



<b>POLICY:</b>	Ontario Broader Public Sector (BPS) Travel, Meal, & Hospitality Expenses (Replacing HR policies 27.0-Meal Allowance & 59.0-Vehicle Allowance/Mileage)		
<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	Senior Leadership	<b>APPROVED ON:</b>	February 8, 2022
<b>LAST REVIEW:</b>		<b>REVISED ON:</b>	

## POLICY STATEMENT

Niagara Support Services will provide reasonable reimbursement for expenses incurred while on business, including travel, meals and hospitality. This policy is based on the Broader Public Sector Travel, Meal and Hospitality Directive, issued in accordance with the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to any person at Niagara Support Services making an expense claim, including employees, board members and volunteers. The employee's immediate supervisor must approve all submissions for reimbursement.

## PRINCIPLES

This policy encompasses four key principles:

1. **Accountability:** public funds used to reimburse travel, meal and hospitality expenses must support business objectives.
2. **Transparency:** the rules for incurring and reimbursing travel, meal and hospitality expenses are clear, easily understood and available to the public.
3. **Value for Money:** plans for travel, meals, accommodation and hospitality are necessary and economical with due regard for health and safety.
4. **Fairness:** only legitimate, authorized expenses incurred during the course of business for Niagara Support Services are reimbursed.

Individuals who do not comply with this policy may be subject to delay or withholding of reimbursement and/or disciplinary action.

## GUIDELINES

### Travel Expenses

Travel expenses occur when individuals use their own vehicles to attend agency meetings, seminars, etc. The individual will be reimbursed at the amount currently approved by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and shall comply with the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010:

- Mileage – according to the current reimbursement rate of \$0.40/km
- Parking – up to \$20.00/day (exceptions to be discussed with supervisor)

If the employer's business includes extra trips to work, the amount paid will be based upon the lesser of:

- A return trip from the employee's residence to the place of work
- Twenty (20) kilometers



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Employees shall clock their mileage after their first work destination point. Employees shall not be paid from their home to their first destination point or from their last destination point to their home. In the interest of economy, when more than one employee is to make the same trip, transportation must be shared if it is practical and convenient to do so.

All travel within Ontario requires the approval of the immediate supervisor. All travel out of province (either within or outside of North America) requires approval of the Chief Executive Officer. In all cases, the most practical and economical means of travel should be considered. Economy (coach) class should be the standard travel option. Any alternative classes require prior approval from either the supervisor or the Chief Executive Officer.

The mileage rate is intended to cover in full all Agency obligations for the use of the employee’s vehicle, including the cost of insurance and any loss or damage to the vehicle. It is strongly recommended that vehicles be covered with sufficient liability insurance to protect the driver for a minimum of \$1,000,000.

**Accommodation Expenses**

Hotel, motel and other accommodation expenses are reimbursed based on actual costs of a standard quality hotel room. Original invoice/receipts are required and must include the location of the stay, dates, number of days stayed and the room rate. Employees are responsible for all subsidiary room charges such as entertainment, laundry, pay TV/movies, alcohol and special facility charges.

Business related expenses not otherwise mentioned above will be reimbursed, such as computer access, photocopying charges, word processing services, internet connections and facsimile charges provided the charges are reasonable and work related.

**Meal Expenses**

When an employee is on agency business (with prior approval), reasonable and appropriate meal expenses may be reimbursed if:

- The employee is away from the workplace over a normal meal period; or
- The employee purchased a meal during authorized overtime or for business meetings that must occur during a meal period.

Original, itemized receipts are required. Alcohol cannot be claimed and will not be reimbursed as part of a travel or meal expense. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Rates are maximum reimbursements for actual meals purchased, include taxes and gratuity, and comply with the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010:

- Breakfast – up to a maximum of \$8.75 /day
- Lunch – up to a maximum of \$11.25/day
- Dinner – up to a maximum of \$20.00/day



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If you claim more than one meal in a day, you can allocate the combined maximum rate between meals, e.g., two meals combined: breakfast and lunch = \$20.00; lunch and dinner = \$31.25.

### Hospitality Expenses

Hospitality is defined as the provision of food, beverages, accommodation, transportation, or other amenities at public expense to persons who are not engaged in work for Niagara Support Services.

Hospitality should be extended in an economical, consistent, and appropriate way when it will facilitate agency business or is considered as a matter of courtesy.

Hospitality expenditures should minimize costs but be consistent with the status of the number of persons attending, and the purpose or business to be achieved.

For verification and audit purposes, hospitality expenses must be recorded in a consistent and detailed manner and the following documented: information on the circumstances giving rise to the hospitality, the form of hospitality, the cost, the name and location of the establishment, the number of attendees, the names of individuals and their agency’s name, and approvals by the appropriate authority.

### Recognition Events

Employees and representatives (i.e. board members, volunteers, students) of Niagara Support Services make important contributions every day, and we value all of their efforts. The desire to recognize the contributions of employees/representatives must also be balanced with the requirement for fiscal responsibility of public funds: the concepts of equity and legal compliance. A proposed budget for a recognition event must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for pre-approval.

Tokens of appreciation may be extended to employees, volunteers and board members. The token gifts are recognition of business related activity such as retirement, years of service, etc. A proposed budget for the tokens of appreciation must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for pre-approval.

### Individuals making claims must:

- Obtain all appropriate approvals before incurring expenses
- Ensure expenses are work related
- Ensure expenses are modest and appropriate
- Ensure expenses strike a balance among economy, health and safety, and efficiency of operations
- Submit original, itemized receipts with all claims
- Fully complete the approved mileage/expense form on a monthly basis, including the date, purpose, destination, and number of kilometres for each trip, total the form and submit to their immediate supervisor within five (5) days of the end of the month in which the claim occurred
- Repay any overpayments within five (5) business days



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**Individuals approving claims must:**

- Abide by Niagara Support Services’ signing authority limits
- Seek a higher approval authority if the expense claim exceeds their authority limit
- Not approve their own expenses
- Only approve expenses that were necessarily incurred in the performance of agency business
- Ensure all appropriate documentation supports any claims for reimbursement
- Check the totals and approve the mileage/expense forms before forwarding to the accounting department for payment

**Consultants and Other Contractors:**

Reimbursement for allowable expenses can be claimed and reimbursed only when the contract for services specifically provides for it. Hospitality, food or other incidental expenses are not considered allowable expenses.

**General:**

- Only the most senior person present can claim expenses for a group.
- Expenses cannot be claimed by an individual that are incurred by their approver.
- Expenses of a personal nature will not be reimbursed. Such expenses include but are not limited to expenses for:
  - Recreational purposes
  - Personal items
  - Traffic and parking violations
  - Social events that do not constitute hospitality
  - Alcoholic drinks

**Reimbursement Form:**

- The Niagara Support Services’ Mileage & Expense Report (sample attached) will be used to log all business related expenses.
- This form is available in the Agency’s Document Library in AIMS (Alliance Information Management System).
- All original receipts detailing the nature of expenses are required, as well as the appropriate approval as noted above.