



DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
Olympia, Washington

---

TITLE: FOOD SERVICE MEALS AUTHORIZATION POLICY 10.04

---

Authority: Chapters 82-28-010, 82-28-040, 82-28-050 WAC  
OFM Policy Part 4, Chapter 2  
DSHS Personnel Policy 521  
DSHS Administrative Policy 6.11  
DSHS Travel Manual

**PURPOSE**

This policy establishes a process for providing an employee a meal at no cost and/or reimbursement for expenses incurred by an employee of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) when engaged in official state business.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Residential Habilitation Center (RHCs) within DDD.

**POLICY**

Each Residential Habilitation Center (RHC) shall have written procedures which govern the provision of free meals to employees and for the reimbursement of legitimate meal expenses incurred by staff.

- A. Meals may be provided at state facilities at no cost to employees as defined in DSHS Personnel Policy 521 and/or the labor-management agreement.
- B. Meals may be provided away from the facility at no cost to employees when in travel status and on official state business as specified in the DSHS Travel Manual and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) Policy Manual.

**PROCEDURES**

- A. A meal will be provided by the facility, at the facility, at no cost to the employee in the following cases, with prior administrative approval:
1. When employees are required to provide assistance, security or treatment to clients within the living unit or residence dining room during the client's meal period and the staff are required to take their meal at that time.
  2. When department staff outside the facility are requested to counsel during the meal period of the clients.
  3. When employees are required to respond to emergency overtime work during breakfast, lunch or dinner meals they would have otherwise been eating at home, whether or not the meal occurs during the overtime period. Food will likewise be made available for swing shift staff required to work mandatory overtime two or more hours into the next shift.
  4. Employees who have been required to return to duty before they were able to complete a meal purchased in an RHC dining facility will have the cost of that meal reimbursed.
  5. On-duty culinary staff as defined in DSHS Personnel Policy 521 are provided one meal during their shift.
- B. Each facility will develop internal systems for tracking meals provided to employees at no cost.
- C. A meal will be provided by the facility, away from the facility, at no cost to the employee in the following cases:
1. Employees are eligible for meal reimbursement if they are in travel status and either meet the three-hour rule, or are on official state business involving one or more individuals who are not state employees.
  2. Meal expenses will be reimbursed when an employee is required to accompany a client on an outing to provide assistance, security or treatment during the client's meal period and the employee is required to take their meal at that time and providing:
    - a. Administrative approval has been given for reimbursement of the anticipated meal and for the employee's participation in the outing; and

- b. The outing will exceed more than three hours in length.

C. Reimbursement Process

1. The per diem method is the basis for reimbursement in DSHS. It consists of a set per-meal entitlement.
2. To receive reimbursement for meal expenses, staff will:
  - a. Complete a Travel Expense Voucher (Form A-20) according to instructions detailed in the DSHS Travel Manual;
  - b. Obtain authorization from the RHC Superintendent or designee for reimbursement for the itemized expense(s); and
  - c. Forward to the Travel Expense Voucher (Form A-20) to Accounting Services for payment.
3. Meal reimbursement will not exceed the maximum allowable per diem rate.

D. Expense Advances

1. Travel expense advances may be authorized for anticipated reimbursable expenses incurred by staff on state business. Refer to the DSHS Travel Manual for instructions.
2. The travel advance amount must not exceed 90 percent of the expected amount of the expenditure.
3. If a staff person expects to frequently incur travel expenses, they may apply for a state-sponsored credit card through their unit travel coordinator.

**DEFINITIONS**

- A. **"Official Residence"** A primary domicile, street address and telephone number from which staff travel to and from the official station where they work.
- B. **"Official Station"** The location of the office where staff work on a regular, permanent basis.

- C. **"Original Receipt"** An itemized bill or invoice issued by a restaurant, hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast establishment indicating amounts paid for lodging, telephone calls, food, other services, and taxes.
- D. **"Official State Business"** Authorized activities performed by state employees, volunteers, contractors, students, or persons representing other government jurisdictions to accomplish state programs as required by the duties of their positions or offices.
- E. **"Per Diem"** An allowance for daily expenses.
- F. **"The Three-Hour Rule"** To qualify for meals and/or lodging reimbursement, an employee must be in travel status for a total of three (3) hours more than the regularly scheduled working hours of one (1) day.
- G. **"Travel Advance"** A sum of money up to 90 percent of anticipated expenses to be incurred by an employee during the estimated duration of the travel time, given to the employee before departure to cover travel costs.
- H. **"Travel Status"** An employee who performs official duties away from their official station and their official residence is considered to be in travel status and is eligible for reimbursement for certain expenses incurred as a result of being away from usual home or office.

**SUPERSESSSION**

Division Policy Directive: 360.2.9  
Issued May 1990

Approved:     /s/ Norm Davis      
Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

Date:     11/29/93