

**Buying Meals or Light Refreshments for Meetings****INTRODUCTION**

The purchase of meals or light refreshments for meetings is subject to state and University regulations.

**Exception**

Procedures in this section apply to purchases made with all University monies except for discretionary accounts in program 17A. See *BPPM* 70.33 to make purchases using a 17A discretionary account.

NOTE: Sponsored accounts may have additional restrictions regarding the purchase of food for meetings.

**Conditions for Meals**

University monies may be used to pay for meals without regard for participants' travel status or the Three-Hour Rule (see *BPPM* 95.06) if the following conditions are met:

- The meal must be essential to the completeness (i.e., an integral part) of an official University meeting or training session, **and**
- The University must *require* that the employee attend the meeting or formal training session, **and**
- The purpose of the event must be to conduct official WSU business or to provide formal training to WSU employees.

**Nonallowable**

The cost of meals may not be supported by University monies when the purpose of the meeting is to conduct one of the following kinds of activities:

- Normal daily business of University employees
- Staff meetings
- Anniversaries of units
- Anniversaries of individual employment.  
EXCEPTION: Such events which are a part of an official employee recognition program approved by the University and HRS may be supported by University monies.
- Retirements
- Elections
- Lobbying a legislator or governmental official
- Social events
- Election celebrations

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|------------------------------------|--|
| Cost Per Meal                      | Cost per meal served may not exceed the applicable travel meal limits for the location. See <i>BPPM</i> 95.19 for travel meal rates.<br><br>Enter the applicable cost per meal on the Request to Serve Food form. (See form instructions under <a href="#">Prior Approval</a> .)   |
| Location                           | The meeting must be <i>away</i> from the employee's regular work place. (See <i>BPPM</i> 95.01 for a definition of work place.)  |
| <b>Conditions for Refreshments</b> | Light refreshments include nonalcoholic beverages and edible items commonly served between meals, but not intended to substitute for meals, e.g., coffee, soft drinks, doughnuts, sweet rolls, fruit, cheese.<br><br>University monies may be used to support the costs of light refreshments, subject to the following conditions:  |
| Purpose                            | The purpose of the meeting must be to conduct official WSU business or to provide formal training to WSU employees. The light refreshments must be essential for the completeness (i.e., an integral part) of an official University meeting or training session.  |
| Nonallowable                       | The cost of light refreshments may not be supported by University monies when the purpose of the meeting is to conduct one of the following kinds of activities (see also <i>SAAM</i> 70.15.20): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Normal daily business of University employees</li><li>• Staff meetings</li><li>• Anniversaries of units</li><li>• Anniversaries of individual employment.<br/>EXCEPTION: Such events which are a part of an official employee recognition program approved by the University and HRS may be supported by University monies.</li><li>• Retirements</li><li>• Receptions for employees</li><li>• Elections</li><li>• Lobbying a legislator or governmental official</li><li>• Social events</li><li>• Election celebrations</li></ul> |

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**PRIOR APPROVAL**

A Request to Serve Food form is required to obtain prior approval to pay for meals or light refreshments. The responsible chair, director, or approving officer must sign the request at least *five working days before* the event. (See also *SAAM* 70.15.30.)

The Request to Serve Food form is available in PDF format on the Procedures, Records, and Forms (PR&F) website at:

[policies.wsu.edu/prf/index/forms/](http://policies.wsu.edu/prf/index/forms/)

The requirement also applies to purchases from WSU service centers.

A Request to Serve Food form may *not* be required for certain funding types. For details, see the Accounts Payable website, Food Matrix:

[acctspay.wsu.edu/food-matrix](http://acctspay.wsu.edu/food-matrix)

List of Attendees

The request form must include a list of participants, indicating each participant's relationship to the University, e.g., employee, official, guest.

NOTE: When seeking approval for *refreshments*, this list may include the names of the participating organizations or groups when the number of participants is large or when the names of participants are unknown.

State Facility

Indicate whether or not a state of Washington facility is to be used for the event. State regulations require that state facilities be given preference when possible. (*SAAM* 10.10.55) See *BPPM* 95.06 for information about conferences and conventions.

Routing

The department must attach a copy of the completed and approved request form to the invoice or invoice voucher and route to Accounts Payable.

For purchasing card transactions, the department retains the completed Request to Serve Food form with the monthly purchasing card reconciliation.

**PAYMENT OR REIMBURSEMENT**

A department may directly pay the vendor or reimburse an employee for incurred food expenses.

**Requesting Reimbursement**

When an employee personally pays for a meal or light refreshments, submit a request for reimbursement to Accounts Payable. Include the following documents:

- An itemized receipt from the vendor.

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### **Requesting Reimbursement (cont.)**

- A completed and approved State of Washington Invoice Voucher, if the employee was not in travel status, approved by the supervisor to Accounts Payable. See *BPPM 30.45*. (If the supervisor does not have expenditure authority for the charged account, an employee holding the appropriate expenditure authority also signs the Invoice Voucher. See *BPPM 70.02*.)

See *BPPM 95.06* and *95.20* regarding travel-related meal reimbursements.

### **Direct Deposit**

A WSU employee may authorize Accounts Payable to deposit his or her food reimbursement in any domestic bank that is a member of an automated clearinghouse. See *BPPM 95.21* to request direct deposit.

### **Direct Vendor Payment**

The department may pay a vendor directly by using one of the following procedures:

#### **DO**

Complete a Department Order. Follow procedures in *BPPM 70.07*.

#### **IRI**

Complete an Interdepartmental Requisition and Invoice if the vendor is a University organization, e.g., Dining Service, CUB. Follow procedures in *BPPM 70.05*.

#### **Purchasing Card**

Use a departmental purchasing card. Follow procedures in *BPPM 70.08*.

NOTE: A purchasing card may not be used to purchase meals that include alcoholic beverages, or to purchase drinking water where potable water is available. (See *BPPM 70.08*.)

#### **Vendor's Invoice**

Obtain an invoice for the meals or refreshments from the vendor. If the vendor's address and name is not on the invoice, complete a State of Washington Invoice Voucher and obtain the vendor's signature on the form.

NOTE: A University purchasing form is not required for this procedure.

Submit the vendor's invoice to Accounts Payable. Add the coding of the supporting account. A University employee with expenditure authority for the supporting account must sign the invoice. (See *BPPM 70.02* for an explanation of expenditure authority.)

NOTE: The total cost may not exceed the current purchasing bid limit. See *BPPM 70.13*.