



Food & Beverage for Meetings & Events Procedure

Chapter 5: Finance

Procedure Number: PR533.02 (Replaces PR533.01 aka Policy 102.09)
Effective Date: 6/10/2019
Reviewed by: Chief Operating Officer, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Health Operations Team
Approval: Financial Management Director

Purpose Statement

This procedure outlines the required steps to purchase food or beverages and provides guidance on healthier food options at meetings, workshops, and catered events.

Food and Beverages for Advisory Committee, Task Force, or Other Work Group Meetings

The purchase of food and beverages is authorized for advisory committee, task force or other work group meetings to make the use of voluntary time of non-state employee participants more efficient and effective. Meetings shall be scheduled to minimize inclusion of meals.

When it is anticipated that advisory committee, task force, or work group meetings will last longer than four hours and occur over the breakfast, lunch, or dinner hour, the department authorizes the purchase of meals. State employees who are considered an integral part of the meeting group may be included, but should be limited to less than 50% of the total group membership.

You are encouraged to stay within the limits outlined in labor agreements for refreshments and meals for meetings.

Food and Beverages for Internal Agency Meetings

The purchase of food is not allowed for routine staff meetings attended only by state employees. Authorization to purchase food is limited to the following, non-routine staff meetings and must fall within one of the categories listed on the RAISE form:

- a. One section-wide training/planning meeting per fiscal year (may include meals.),
- b. One division-wide training/planning meeting per fiscal year (may include meals.),

- c. One department-wide employee recognition meeting per fiscal year (may include beverages and light snacks, but no meals.),
- d. Active response to ongoing public health emergencies when employees are required to remain on premises for extended periods of time or outside of normal work hours (may include meals), and
- e. Approved by the Commissioner of Health or designee per [Minnesota Management and Budget Administrative Procedure 4.4: Special Expenses](#) (may include meals).

State funds cannot be used to purchase food for a party for an employee who is retiring or leaving state service, unless approval has been given by Commissioner to use the department head expense account.

Per the Department of Administration's purchasing policy 33: Procurement of Events, providing alcoholic beverages or a "cash bar" is prohibited. State funds must not be used to pay for a cash bar or costs associated with a cash bar (e.g. alcoholic beverages, bartenders, wait staff, security, or venue space).

Healthy Food Choices

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is committed to promoting the health and well-being of all Minnesotans, including its employees. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle involves more than individual choices. Environmental and social norms are key factors that influence the healthy eating habits that are integral to good health and optimal work performance. MDH will ensure that a variety of healthy food choices are available for all organization activities where food is served.

MDH encourages serving nutritious foods to employees and guests. A good standard is the USDA My Plate guidelines: half the meal consists of fruits and vegetables, one quarter protein and one quarter grains.

Additional considerations include:

- a. Purchasing foods and beverages with no or reduced added sugars, saturated fat and sodium are encouraged.
- b. Purchasing foods and beverages with limited nutritional value such as soda pop and candy are discouraged.
- c. Foods provided for meetings and events always include healthy choices, including substantive vegetarian and low-fat options.
- d. When feasible, dietary restrictions should be identified and accommodated (e.g. identify during event registration).
- e. Healthy foods will be labeled as such and positioned more prominently than other foods.
- f. All food is handled, prepared and stored in accordance with Food Safety Regulations.
- g. In the event that a contractor organizes an MDH sponsored event, the contractor shall collaborate with the appropriate MDH staff to approve the menu of foods and beverages in accordance with the MDH catering policy.
- h. MDH encourages the purchase of food in minimal, reusable, or recyclable packaging.
- i. State agencies are also encouraged to reduce their consumption of bottled water. It is recommended that for training classes, state agencies provide pitchers of tap water and encourage attendees to bring their own refillable beverage container. In addition, agencies are encouraged to provide compostable cups.

Applicability

This procedure applies to all MDH staff and management, MN.IT staff and management, contractors, divisions and offices, councils, boards, commissions and other entities associated with the Minnesota Department of Health.

Procedure Steps

Step No.	Responsible	Procedural Step
1.	Assistant Division Director or Designee	Determine the division need for food/beverage services and notify assigned staff member of needed item.
2.	Requestor	Complete the following: a) A Request for Approval to Incur Special Expense (RAISE) form: • For expense type, select one of the refreshment options. • For payment method, select Employee Expense or Vendor Payment. Purchasing cards cannot be used to purchase food or beverages. • Attach all quotes and estimates for approval purposes. Contact the health.reserve@state.mn.us mailbox for assistance. Wait for all approvals and confirmation from Financial Management before incurring any obligations for (i.e. ordering/purchasing) the food/catering services. If an order was placed with a vendor prior to obtaining a PO, a violation has occurred. The Purchasing Violation Form must be completed. <i>Note: If an external venue is needed please follow procedure MDH Procedure PR516: Conference and Meetings in External Venues or contact health.reserve@state.mn.us.</i>
3.	Activity Manager & Division Director/Designee	1. Review RAISE form and verify accuracy. 2. Approve or deny RAISE form.
4.	Financial Management	1. Review approved request and follow-up with requestor for missing or inaccurate information. If request changes during this process, obtain any new approvals as required. Once approvals are complete, proceed as follows: • \$0-2,000 create purchase order. (PO number will be entered on RAISE form and sent to requestor.)

Step No.	Responsible	Procedural Step
		\$2,000 or more - the competitive bid process will be used as outlined in the Purchasing Procedure.
5.	Requestor	- Once purchase order number is received, make arrangements with vendor to secure order. - Notify Financial Management of any changes to the RAISE form. If the final amount is 10% over the original request amount, the change must be authorized in advance by the Activity Manager or Designee via e-mail to health.raiseforms@state.mn.us.
6.	Requestor	- Assure services are delivered. - Pay for the food/beverages: - If you selected Employee Expense (paid for with personal credit card or cash) on the RAISE form, pay for the food/beverages and request reimbursement on a SEMA4 Employee Expense Report. - If you selected vendor payment on the RAISE form, instruct the vendor to bill the department directly via invoice. When you receive the vendor's invoice, approve (sign, date, list the PO number, and ok to pay) and forward it to Financial Management at health.invoices@state.mn.us.
7.	Financial Management	Process SEMA4 Employee Expense Report or invoice for payment.

Forms

- [Conference-Meeting Request for External Venues Form](#)
- [Request for Approval to Incur Special Expense \(RAISE\)](#)
- [SEMA4 Employee Expense Report](#)
- [Purchasing Violation Form](#)

Related Information

- [Minnesota Management and Budget Administrative Procedure 4.4: Special Expenses](#)
- [Department of Administration Policy 33: Procurement of Events](#)
- [MDH Procedure PR516: Conference and Meetings in External Venues](#)
- [MDH Procedure PR509: Reimbursement of Business-Travel Expenses](#)

Resources for healthy food guidance:

- Eat Well Work Well Website: <http://www.eatwellworkwell.org/index.htm> [attn: non-MDH site],
- Eat Well Work Well Nutrition Guide: http://www.eatwellworkwell.org/pdfs/Nutrition_Guide_2008.pdf [attn: non-MDH site]
- Meeting Well: <http://www.acsworkplacesolutions.com/meetingwell.asp> [attn: non-MDH site]
- USDA My Plate: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> [attn: non-MDH site]
- [MDH Sustainability](#) Intranet Site