



CORPORATE

Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality

Approved By:	Derrick Drouillard	Page:	1 of 14
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Policy Code:	147		
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PURPOSE STATEMENT:

The purpose of this Policy is:

- To set out rules and principles for the reimbursement of expenses to ensure fair and reasonable practices;
- To provide a framework of accountability to guide the effective oversight of public resources in the reimbursement of expenses; and,
- To set the parameters for the public disclosure of information about expenses.

SCOPE:

This policy sets out the rules for managing travel, meal, and hospitality expenses for the Society.

They apply to:

- Employees
- Foster Parents
- Volunteers and Board Members
- Consultants and contractors engaged by the organization, providing consulting services or other services

This policy supersedes any previous Travel, Meal & Hospitality Policy.

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	2 of 14

PRINCIPLES:

In the development of this policy the Broader Public Sector (BPS) Expenses Directive and Perquisites Directive were used as a guideline in order to ensure consistency and alignment with the standards expected in the ministries and agencies of the Government of Ontario. The following principles will govern travel expense reimbursement practice at the Society.

- Accountability – work related expenses which support business objective and strategic plans.
- Transparency – rules for incurring and reimbursing travel, meal and hospitality, and perquisites must be clear and easily understood by all stakeholders and will be posted on the society website.
- Fairness – modest, appropriate, and authorized expenses which are incurred during the course of business.
- Value for Money – strike a balance between economy, health and safety, and efficiency of operations.

Best practices are in place, including:

- Prior approval to incur expenses is obtained.
- Other options for meetings are always considered before travel is approved, including audio or video conferencing.
- Corporate credit cards are used for authorized business travel and business-related expenses.
- The government's vendors of record for travel-related services are used whenever possible.

While conducting the business of the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society, agents of the Society are entitled to reimbursement for travel, meals, and miscellaneous expenses incurred in the course of their work on behalf of the Society. Employees shall be entitled to be reimbursed for these expenses in accordance with the Society's generally established practices as applied per the collective agreement, employment contracts, and/or terms and conditions of employment.

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK:

The Executive Director has the authority to establish additional rules regarding expenses. Any additional rules should be consistent with those laid out in the policy and be necessary to meet specific operational needs. These additional rules do not replace any rules required in this policy. In

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	3 of 14

addition, the Executive Director may modify the level of approval upward to a more senior level when authority is assigned to a manager/supervisor.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS – GENERAL

- Written approval from the Executive Director is required for the following before any arrangements are made by submitting a Funds Requisition Form or memo with the appropriate detail:
 - International travel;
 - Extended time business travel (costing greater than \$2,000); and,
 - Hospitality events involving alcohol.
- Alcohol cannot be claimed and will not be reimbursed as part of a travel or meal expense.
- Hospitality is provided only when the event involves people from outside the Society.
- Functions involving only people who work for the Society (all those covered by this Policy) are not considered hospitality functions.
- Expenses for a group can only be claimed by the most senior person present – expenses cannot be claimed by an individual that are incurred by the approver (e.g. a Supervisor cannot submit the Director’s claim for lunch even if they were at the same event).
- Good record-keeping practices must be maintained for verification and audit purposes.
- This policy will be posted on the Society’s website.

The Society assumes no obligation to reimburse expenses which do not comply with this policy. In the event of an overpayment of expense claims, such overpayment will be recovered promptly from the payee. Employees are obliged to familiarize themselves with this policy and to seek clarification from their supervisors if required. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and for taking remedial action if required.

PROCEDURES:

Non-Reimbursable Expenses:

Expenses of a personal nature will not be reimbursed. Such expenses include but are not limited to:

- Recreational purposes (e.g. video rentals, mini bars)

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	4 of 14

- Personal items
- Traffic/parking violations
- Social events that do not constitute hospitality
- Alcoholic drinks, unless part of hospitality
- Expenses incurred on behalf of friends/family

A perquisite refers to a privilege that is provided to an individual or group of individuals, provides a personal benefit, and is not generally available to others. Perquisites include items such as: club memberships for personal recreation or socializing purposes, season tickets to cultural or sporting events, clothing allowances not related to health and safety or special job requirements, access to private health clinics, and professional advisory services for personal matters. These privileges cannot be provided by any means including: an offer of employment letter, an employment contract, or a reimbursement of an expense. Perquisites are only allowable in limited and exceptional circumstances where it is demonstrated to be a business-related requirement for the effective performance of an individual's job. Only the Executive Director has the authority to approve perquisites.

Consultants and other contractors will not be reimbursed for any hospitality, incidental or food expenses, including:

- Meals, snacks, and beverages
- Gratuities
- Laundry or dry cleaning
- Valet services
- Dependent care
- Home management
- Personal telephone calls

Reimbursement for allowable expenses under this Policy can be claimed only when the contract with the Society specifically allows for it.

Receipts:

Original itemized receipts (not photocopies) must be submitted with all expense claims. Credit card slips by themselves are not sufficient to support a claim for reimbursement.

All efforts must be made to obtain an original itemized receipt. In the event of missing receipts, an exception to this directive may be made at the individual discretion of the supervisor and only with appropriate detailed documentation from the claimant on the receipt that has been misplaced.

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	5 of 14

Original receipts plus credit card slips, if applicable, obtained via the use of society credit cards must in all cases be submitted to Accounting for reconciliation to the credit card statement.

Travel expense claims records will be retained in the same format and for the same time period as all society accounts payable claims.

Time Limit for Claims:

All expenses (excluding credit card expenses - see credit card policy) must be submitted within 90 days after the date they are incurred.

Verification:

Supervisors having responsibility for approving expense claims are required to monitor compliance with this policy. Expense approval limits are as defined in the society's Signing Authority Guidelines. These are set out in the Delegation of Financial Authority Policy.

Guidance on Exceptions:

Requests for reimbursement should not be rejected solely because they arose from mistakes or misinterpretations of the requirements of this policy. Decisions to approve exceptional reimbursement must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and approved by an employee's Director. A decision to make an exception to a claim will be guided by the following principles:

- Trust – use discretion and latitude to act in a fair and reasonable manner.
- Flexibility – management decisions respect the duty to accommodate, respond to a persons' needs and interests and to consider unforeseen circumstances.
- Stewardship – to ensure consistent, fair, and equitable application of this policy giving consideration to all circumstances while maintaining the shared responsibility of wise and prudent use of society resources.

Where a Director decides to exercise discretion in making an exception and in order to ensure a proper record for audit purposes, the rationale for the exception must be documented and accompany the expense claim.

When any provision of the Society's collective agreement, employment contracts, and/or terms and conditions of employment conflict with this policy, the terms of the collective agreement, employment contract, and/or terms and conditions of employment will supersede the policy.

Travel Advances:

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	6 of 14

In general, the Society does not extend travel advances. In emergency situations, a cash advance may be provided with the approval of the appropriate Director. Travel advances from petty cash or in amounts lower than \$100.00 will not be provided. Exceptions may be made from time to time.

Loyalty Programs:

Staff may participate in loyalty programs (e.g. frequent traveler programs) provided they select the most cost-effective means of travel.

Approval for Travel:

- Normal travel related to a direct service or other Society business and within the society's area of jurisdiction does not require prior approval. Such claims are approved after incurrence. Normal society expense guidelines will govern reimbursement claims.
- Travel outside the society's jurisdiction, but within Ontario requires written prior approval from an employee's immediate supervisor. Normal society expense guidelines will govern reimbursement claims.
- Travel outside of Ontario requires written prior approval from a member of Executive Management. Normal society expense guidelines will govern reimbursement claims.
- Travel outside of Canada requires written prior approval from the Executive Director or designate. Normal society expense guidelines will govern reimbursement claims.
- A detailed cost proposal for travel outside of Ontario or Canada must be submitted. The proposal is to include a written rationale to demonstrate that the travel is critical to the organization's priorities, and documentation to demonstrate that the requested travel arrangements (e.g. transportation mode, accommodation, etc.) are cost-effective, including a detailed itemization of all expenses that will need to be incurred.

Claimants submitting a Travel and Expense Reimbursement Form or filing their monthly society credit card statement, and it includes overnight travel related expenses, shall submit appropriate supporting documentation with the required approvals described above. The applicable submission will include:

- Purpose of trip;
- Dates and destinations (person or institution visited);
- A listing of all expenses payable by the Society associated with the trip regardless of whether paid for directly by the Society or by the claimant. Personal expenses borne by the

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	7 of 14

claimant and in respect of which the claimant is not seeking to be reimbursed need not be listed;

- Official supporting documentation if applicable (e.g. travel authorization, indicating the dates of conferences and workshops);
- Details of daily claims for expenditures relating to those visits;
- Details of any vehicle used; and
- Original air travel ticket receipts and boarding pass for air travel (or print-out of electronic boarding pass/confirmation email if checking in online).

Medical/Health Insurance:

Employees will not be reimbursed for the cost of privately arranged medical/health insurance for travel within or outside of Canada since coverage in the event of illness, injury or death is provided through the society health insurance plan.

Vehicle Insurance:

Only employees with valid drivers' licenses are authorized to drive their own or other vehicles in the course of society business.

Personal vehicles used for society business must be insured at the vehicle owner's expense for personal motor vehicle liability. Coverage should be equal to or greater than the minimum liability specified in the Insurance Act and in accordance with the employment contract. The society will determine whether an employee's motor vehicle insurance coverage should include business use of their vehicles. The society does not reimburse costs of business use coverage or collision and liability coverage, beyond the limits of the collective agreement.

The society assumes no financial responsibility for privately owned vehicles other than paying the kilometric rate when used for society business. The society is not responsible for reimbursing deductible amounts related to insurance coverage. Those driving a personal vehicle on society business cannot make claim to the society for damages as a result of a collision or other vehicle mishaps.

Accidents must be reported immediately to local law enforcement authorities, the rental car agency (if applicable), the automobile insurance company (if using a personal vehicle) and the person's immediate supervisor.

Car Rental:

Employees, foster parents, volunteers and board members will use the Society's approved vendor of record when renting a vehicle.

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	8 of 14

The size of the rental car is not to exceed a full-size car. Upgrades to mini vans or sport utility vehicles are permitted if the rate charged does not exceed full-size car rental rates. Exceptions are to be documented and approved in advance in writing. In no case will luxury or sports car rentals be reimbursed. Staff will follow the current procedure to rent a vehicle.

It is strongly encouraged that vehicles are returned with the same amount of fuel that was in the tank when the vehicle was picked up, however arrangements have been made with the approved vendor to charge current "pump price" to refuel the vehicle should circumstances prevent the renter from re-fueling the vehicle to the appropriate level.

Employees may choose to use the 407 ETR route. ETR mileage charges will be reimbursed by the society either to the rental car company or to the employee provided appropriate documentation accompanies the expense claim.

The society assumes no financial responsibility for traffic violations incurred while utilizing a rental vehicle for society business.

Damages to the rental vehicle caused by a collision will be covered through society insurance. In situations where the society staff is charged to be 'at fault' under the Highway and Traffic Act the society reserves the right to recoup any related costs.

For any single day trip, outside of Essex County where the round-trip distance is to exceed 200 km, reimbursement for personal vehicle use will be limited to the current approved vendor rate for a full-size vehicle plus \$0.08 per kilometer. Employees are advised to rent cars to avoid assumption of personal cost for unpaid mileage. Rental cars are to be arranged through the society's preferred vendor. Instructions for renting a vehicle are attached to this policy.

In an emergency or when a rental vehicle is not available, staff may use their own vehicle with prior approval from a supervisor. Rates of reimbursement for mileage will apply as usual in these circumstances.

Kilometer Reimbursements Rates for Personal Vehicle Use:

Rates of reimbursement are pursuant to the applicable collective agreement, employment contract and/or terms and conditions of employment. It is the Society's expectation that all employees will ensure travel expenses are minimized whenever possible.

Expense claims are to be submitted on the society approved form and must include the:

- Case name/number or purpose of the travel expense;

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	9 of 14

- Starting address;
- Ending address (or institution name);
- Km's travelled; and,
- Date of travel.

Offsite Training or Meetings:

Occasionally, employees are required to start their day at an offsite training session or meeting. In all cases, travel is reimbursed from the employee's assigned office location **or** from home to their "work related" destination, whichever is the shorter of the two distances.

Client Visits:

Employees may schedule client home visits at their discretion. In situations when a work assignment is scheduled at the beginning of an employee's shift, and thus the staff member would be traveling from their home directly to a work assignment or from the work assignment to the staff member's home at the end of their shift, the employee may claim kilometers based on the parameters in the Collective Agreement. In these circumstances, the Society agrees to permit staff to claim kilometer reimbursement for the shorter of the two distances: to or from the employee's work location or to or from the employee's home, whichever distance is shorter.

Employees are expected to submit kilometer reimbursements within 90 days of when the expenses are incurred.

Taxi Travel:

Where practical, local public transit/hotel shuttles must be used. Receipts for reimbursement are not required. Where other means of travel are not available or practical, taxi travel will be reimbursed only with receipts. Taxi travel will not be reimbursed to employees within Essex County.

Rail Transportation:

Travel by rail (coach class) is permitted when this is the most practical and economical way to travel. Travel in fare classes above coach class will only be reimbursed at the coach class rate.

Air Transportation:

Travel by air is permitted when this is the most practical and economical way to travel. The standard is economy class. Travel in fare classes above economy class will only be reimbursed at the economy class rate.

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	10 of 14

Other Travel Expenses:

Reimbursement for hotel accommodation in the Society's geographical jurisdiction area will not normally be made. Exceptional or emergency situations may arise where personnel who reside out of town are required to remain in the society's jurisdiction overnight (e.g. extended collective bargaining, large IT projects, etc.) and these may be approved at a Director's discretion.

For any overnight accommodation outside of Essex County, supervisor approval must be secured prior to the expenditure.

Reimbursement will be made for the equivalent cost of single accommodation in a standard room. Staff who use suites, executive floors or concierge levels will be reimbursed for the equivalent cost of single room accommodation at the same location.

Private stays with family and friends are encouraged.

For extended stays out of Society jurisdiction at a single location, long term accommodation must be approved by the Executive Director, in order to take advantage of lower weekly or monthly rates. This may include the rental of a housekeeping facility.

Other Out of Pocket Expenses:

Reasonable gratuities for meals (subject to meal allowance limitations), and taxis will be reimbursed. Likewise reasonable expenses related to parking meters, bus tickets and subway tokens will be reimbursed provided appropriate receipts are submitted. Receipts are not required for on street parking meters but will be reviewed for reasonability. Expenses (excluding credit card expenses – see credit card policy) are to be submitted within 90 days after the date they are incurred.

Additional Business Expenses:

While travelling on society business, additional business expenses may be incurred not otherwise specifically contemplated in this policy. Such reasonable expenses such as business calls, air/rail phones, computer access charges, photocopying, fax expenses will be reimbursed with receipts.

Meal Expenses:

Reasonable and appropriate meal expenses will be reimbursed subject to an employee's supervisor approval when employees are required to be at an out of County location for a normal

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	11 of 14

meal period.

Original, itemized receipts must be provided. Reimbursement must not exceed the amount actually spent, (including taxes and gratuities) as validated by a receipt.

Meal maximum rates are subject to the terms of the collective agreement (union and non-union staff), employment contracts, and/or terms and conditions of employment.

Reimbursement of actual meal expenses that exceed the applicable meal rates may be approved by a supervisor if the reimbursement is consistent with the policy statement on page 2 of this document. Every claim for reimbursement must be accompanied by an original receipt and a written explanation with sufficient detail when the meal rate is exceeded.

Reimbursement of meal costs in no case will include the cost of alcoholic beverages.

No reimbursement will be made for meals consumed at home prior to departure or on return, or for meals included in the cost of transportation, accommodation, seminars, and/or conferences.

Business Meals:

Meetings including only Society personnel generally are not to be reimbursed however consideration for reimbursement will be given under the following circumstances:

- A working meeting extended for three hours or greater over a meal period for purposes of achieving business objectives or strategic plans.
- A board meeting which occurs beyond regular operating business hours over a meal period.
- Nominal food and beverage costs incurred for staff recognition of achieving business objectives or training sessions which occur that extend for three hours or greater over a meal period.

All business meals require detailed receipts and a listing of those who attended the meal and the business objective achieved. For all business meals reimbursed the Society must demonstrate accountability and a sound business case for the expense.

Meal Expenses for Clients:

Employees providing meals for clients, specifically children in care, will be reimbursed for the following situations:

- Court appearances lasting over a meal period.
- Medical appointments lasting over a meal period.

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	12 of 14

- Caregivers attending out of County appointments with child (foster parents excluded).

The claim for expense must be substantiated with a detailed receipt, client's name (or case number), and rationale for the purpose.

Credit Cards:

Purchases on a Society credit card must be substantiated by itemized receipts provided to Accounting for reconciliation of the credit card statement. A credit card slip is not deemed sufficient detail. Refer to Credit Card Policy.

Hospitality:

Hospitality is the provision of food, beverages, accommodation, transportation, or other amenities at society expense to persons who are not engaged in work for the society, except if it is provided for consideration under the business meal policy. Hospitality should be extended in an economical, consistent, and appropriate way when it will facilitate society business or is considered desirable as a matter of courtesy. Hospitality expenditures should be consistent with the status of the guest(s), and consistent with diplomatic protocols, the number of persons attending and the business purpose to be achieved.

Where hospitality events are extended by the society and where guests include vendors or prospective vendors to the society, supervisors are responsible for obtaining prior approval to ensure that the hospitality provided does not give, or is not perceived to give, preferential treatment to any vendor.

Acceptance of hospitality from vendors, current or prospective, may constitute a conflict of interest and may therefore be disallowed. Supervisors are responsible to ensure that employees are aware of their conflict-of-interest obligations.

Hosts must ensure that hospitality expense records include:

- The circumstances of the event (business purpose).
- The form of hospitality.
- Cost supported by receipts.
- Name and location of establishment.
- Names, titles, and companies of attendees.
- Approvals by appropriate individuals in the society.

Recipients of Hospitality:

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	13 of 14

Gifts of appreciation may be accepted if token in nature, valued at up to \$30.00. Gifts valued above \$30.00 must be justified and approved by the Director of the recipient. In all cases where hospitality is provided to society staff or board members, conflict of interest guidelines will prevail in determining whether such hospitality should be reasonably accepted. If in doubt, a worker should consult with his/her supervisor.

It is also the policy of the Society to formally acknowledge those members of staff whose personal contribution extends over many years per the collective agreement. An employee who completes five (5) years of continuous service with the Society and in each fifth year thereafter shall receive a memento of the occasion as determined by the Society. Arrangements for the presentation should be in keeping with the intent, which is to give public recognition to staff members who have provided services to the Society over many years.

Responsibility of Claimants:

Claimants are responsible for:

- Consider alternatives to travel such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing and obtain approvals from appropriate authorities for travel.
- Use service providers designated by the society where appropriate.
- Request and accept lowest common carrier fare.
- Use the Society credit card to prepay hotel accommodations where possible.
- Supply an itinerary to and notify their supervisor of any changes so that travelers may be contacted in an emergency.
- Cancel hotel bookings prior to 6:00 p.m. to avoid no-show charges.
- Submit all expense claims (excluding credit card expenses – see credit card policy) on a timely basis no later than 90 days post incurrence. If leaving employment with the Society, submit any claims for expenses before leaving.
- Provide original, itemized receipts for all expense claims. If the information is not available or is not possible, submit a written detailed explanation to provide the approver with adequate information for decision making.
- Provide explanations for unusual expenses.
- Provide detailed descriptions for all expenses claimed.
- Repay any overpayments (it is considered debt owing to the society).

Responsibility of Approvers:

Approvers are responsible for:

- Not self-approving expense claims.

Department:	All Staff, Senior Leadership	Policy Code:	147
Policy Name:	Finance - Travel, Meal & Hospitality	Page:	14 of 14

- Within the scope of the approver's authority.
- Ensure that expenses and travel arrangements are consistent with this policy.
- Determine and authorize when business travel is necessary.
- Consult with the employee to ensure travel arrangements accommodate both their needs and interests and the society's travel policies.
- Ensure that appropriate original itemized receipts are provided to support expense claims.
- Ensure that unusual items or missing receipts are appropriately explained and documented.
- Ensure the rationale for an exception is documented and accompanies the expense claim.
- Ensure that all workers are aware of conflict-of-interest guidelines.