

Use of State Funds for Light Refreshments and Meals

University Operations – Financial Management

CWU Policy 202-11

Effective: March 6, 2013

Policy Review Date: YEAR

Policy Executive: Senior Vice President – Finance and Administration

Responsible Office/Unit: Contracts, Purchasing & Surplus

Policy Statement:

Applicability:

Content:

Policy

(1) Reference: [OFM State Administrative & Accounting Manual](#)

(2) Authority: [RCW 43.03.050\(4\)](#)

(3) General.

- A. University funds cannot be expended for hosting activities related to lobbying or social gatherings.

(4) Light Refreshments.

- A. University funds may be used to serve light refreshments in certain circumstances subject to programmatic and fund approval by the principal budget administrator (PBA). Light refreshments include non-alcoholic beverages and edible items commonly served between meals, but not intended to substitute for meals. See [SAAM 70.10](#) for rules.
- B. In order to meet state reporting requirements, a memorandum of approval for the payment for light refreshments signed by a principal budget administrator in advance of the event must include the amount to be spent, the purpose of the event, and the estimated number of people attending the event.

- C. The university may pay for the purchase of non-alcoholic beverages and other light refreshments for the exclusive consumption of uncompensated volunteer committees or groups who work on university projects, provided that:
 - 1. the principal budget administrator formally approves in writing the need for the activity;
 - 2. the activity is held in a locality other than the “official workstation” of the majority of the volunteers; and,
 - 3. the majority of attendees at the activity are volunteers.
- D. [RCW 41.60.150](#) allows recognition awards for outstanding achievements, safety performances, and longevity. Expenditures for light refreshments may be made as part of the award. The total amount for the award may not exceed \$200 per award.

(5) Meals.

- A. University funds may be used to pay for meals at meetings when the purpose of the meeting is to conduct official university business or training. See [SAAM 70.15](#) for rules.

(6) Prospective Employee Interview Expenses.

- A. [SAAM 70.20](#) defines the circumstances when university funds may be used to pay a prospective employee for their necessary travel expenses.

(7) Grant Funds (Fund 145)

- A. Prior to expenditure of grant funds for food, light refreshment or meals, the Grants Office must determine if the expenditure is allowable under the grant rules. Once the determination is made that the expense is allowable, grant purchases are subject to the same policy and procedures as state funds; however, there are times when a grant specifically authorizes the purchase of food, meals, or light refreshments that would not be allowed with general operating funds. In that case, the Grants Office will attach documentation that shows the special grant circumstances that allow the purchase.

(8) Student Activity Funds

- A. Generally speaking, refreshment may be served as incidentals of approved student programs such as graduation ceremonies, scholarship convocations, student activity or club meetings, student awards, student work sessions, etc.) Activities funded by service and activity fees are subject to the applicable policies.

(9) Policies for Food Purchased as a Supply or for Resale

- A. Certain university activities require the purchase of food that is not subject to state meals and light refreshments policies. For example, a designated state-funded lab or research project may purchase food as an instructional or research supply. Or, a specific self-support program may purchase food for resale or for a fundraiser.

History:

*10/01/2008; Responsibility: CFO/BFA; Authority: [RCW 43.03.050\(4\)](#); Reviewed/Endorsed by: UPAC;
Review/Effective Date: 03/06/2013; Approved by: James L. Gaudino, President
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