



Pine-Strawberry Fire District Compensation & Benefits 4.12

Subject: Educational Reimbursement

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Board Chair Signature & Date:

[Signature] 4/17/2025

I. POLICY:

The Pine-Strawberry Fire District policy is to provide a means to reimburse members for the cost of professional education and development within the budget capacity of the District.

II. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to encourage existing members to continue their professional development and education and to attract new members to the District.

III. EDUCATIONAL REIMBURSEMENT:

A. This plan is available to career, reserve, and administrative members.

1. In order to reimburse educational and development expenses, there must be adequate funds in the training budget.
2. There must be a demonstrated need or benefit to the District for the training or schooling being requested.
3. A written proposal must be submitted demonstrating the need or benefit and cost.

B. Pre-Approval of Training Requests:

1. All prospective students must be pre-approved by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.

2. The District has no obligation to reimburse members for expenses which have not been pre-approved.
3. Prospective students may be required to sign an education reimbursement contract.
4. The Fire Chief, in consultation with the Training Officer or EMS Officer, as applicable, will determine if a contract is needed.
5. Any student who fails to complete a course, or who fails to complete it satisfactorily, may be required to reimburse the District for any or all course related expenses incurred by the District.
6. College level classes must be completed with a grade of "C", or better, in order to be considered successfully completed.
7. If the course is a certification course, the course is not considered to be successfully completed until certification has been achieved.
8. Extensive courses may require that the member sign a contract specifying the terms, conditions, and benefits of the contract.
 - a. If the member fails to meet the conditions of the contract, they may be required to reimburse the District for any or all course-related expenses.

C. New Hire Training Reimbursement:

1. Reimbursement for newly hired members may be available to cover FF1, FF2, EMT, and/or HAZMAT costs, among other educational and licensure programs and needs, including but not limited to PPE.
2. In order to reimburse educational and development expenses for new hires, there must be adequate funds in the training budget earmarked for tuition reimbursement.
3. All applicants must be pre-approved by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.
 - a. Applicants will be required to complete a PSFD hire application, fingerprinting, and background check.
 - b. Applicants will be required to sign an educational reimbursement contract outlining the course to be completed, the timeline to be completed in, and requirements for reimbursement upon completion.

- c. Hard copies of the hire application, contract, tuition receipts, and other related documentation will be kept in the applicant's personnel file.
- d. Upon approval of application and contract, the prospective member will be considered to be "sponsored" by PSFD and will be eligible for PPE and other academy required equipment.
- e. Sponsorship carries with it the responsibility to adhere to PSFD's established standards of conduct which will be provided to applicants.
- f. Adherence guidelines will also be outlined in the contract.
- g. Upon successful completion of the applicant's first semester of pre-approved education, the applicant may be considered for conditional hire as outlined in the contract.
 - (1) Once applicant is offered conditional hire, the applicant is then eligible for reimbursement.
 - (2) No wages or benefits can be paid to a non-member.
 - (3) Applicants are encouraged to seek other means of up-front funding prior to hire (i.e. FAFSA, 100 Club of Arizona, Pine- Strawberry Firefighters Association, Mogollon Health Alliance, etc.)
- h. Expenses outside of pre-approved amounts outlined in the contract will not be eligible for reimbursement. The Fire Chief may consider unanticipated costs outside of the applicant's control but will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require a justification statement.
- i. A specified term of employment with the District will be required in exchange for any reimbursed training expenses incurred by the District.
- j. If the applicant fails to satisfactorily complete the specified required training or term of employment, he/she will be required to reimburse the District for training costs incurred on a pro-rated basis.
- k. All terms and requirements will be specified in the pre-employment contract and reimbursable costs may be withheld from the applicant's pay checks if the contract is not fulfilled.

D. Mandatory Training Expenses:

- 1. Any courses required by regulations, statute, or District policy will be eligible for educational reimbursement.
- 2. Education and training acquired prior to employment will not be eligible for educational reimbursement unless pre-approved as described above.