



State of Arizona Accounting Manual

Topic 80 Miscellaneous
Section 11 Food and Beverages
at Board and Commission Meetings

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INTRODUCTION

The directives governing meetings of Arizona's boards and commissions are codified by statute, including A.R.S. § 38-431 et seq., and relevant sections of the Arizona Administrative Code. This policy expands upon these instructions.

Upon rare occasions, it can be in the best interest of the State to provide a meal to those not in travel status at a meeting of board members. This section of SAAM sets forth the conditions and limitations that apply to serving food and beverages at meetings of the members of State boards.

POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. Board, commission and other meetings and events hosted by State agencies are to be conducted in a manner that, while adequately permitting the conduct of State business, does so in such a way as to reduce costs.
2. Boards and commissions, when feasible, should conduct meetings in a manner that reduces travel expenses, while still maximizing member and public participation.
 - 2.1. Board and commissions should consider alternatives that reduce the costs of meeting in person, such as teleconferencing, if less costly to the State, allowed by statute (with particular regard to A.R.S. § 38-431.01) and rule, and can achieve the objectives of the meeting.
 - 2.2. When a physical meeting is required, the meeting is to be held in public facility whenever possible.
3. The justification for allowing the provision of food and beverages at the State's expense at board meetings to those not in travel status may be one or more of the following:
 - 3.1. The reduction of the overall cost to the State of holding board meetings.
 - 3.1.1. This may be accomplished by lengthening one or more days' agendas if this results in reducing the number of days required for the meeting and thereby the overall cost to the State. (The reduction in the number of days of the meeting, in turn, reduces or eliminates the costs of meals and lodging that would have been incurred as a result of overnight stays for required participants in travel status. This implies that one or more of the participants are in travel status and are or

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- would be entitled to overnight lodging and additional meals were the meeting to be held over to an additional day.)
- 3.2. The impracticality or cost of convening a quorum of the board members for an additional day or days.
 - 3.3. Certain (very rare) emergencies requiring the immediate and uninterrupted attention of board members.
 4. The provision at State expense of food and beverages to certain individuals not in travel status at board and commission meetings is subject to the conditions and limitations set forth in this section of SAAM.
 5. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct official State business.
 6. The meeting, including any time allowed for breaks, must last at least ten (10) hours from the time it convenes until the time it adjourns.
 7. The actual time devoted to the “business of the meeting” (i.e., not allocated to meals or other non-business activities) must consume at least nine (9) hours during the meeting.
 8. No single break during the meeting shall exceed thirty (30) minutes in length.
 9. No person not in travel status and provided a meal at the State’s expense shall leave the building in which the meeting is held while the meeting is in session.
 - 9.1. The “business of the meeting” includes, but is not limited to:
 - 9.1.1. Discussion of the needs of the board or the profession, trade, occupation or activity it regulates, or other purposes for which the meeting was convened.
 - 9.1.2. Listening to and/or interviewing witnesses, candidates, subject matter experts, licensees and/or members of the public served by the board, etc.
 - 9.1.3. Review, development and/or proposal of rules, regulations and/or laws related to the activities of the board.
 - 9.1.4. Analysis and/or review of budget, financial, accounting, economic, legislative, professional and other reports impacting the board or its area of concern.
 - 9.1.5. Reading of the minutes of prior board meetings and scheduling of future board meetings or board-related activities.
 - 9.2. The “business of the meeting” does not include activities such as:
 - 9.2.1. Celebratory activities like anniversaries, employee recognition events, etc.

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- 9.2.2. Hosting activities that are social rather than business events.
10. The amount per person paid for food and beverages that may be provided at State expense may not exceed the amount that would be allowed for lunch at the place and time where and when the meeting is held.
 11. No more than one meal each day may be provided for those not in travel status.
 12. Meals for those not in travel status may be provided only to members of the board and full-time State employees, whose presence is required for the entire meeting.
 - 12.1. Possibly included among agency personnel whose presence might be required for the entire meeting would be the executive director, legal counsel, and whoever is responsible for taking notes and preparing minutes of the meeting.
 13. The cost of meals provided under the provisions of this policy is to be recorded using Expenditure Object 6711, rather than 6541 or 6542.
 - 13.1. Travel claims that may be filed in connection with this meeting are to be scrutinized to ensure that no claim is made for a meal that was provided.
 14. Parties to whom meals are served under must not leave the meeting room except for brief breaks for personal matters, to take telephone calls, etc.
 15. Board and commission members are reimbursed allowable meal and lodging expenses subject to the dollar limitations that apply to other State officers and employees.
 16. Meals must be served and consumed on premises. There is a twofold reason for this:
 - 16.1. If not served and consumed on the premises, the meal provided is taxable to those who partake if no overnight travel is involved.
 - 16.2. If adequate time is available to acquire and consume a meal off premises, then the rationale for providing meals to those not in travel status, (i.e., to shorten the time of the meeting with the goal of reducing additional travel costs), is invalidated.
 17. The length of the meeting should not be purposely lengthened or arbitrarily manipulated for the purpose of complying with the terms and restrictions of this policy.
 18. An agenda for the meeting, showing scheduled start and end times and events must be prepared and retained.
 19. Minutes of the meeting must be prepared and retained for audit.

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20. The meals are an integral part of the meeting, i.e., neither before nor after conducting the business for which the meeting was convened.
21. The agency must obtain and retain a receipt for the actual cost of the food and beverages served.
22. The agency head, his deputy or the agency CFO must approve payment for the meals.
23. A list of all board or commission members as well as other State employees who received a meal must be prepared and retained. This list should also indicate which of those who received a meal were and were not in travel status.
24. The agency head should prepare or have prepared a cost-benefit analysis that demonstrates the savings to the State realized by providing meals to those not in travel status. This analysis must be retained for audit.
25. Minutes of the meeting must be retained. (Public meetings law as well as any rules that may apply.)