

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Ordinance amending Section 3.79.040 of the Bellevue City Code to authorize the City Manager to approve additional nominal benefits for partially benefited employees when consistent with good personnel practices and so long as sufficient appropriations exist within the current budget to pay the full cost of the benefits, and to delete the “temporary employee” definition.

Bindi Lassige, Director, 452-4581
Hollie Egan, Assistant Director, 452-7846
Human Resources Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**ACTION**

This Ordinance will amend the definition of “partially benefited positions” and “partially benefited employees” in the Bellevue City Code to authorize the City Manager to approve additional nominal benefits for employees in these positions, such as gift cards for recognition and access to the Employee Assistance Program. The Ordinance will also eliminate the “temporary employee” definition which is no longer applicable.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Ordinance No. 6902

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Partially benefited positions are at-will positions created by the City Manager or designee so long as sufficient appropriations exist within the budget, and include part-time, seasonal, and variable positions. As provided in the Bellevue City Code, these positions are only eligible to receive either PERS or MEBT II benefits and no other city benefits except as required by law, such as paid sick leave.

Employees in partially benefited positions (PBEs) historically make up between 17% and 23% of the city’s workforce. These numbers fluctuate and are highest in the summer. The ability to attract and retain employees to work in partially benefited positions is critical to the city’s operations and ability to provide services to the public, particularly seasonal programming. Accordingly, staff propose amending the code to authorize the City Manager or designee to approve additional nominal benefits for PBEs when consistent with good personnel practices, and within existing budget limits. These nominal benefits could include gift cards to recognize exceptional employee performance or access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which provides short-term mental health counseling, coaching, text therapy, virtual group therapy, as well as financial and legal resources and other benefits. Staff believe providing flexibility to the City Manager or designee to approve these kinds of additional nominal benefits will make Bellevue a more competitive employer and is in the best interests of the city. PBEs would continue to be ineligible for health insurance and the paid leave benefits only available to regular status employees. Any decision to provide additional nominal benefits to represented PBEs would have to be bargained with their respective unions, consistent with state law and Bellevue City Code.

Staff also propose to delete the partially benefited “temporary employee” definition from the Bellevue City Code as Council directed this term be sunset and no longer applicable after December 31, 2014.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

The City of Bellevue’s core values of exceptional public service, stewardship, commitment to employees, integrity, innovation, and diversity, equity and inclusion guide employee benefits decisions. This proposed code change reflects these core values, and supports the City Council vision for high performance government by allowing Bellevue to stay competitive with other jurisdictions and attract, engage, and retain a high-performing, diverse workforce.

Fiscal Impact

As provided in the proposed Ordinance, any additional nominal benefits approved for PBEs must be within existing budget limits.

Each department has an established recognition fund within the adopted 2025-2026 budget. If approved, all costs associated with expanding recognition gift card access to PBEs would remain within the departments’ existing budget limits.

The cost to expand EAP benefits to PBEs would be less than \$10,000 annually based on 2025 PBE headcount (\$2.53 per employee per month). If approved, the increased EAP costs could be fully absorbed within the adopted 2025-2026 budget.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the Ordinance amending Section 3.79.040 of the Bellevue City Code to authorize the City Manager to approve additional nominal benefits for partially benefited employees when consistent with good personnel practices and so long as sufficient appropriations exist within the current budget to pay the full cost of the benefits, and to delete the “temporary employee” definition.
2. Do not adopt the Ordinance and provide alternative direction for staff.

ATTACHMENTS

Proposed Ordinance No. 6902

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A