



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 19-549A, Version: 1

Subject:

Revisions to the Pinellas County food, beverage, recruitment, and awards-related expenses policy.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the revisions to the County's incentives, awards, and recruitment policy to allow for more flexibility associated with relocation reimbursements for eligible new hires; clarify allowable expenses related to appointing authority sponsored meetings; and specify the types of partner events that are allowable expenses.

Staff also recommends approval of the Review Transmittal Slips for the associated recurring expenses for the County Administrator and Deputy County Administrator only, which will be attached to expense reports and receipts going forward. A representative list of the types of meetings and events is provided. Revised policy includes the following changes:

- (1.) Increases the not-to-exceed reimbursement amount to \$20,000.00 for relocation expenses for managerial employees at the department head level or higher, with appointing authority approval;
- (2.) Clarifies that certain appointing authority sponsored meeting expenses are allowable; and
- (3.) Specifies certain special events by partners are allowable expenses.

Strategic Plan:

Create a Quality Workforce in a Positive, Supportive Organization

1.1 Recruit, select, and retain the most diverse and talented workforce

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

Summary:

Approval of the recommended revisions would allow more flexibility, clarity, and operational efficiencies within the county's food, beverage, recruitment and awards-related expenses policy. Recommended revisions to the policy include the following:

- (1.) Increases the not-to-exceed reimbursement amount to \$20,000.00 for relocation expenses for managerial employees at the department head level or higher, with appointing authority approval;
- (2.) Clarifies that certain appointing authority sponsored meeting expenses are allowable (exempt workshop and service award recognition meetings); and
- (3.) Specifies that special events by partners are allowable expenses.

In order to ensure the County is able to recruit the most qualified candidates in a competitive market, it is recommended that the County increase the not-to-exceed amount for relocation reimbursements. In addition to increasing the not-to-exceed amount, it is recommended that the County adopt additional revisions to this policy as it relates to repayment terms and a requirement for a minimum number of bids.

Secondly, there are certain appointing authority sponsored meetings, such as exempt workshop and service award recognition meetings, in which appointing authorities may want to provide coffee, water, and light snacks for attendees. Under the current policy, these are not allowable expenses and typically come out of pocket from the department or the appointing authority.

Lastly, the updated policy and the associated representative/sample list of partner events will better facilitate the allowable expense approval process for appointing authorities and their designees to attend certain partner events on behalf of the county on a recurring basis.

Background Information:

Ordinance No. 07-26 was approved by the BCC on May 1, 2007 and amended the provision of Section 2-145 of the Pinellas County Code as part of an ongoing effort to streamline County business operations and run County government more efficiently. County Code requires that the County Administrator develop rules and procedures for approval by the BCC, in order to provide controls that guard against abuse and ensure accountability to the taxpayers and the public. The associated policy also simplified the approval process of certain expenditures.

In a review of peer cities and counties in the region, staff found that Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa do not assign a specific dollar amount for relocation expense reimbursements, allowing for more flexibility when bringing on new hires. These peer entities also have repayment terms and/or bid requirements. It is recommended that the County adopt similar provisions within its policy, to ensure the protection of public resources. Members of the County Administrator's staff met with the Clerk's Finance Division to discuss other potential areas for operational efficiencies and clarifications and have recommended changes related to eligible expenses for appointing authority sponsored meetings and partner events.

Fiscal Impact:

Actual expenditures incurred under the provisions of this policy between FY15 and FY18 averaged approximately \$210,000.00 across all funds, with a majority expended on employee service awards. The impact of the proposed changes is anticipated to be minimal in relation to total expenditures and will be absorbed within existing departmental budget appropriations.

Staff Member Responsible:

Canaan McCaslin, Special Assistant to the County Administrator

Partners:

N/A

Attachments:

Food, Beverage, Recruitment and Awards Related Expenses Policy - Redline
Food, Beverage, Recruitment and Awards Related Expenses Policy - Final
Recurring Expense Meeting and Event List and Review Forms for Pre-Approval