

RECOGNITIONS, REFRESHMENTS, AND MISCELLANEOUS REIMBURSEMENTS POLICY 504

.1 PURPOSE

This policy authorizes and provides regulations on activities to recognize employees, volunteers, and the department of Juvenile and Family Services program participants, on providing refreshments/meals at meetings or other events, and on miscellaneous disbursements.

.2 APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all County offices/departments and agencies and to all County Officials, their employees, and officially recognized volunteers and those participating in the department of Juvenile and Family Services sponsored programs.

.3 DEFINITIONS

“County Official” as used in this policy means elected official and/or appointed department head.

“Refreshment” means food and beverages and supplies (such as cups and spoons) typically consumed between meals at a cost of no more than 1/16 of the Federal daily Meal and Incidental rate. Refreshments should be purchased from an approved source and may only be served at an event lasting more than two hours.

“Meal” means food and supplies (such as paper plates and napkins), purchased from an approved source, allowed at an event lasting more than four hours equaling one fourth per diem for lunch and one half per diem for dinner.

“Volunteer” or “Program Participant” means anyone who, without compensation or expectations of compensation beyond reimbursement for expenses as allowed by policy, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the County. To be considered a “volunteer” or “program participant” an individual must be officially accepted and enrolled by the County prior to performance of the task or participation in the program.

“Approved Source” means a commercial store, restaurant, or licensed caterer.

.4 AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

4.1 Employee Awards

It is the desire of the Board of Commissioners to recognize the superior job performance and outstanding customer service of employees and volunteers. County Officials are encouraged to issue notes, certificates, and letters to recognize employee and volunteer performance as long as the cost is de minimis and within their respective budgets. For more extensive recognitions, such as in the Sheriff's Office and Juvenile and Family Services (for instance), public funds may be expended for awards to recognize outstanding employee and volunteer performance. The department must have specifically approved policy and procedure and a budget line for the administration of their respective awards program.

4.2 Employee Recognition

A special annual countywide event to recognize employee performance and longevity is allowed. For departments unable to attend due to shift work (Sheriff's Office and Juvenile and Family Services, for instance) other arrangements for an annual recognition is permitted as long as the per capita cost is in line with that expended for the special countywide event previously referenced.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent County Officials from issuing notes, letters, or certificates as they see fit as long as the expenditure is de minimis and within their approved budget.

4.3 Volunteer Recognition

Each department may host one annual event to recognize its volunteers and/or provide its volunteers one award annually to publicly acknowledge the contributions of volunteers. All cost of the event, excluding the award, must fall in the fractional per diem rates for meals or refreshments. Annual awards for volunteers may be purchased using public funds but may not exceed \$25 per volunteer. A Claim for Reimbursement form must accompany the invoice submitted to the Auditor.

4.4 Program Participant Recognition / Incentives

Youth accepted or enrolled in programs sponsored by the department of Juvenile and Family Services may receive recognition awards or goal-oriented incentives specific to successful completion of tasks or accomplishments required by the program. Awards or incentives for program participants may be purchased using public or grant funds (if available) based on available funds within the department, but may not exceed \$25 per participant per month unless otherwise outlined by grant requirements (if applicable).

Participants involved in Superior Court programs Parents for Parents (P4P) and L.I.F.T. Court (Living In Families Together) may receive recognition awards or goal-oriented incentives specific to successful attendance, completion of tasks, or accomplishments as outlined in these programs. Awards of incentives for program participants may be purchased using public or grant funds based on available funds within departmental program budgets, but may not exceed \$25 per participant per month unless otherwise outlined by grant requirements (if applicable).

4.5 Employee Life Events

Public funds shall not be used to recognize employee life events such as birthdays, marriages, or deaths. Public funds may be used, to a maximum of \$50, to acknowledge employee retirements providing that the retiree has been a County employee at the time of retirement for a minimum of 15 years. Departments may request reimbursement of the cost of a cake and/or other refreshments from the General Fund Non-departmental budget.

4.6 Non-Employee Life Event

Public funds shall not be used to recognize life events for non-employees such as deaths, marriages, retirements, etc.

.5 REFRESHMENTS

5.1 Public Employee Meetings and Training

Public funds shall not be used for refreshments at meetings and/or trainings, that are expected to last for two hours or less, consisting only of Public Employees (whether from the same municipal corporation or not). Meetings expected to last longer than two hours may be treated the same as in 5.2 (below).

5.2 Public Employee Meetings and Training with the Public

When a meeting and/or training includes Public Employees and members of the general public and lasts more than two hours refreshments may be provided using public funds. The cost of refreshments should not exceed 1/16 of the Federal Meal and Incidental rate, for the location of the meeting, per attendee.

5.3 Volunteer Work Events

Meals may be provided to volunteers working on a project if the project lasts more than four hours and it is not reasonable for the volunteers to take a meal break.

Refreshments may be provided if an event lasts more than two hours. Meals and refreshments must follow the nominal cost guidelines.

.6 MISCELLANEOUS REIMBURSEMENTS

6.1 Employee Purchases

Any purchases made by an employee, and submitted to the Auditor for reimbursement, should be accompanied by a detailed receipt listing the items purchased. If the receipt does not provide itemized detail the Miscellaneous Reimbursement form must also be attached. At the Auditor's discretion, other forms of documentation may be accepted in extraordinary circumstances.

.7 DOCUMENTATION OF EXPENSES

7.1 Affidavit in Lieu of Receipt

A County Official, at his/her discretion, may approve an Affidavit of Expense in lieu of receipt for an expenditure for which a receipt might reasonably not have been available or if the receipt is lost. Such reimbursement will be included in the employee's taxable income.

7.2 Claims for Reimbursement for Meals and Refreshments Form

When meals or refreshments are purchased using the guidelines of this policy a Claims for Reimbursement for Meals and Refreshments form must be completed and accompany receipts when request for reimbursement is submitted.

All claims for reimbursement for meals and refreshments purchased for others must contain the following:

- a. Who and how many people consumed the food and drink?
- b. What was the nature of the occasion for the consumption?
- c. What public purpose of policy objective was served?
- d. What is the date and name of the event?
- e. What is the start time and the end time of the event?

Any remaining food shall not be removed from County premises for personal use by County employees.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ***If I make something at home and serve it at the meeting or training can I be reimbursed for ingredients?***

No. Food items must come from an approved source in order to be reimbursed for your purchase.

- ***What can I do with leftover food or supplies?***

Any remaining food shall not be removed from County premises for personal use by County employees. Perishable food may be donated to the Food Bank, Serenity House, Juvenile and Family Services, or other charity organization. If a donation cannot reasonably be done, County employees may consume the remaining food while on County premises. Non-perishable food shall be stored on county premises with the intention of using for future meetings and/or trainings.

- ***If my grant will reimburse at a higher rate than this policy may I use the grant rate?***

No, County policy shall be followed for all meal and refreshment purchases.

- ***We held an advertised public meeting but no one showed up. Refreshments were purchased prior to the meeting. Do I still get reimbursed for my purchases?***

Yes, with proper substantiation regarding the purchase, information about the meeting, and what happened to the unused food, you can still be reimbursed.