

Policy Type: Business Affairs  
Policy Title: Meals with Business Meetings  
Policy Number: BA-06

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**Purpose:**

The Agency Head has delegated responsibility to Administrators to approve payment for a meal with a *business meeting* if it is away from the employee's or official's regular workplace, regardless of travel status, if the *business meeting* meets the criteria described below.

Administrators are expected to exercise prudent judgment in approving meals with *business meetings* and to apply this policy to ensure that employees are not treated differently under like circumstances.

**Scope:**

All State Employees

**Definitions:**

**Official State Business:**

Activities performed by an official or state employee, authorized volunteer, or contractor, work experience program participant, student or employee of another governmental jurisdiction as directed by his or her supervisor in order to accomplish state programs or as required by the duties of his or her position or office.

**Integral part of the meeting:**

A meal is an integral part of a *business meeting* when, in the interests of time, the meeting stays in progress while the participants are eating their meal, or if breaking for an un-sponsored lunch would make it impossible to complete the meeting or training event on time.

**Hosting Activities:**

Hosting includes, but is not limited to, those activities that are intended either to lobby a legislator or a governmental official, or are to be a social rather than governmental business event, and include expenditures for meals for those whom agencies are not legally authorized to reimburse.

**Business Meeting:**

Including, but not limited to, conferences, conventions and formal training sessions.

**Advantageous to the State:**

A meal with meeting is advantageous to the State when the business meeting is directly work-related and the meal is served in order to facilitate timeliness of the meeting or to limit additional travel expenditures.

**Policy or Procedure:**

This authority is intended for use when the agency requires a person to attend a *business meeting* where meals are served. If it is determined that reimbursement for a meal, regardless of travel status, is *advantageous to the State* all of the following criteria must be met:

1. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct official state business or to provide training to state employees or state officials; and
2. The meal is an integral part of the business meeting (as described above); and
3. An administrator has provided written approval for payment in advance of the meeting. (One-time approvals are acceptable for recurring meetings); and
4. If a meeting otherwise meets the requirements for a meal with meeting, the meeting must be in session no less than 3 hours in order to qualify.

**Reimbursement procedures:**

1. A meal that meets all of the above criteria will be reimbursed when a properly completed and authorized Meals with Meetings approval form has been submitted to the Accounts Payable department along with an A-19. The form must include names of state organizations or persons attending the meeting and the purpose or accomplishments of the meeting. A meeting agenda needs to accompany the request.  
[https://www.gatonet.greenriver.edu/BusinessOffice/Forms/meals\\_with\\_meetings\\_approval\\_form.htm](https://www.gatonet.greenriver.edu/BusinessOffice/Forms/meals_with_meetings_approval_form.htm)  
[https://www.gatonet.greenriver.edu/BusinessOffice/Forms/accounts\\_payable\\_voucher\\_distribution\\_form.htm](https://www.gatonet.greenriver.edu/BusinessOffice/Forms/accounts_payable_voucher_distribution_form.htm)
2. An approved meal will be reimbursed at an amount not to exceed the per diem rate as prescribed by the State of Washington for the county where the meal is served.  
<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/policy/colormap1004.pdf>

**Advisory Committees:**

Advisory Committee members can be served a meal with a meeting if there is an appointment letter (agreement) in place to obtain their committee services without making them employees.

**Expenditures for meals with meetings are prohibited in some cases:**

1. For anniversaries of agencies, receptions for new, existing, and/retiring employees or officials, training sessions for new staff, or election celebrations.
2. Any “*hosting*” activities.
3. Any meal that fails to meet the criteria as described above.

**Agency encouraged meals with meetings:**

1. In the interest of responsible state fund spending, the college encourages staff to have potluck lunches whenever possible. In addition to responsible spending of State funds, a potluck also lends itself to important team building opportunities.
2. Unless there is a lack of space or a confidentiality issue, business meetings that involve only GRCC staff are to be held at main campus or one of the branch locations, which may help to avoid the need for a meal to be served and paid for by the State.
3. Meals with meetings should be the exception, and not the rule.
4. Meals may be served at staff retreats. However, staff units are encouraged to limit serving meals to one retreat per fiscal year.

**Specific Authority:**

RCW 43.03.050 (3) <http://www.leg.wa.gov/RCW/>

SAAM 70.15 Meals with Meetings

<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/policy/70.15.htm#70.15>

SAAM 10.10.10 Agency Responsibilities <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/policy/10.10.htm>

**Law Implemented:**

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**History of Policy or Procedure**

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Revised:

Reviewed by:

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