u>Employee Commitment to County Employment:</u> |
|------------------------------|--|
| • \$1,000 - \$1,999:         | 12 months  |
| • \$2,000 - \$4,999:         | 24 months  |
| • Above \$5,000:             | 36 months  |
2. Employee agrees that if he/she voluntarily terminates his/her employment after the completion of his/her training/professional certification within the Monetary Range Scale, the employee shall repay the pro-rated cost of the training/professional certification. Further, the employee agrees to repay any such funds immediately, if for any reason the employee does not actually spend the funds as designated, or fails to attend the training or obtain the professional certification.
  3. Employee agrees that said repayment shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck. If the final paycheck is insufficient to cover the repayment amount the employee agrees to pay the difference to the County within 90 days of separation.
  4. Repayment amount shall be for the remaining balance of months left on the agreement from the date of completion of the above training or professional certification to the employee's voluntary separation from employment.
  5. The agreement shall include all costs associated with the training or professional certification.
  6. All Training and Professional Certification Agreements shall be signed by both employee and the Department Head prior to training or professional certification efforts.
  7. Department Heads may keep a copy of the Agreement in the department file; however, original Agreements shall be forwarded by the Department to the Human Resources Office to be placed in the employee's file. Upon separation, any balances owed will be verified during the exiting process.
  8. Each individual training/professional certification request that meets the minimum monetary range listed above shall require an Employee Training and Professional Certification Agreement. The employee's commitment to the County **will be** calculated by combining the costs of all requests that have been funded by the County over the last 36 months.

Example: Employee attends two (2) training conferences, one in January and one in July. The January training costs \$1,500 and the July training costs \$2,000. The January agreement will commit the employee to 12 months of County employment, while the July training commits them to 24 months. However, the two training agreements would be added and the total commitment the employee will have to the County is 24 months for both agreements since the total range is \$3,500 combined.

9. Exceptions to an Agreement may be made by the Chief Administrator, or designee, as deemed appropriate. (ie. Retirement, military leave, catastrophic events outside the employee's control, lost elections, completion of grants, or other valid reason as approved.)

### **III. Verification of Training Submissions**

Employees shall submit proof of training to the County's Human Resources Department to ensure their training records are continuously updated.

#### **A. Online submission**

1. Training certificates must be submitted on or before August 31<sup>st</sup> of each fiscal year to receive credit.
2. Employees may enter outside training via the County's Employee Training Submission Form at <http://intranet/hr/training.htm>.