

Policy #: 740
Title: SPECIAL EXPENSES/OUTSTATE TRAVEL
Date of Initial Approval: 05-03-2007
Revision/Re-authorization Dates: 11-21-2013; 01-23-2014; 03-24-2016; 08-15-2019; 02-23-2022
Reviewers: MSA Director of Fiscal Services; MSA Superintendent

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to reimburse employees for special expenses incurred in connection with assigned official duties of a state employee which are not reimbursable through the regular expense regulations.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the policy of the Minnesota State Academies (MSA) to pay for approved special expenses. All expenses to be reimbursed must be pre-approved by supervisors.

Note: Refreshments or meals may not be provided for meetings consisting of a majority of state employees. This includes ad hoc meetings or staff meetings, whether held periodically or on an on-call basis. Exceptions are listed in Section E below.

Special expenses include reasonable costs for the following:

- A. Full cost of a meal when it is a part of the structured agenda of a conference, workshop, seminar, or meeting which the Appointing Authority has authorized the employee to attend (this does not include routine staff meetings).
- B. Registration and tuition fees for conferences, seminars, workshops, or education courses.
- C. Refreshments for department-sponsored meetings, conferences, or workshops where the majority of participants are not state employees.
- D. Refreshments, meals, and other conference costs for department-sponsored events where registration fees are charged and the majority of the participants are not state employees.
- E. Refreshments and/or meals for meetings that consist primarily of state employees when the refreshments and/or meals are an integral part of the event and are necessary to sustain the flow of the meeting and to retain the captive audience, and if the meeting is one of the following:
 - 1. A meeting with participants from many geographic locations where the majority of the participants are in travel status.
 - 2. A department-wide annual/quarterly staff meeting for all employees.
 - 3. A department senior management/cabinet planning or organizational meeting.
 - 4. A department-wide annual/quarterly staff meeting for all managers.
 - 5. An annual/quarterly staff meeting of all employees.
 - 6. A structured training session, available to employees generally and conducted by persons outside the agency, provided it has been approved by the agency training or staff development office.

With the exception of structured training sessions, the meetings described shall be held no more frequently than one each quarter. All meetings shall be scheduled to minimize inclusion of meals.

- F. Refreshments and/or meals may be provided during official meetings of statutory boards, councils, task forces, advisory committees, and commissions; and during official meetings of external non-statutory councils, task forces, advisory committees, and commissions for which expenses are authorized by statute or as a condition of a federal grant or contract. Official meetings include meetings of subcommittees provided that such meetings are authorized by the full board, council, task force, advisory committee, or commission. All meetings shall be scheduled to minimize inclusion of meals.

- G. Lodging:
 - 1. when weather conditions or other unforeseen occurrences prevent the employee from returning home; or,
 - 2. if the appointing authority authorizes overnight participation in an approved event (authorization should be based on the benefit of such participation to the state).

- H. Expense reimbursement for lodging, travel, and meals for one attendant for an employee with a disability who requires daily assistance in performing various personal tasks or who has special mobility needs.

- I. Expenses as follows for employees assigned to work at the State Fair if MSA chooses to participate.
 - 1. Fees for admission to the fairgrounds, unless previously provided.
 - 2. One meal during each shift of fewer than ten (10) hours or two (2) meals during each shift of ten (10) hours or more, subject to the meal amounts for in-state travel in collective bargaining agreement or plan.
 - 3. For employees who report for work directly to the State Fair and/or return home directly from the State Fair, reimbursement for mileage for each trip is limited to the lesser of the mileage between their home and the State Fair or between their permanent work station and the State Fair as per Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) policy and the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.
 - 4. Taxi fare for employees with a disability who are unable to drive or use other means of public transportation between their normal workstation and fairgrounds or between the employee's residence and the fairgrounds, whichever distance is less.

- J. All airline and lodging reservations need to be made by Fiscal Services and billed to Minnesota State Academies.

- K. Out-of-State Travel: All Out-of-State Travel must be approved by the Superintendent.
- L. Expense reimbursement for international travel which exceeds the limits for out-of-state travel authorized in collective bargaining agreements.
Note: All international travel must be approved thru the Superintendent's Office and by the Commissioner of the Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB). Reimbursement limits for international travel will be the same as out-of-state travel provisions contained in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement or plan, unless the special expense exceeding the limits has received prior approval of the Appointing Authority and from the Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB). [Appendix 740-B]
- M. Expenses as follows for individual employee awards and MSA recognition events:
Note: Length of Service awards as found in the appropriate category in the State and MSA Length of Service contracts are not special expenses and are not subject to this policy.
1. Recognition awards at the discretion of the Appointing Authority. Awards for individual or group achievements which are limited to noncash/nonnegotiable items of nominal value (\$50 or less.)
 2. Funds in state accounts may not be used to purchase meals/refreshments for agency employees at MSA recognition events.
- N. Other expenses authorized by the Appointing Authority and approved in advance by the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB).

An approved Request to Incur Special Expense Form must accompany individual Employee Expense Reports requesting department reimbursement for these special expenses and/or any invoices for such expenses to be paid directly by the department. In addition, a copy of each request must be forwarded to the MSA Business Manager for monitoring/reporting purposes as required.

Requests received after the event or too late to provide a proper review must include an explanation of why the request was not provided in a timely manner.

Note: If an Out-of-State Travel Authorization (NA-00100-06) identifies the special expense for tuition and registration fees, that form may be used in lieu of the Request for Approval of Special Expenses (PE-00668-01)

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 43A.04, Subd. 4 (General Information)

Appendices:

Appendix 740A - Request for Approval of Special Expenses Form (PE-00668-01)

Appendix 740B - Out-of-State Travel Authorization Form (NA-00100-06)