



# STATE OF MONTANA LEGISLATIVE BRANCH POLICY DIRECTIVE

Policy No. LEG FIN 1_08_01	Subject: Providing Light Refreshments
Chapter: 1 FINANCIAL OFFICE	Pages: 2
Section: 08 Meeting Costs	Effective Date: April 6, 2026
Signature:	Revised:

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the Legislative Branch policy concerning meeting costs, alcohol and entertainment, and events sponsored by the Branch.

## 2. APPLICABILITY

- 2.1. The legislative services division established by [5-11-111, MCA](#);
- 2.2. The legislative fiscal division established by [5-12-301, MCA](#);
- 2.3. The legislative audit division established by [5-13-301, MCA](#); and
- 2.4. The environmental quality council established by [5-16-101, MCA](#).

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **Light Refreshment:** Snacks consumed outside a regular meal; including cookies, pastries, cake, or other food provided in quantities that are not considered to be a meal. This does not include items such as coffee, tea, or water.
- 3.2. **Meal:** A quantity of food that equals a full serving of breakfast, lunch or dinner.
- 3.3. **Event:** An all-inclusive term to include a conference, meeting, training occurrence, award ceremony, hiring panel or other similar gathering.
- 3.4. **Attendees:** Legislative Branch employees, elected officials, other government staff, board and committee members, members of the public, or a combination.
- 3.5. **FO:** Legislative Branch Financial Office.

## 4. BRANCH DIRECTIVES

- 4.1. Meals will only be provided to employees if the employee is in "travel status" or continuous availability of employees with Division Director approval. Employee meal reimbursement must not be requested for meals provided.
- 4.2. All the following conditions must be met if light refreshments or meals are to be allowed:
  - 4.2.1. Event must be for work purposes.
  - 4.2.2. The cost does not create undue financial hardship to the Branch.
- 4.3. Here are examples of events at which light refreshments or meals if the employees must be continuously available through lunch for purposes of training and the division director authorizes may be allowable expenditures:
  - 4.3.1. Technical information is disseminated.
  - 4.3.2. Training is provided for employee development.
  - 4.3.3. An event is sponsored for the public.

4.3.4. Traveling for official legislative business as established in:

- 4.3.4.1. [Title 5, chapter 16, part 1, MCA](#)
- 4.3.4.2. [Title 5, chapter 11, part 4, MCA](#)
- 4.3.4.3. [Title 5, chapter 5, part 2, MCA](#)
- 4.3.4.4. [Title 5, chapter 12, parts 2, 5, and 6, MCA](#)
- 4.3.4.5. [Title 5, chapter 13, part 2, MCA](#)

4.4. Unallowable Expenses

- 4.4.1. Alcoholic beverages;
- 4.4.2. Staff meetings;
- 4.4.3. Holiday parties;
- 4.4.4. Employee promotions, transfers, and retirements;
- 4.4.5. Celebrations of a personal nature;
- 4.4.6. Decorations, utensils, or serving containers for purposes in this section.

4.5. Light Refreshment or meal documentation.

- 4.5.1. Complete and sign Food and Refreshment Purchase Form.
- 4.5.2. Submit completed Food and Refreshment Purchase Form along with original itemized receipts to FO.
- 4.5.3. If ProCard was used to make purchase, submit completed Food and Refreshment Purchase form along with the original itemized ProCard receipts and ProCard log to FO.

4.6. Directors should not require or ask employees to pick up and deliver food in the employee's personal vehicle. It is strongly advised that all meals be delivered to the committee meeting location by a licensed, insured business.

4.7. The purchase of a refrigerator, microwave, tea kettle, or coffee maker (non-Keurig or specialty coffee machines) for Legislative Branch common spaces are allowed with prior approval from the appropriate approving authority (see the [Expenditure Approval Policy](#)). No other kitchen appliances will be approved for purchase. If staff would like to purchase other items for their workspace, they must get approval from the Division approving authority prior to purchase.

## **5. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEGISLATIVE FINANCIAL OFFICE**

- 5.1. The Legislative Financial Office shall:
  - 5.1.1. Ensure that all proper documentation is completed.

## **6. CLOSING**

- 6.1. Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Legislative Financial Director.

## **7. ATTACHMENTS**

- 7.1. Attachment 1 entitled "Food and Refreshment Purchase Form."