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APPLICATION

These standards and principles apply to any of the following individuals making a claim for the reimbursement of travel, meal and hospitality expenses from Family and Children's Services Niagara:

- Employees, Board Members, Foster Caregivers, Volunteers, and Consultants and Contractors engaged by the Society.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles will govern travel and expense practice at Family and Children's Services Niagara (the Society).

Expenses must:

- be work-related,
- be modest and appropriate, and
- strike a balance among economy, health & safety, and efficiency of operations.

The Society assumes no obligation to reimburse expenses that do not comply with this policy.

Claimants 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.

The most practical and economical way to travel (including accommodation) will be chosen in each circumstance.

Note 1: This policy replaces:

- H.R. Policy - Reimbursement for Travel and Related Transport Expenses
- H.R. Policy - Vehicle Rental
- H.R. Policy - Staff Driving of Clients/Society Use of Personal Vehicles



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Expenses of a personal nature will not be reimbursed. Non-reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- recreation (*e.g. video rentals, amusements, etc*)
- personal items
- traffic and parking violations and/or penalties
- social events that do not constitute hospitality (*e.g. team events, celebration lunches, etc*)
- alcoholic drinks, unless pre-approved as part of hospitality
- expenses for friends or family members, unless part of hospitality

Original detailed receipts (not photocopies) must be submitted with all claims. A credit card slip is not acceptable as the sole proof of expenditure.

Supervisors are responsible for monitoring compliance with all elements of this policy. Supervisors must ensure that appropriate records and receipts are attached to the claims, which will be retained by Finance once the claim has been paid.

Any overpayments, namely amounts reimbursed or paid that are not in accordance with this policy, shall be recovered from the claimant.

All claims must be submitted by the claimant on a timely basis. Expenses submitted more than ninety (90) days after the date they are incurred by the employee will result in a meeting with their Supervisor and a counselling letter provided for the first occurrence. Following this, an employee who knowingly fails to act in accordance with the provisions of the Travel, Meal & Hospitality policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

For claimants other than employees, the agency assumes no obligation to pay expenses submitted more than (90) days after they are incurred. Exceptions to timeliness will be at the discretion of the Director of Service or Chief Financial Officer.



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EXCEPTIONS

Where an exception to the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses policy is being considered, the rationale for the exception must be documented, signed by the Supervisor, and accompany the claim. The claim must then be forwarded to the claimant's Director so approval for the exception may be sought.

Principles to guide exceptions:

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



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APPROVALS AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- **Within geographic jurisdiction**
 - normal work-related travel within the Society's geographic jurisdiction does not require prior approval
 - claims are approved after incurrence by the claimant's Supervisor, indicated by a signature.

- **Outside geographic jurisdiction within Ontario**
 - prior verbal approval to travel from Supervisor
 - details of the claim and supporting documentation are then approved after incurrence by the claimant's Supervisor, indicated by a signature.

- **Outside Ontario, within Canada and Continental USA**
 - requires prior written approval of the Executive Director or their designate
 - must be substantiated by written rationale and justification for the travel
 - a detailed travel plan with costs will be inherent in the approval process
 - details of the claim and supporting documentation are then approved after incurrence by the claimant's Supervisor, indicated by a signature

- **Outside Canada and Continental USA**
 - requires prior written approval of the Executive Director or their designate
 - must be substantiated by written rationale and justification for the travel which demonstrates that the travel is critical to the Society's priorities
 - a detailed travel plan with costs will be inherent in the approval process
 - details of the claim and supporting documentation are then approved after incurrence by the claimant's Supervisor, indicated by a signature.

The Supervisor of Learning and Development provides pre-approval for travel related to training and shall also approve the details of the claim and supporting documentation.

The Board President (or board member(s) authorized by the Board President) will approve the reimbursement of expenses for the Executive Director and will pre-approve Executive Director's travel outside of Ontario.

Claims made by the Board of Directors will be approved by the Board President or designate. The Board President's expenses will be approved by a member of the Board Executive.

Approvers cannot approve their own expenses. Expenses for a group must be claimed by the most senior person present.



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MODES OF TRAVEL

Only claimants with a valid drivers' license are authorized to drive their own or other vehicles for work-related travel, no exceptions.

The most practical and economical way to travel will be chosen in each circumstance. Where a claimant drives for work-related travel the society reserves the right to specify the means and route of travel which may include car pooling and use of rental or society vehicles. Travel will be carried out in the most efficient manner possible.

All travel claims must include, for each trip:

- date of travel
- case name/number or purpose of expense
- starting address or place name *(with sufficient detail to facilitate audit of travel claim)*
- ending address or place name *(with sufficient detail to facilitate audit of travel claim)*
- kilometers traveled (for 'per kilometer' reimbursement)
- indication of return trip or one way

Employees may claim travel expenses from their headquarters to the work-related destination. If work related travel commences or ends at the employee's home address, the travel claim will be the lesser distance of their headquarters or home address.

COVID-19 Pandemic Travel Exception – Each day one round trip from the employee's home to their headquarters is not claimable. All reasonable additional work related travel to and from the employee's home in a given day may be claimed. This provision is in place to reimburse additional expenses due to COVID.

Volunteers may claim travel expenses as outlined in Volunteer Management and Utilization Policy 4-080.

Supervisors will assess the reasonableness of kilometers claimed from starting point to ending point. Use of an internet mapping program may be necessary to assess the reasonableness of travel claims.

Foster caregivers and Board Members may claim travel expenses as outlined in their respective handbooks.

Personal Vehicle



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Personal vehicles used for work-related travel must be insured at the vehicle owner's expense for personal motor vehicle liability. Coverage should be as outlined in the Collective Agreement. Drivers must satisfy themselves whether their motor vehicle insurance coverage should include coverage for business use of the vehicle. Further details can be found in the Collective Agreement.

The Society assumes no responsibility for privately owned vehicles other than paying the kilometric rate when used for work-related travel. The Society is not responsible for reimbursing the deductible amount related to insurance coverage. Those driving a personal vehicle for work-related travel cannot make claims to the Society for damages as a result of a collision.

Rates of reimbursement applicable to travel by bargaining unit employees will be in accordance with the Collective Agreement. Reimbursement rates applicable to all other staff, volunteers and foster caregivers will be approved through the budget approval process.

Rental Car

To ensure travel is economical, all claimants are strongly encouraged to consider the use of a rental car when traveling more than 200 kilometers in one day. The number of rental days shall be considered as well as the estimated distance to be traveled, etc.

Use of a hybrid vehicle should be considered. The size of the rental car must be the most economical and practical required for program delivery and number of occupants. Luxury and sports car rentals are prohibited. Exceptions must be documented and approved by the traveler's Supervisor.

The rental car must be refueled wherever possible before returning it, in order to avoid higher gasoline charges imposed by the rental car Society.

Rail and Air

Travel by rail or air is permitted when it is the most practical and economical way to travel. Such travel will be in coach or economy class. For travel in other fare classes, the Society will only be responsible for payment at the coach or economy class rate.

Whenever possible, rail and air travel will be booked and paid for through the Director of Service using the Director of Service credit card for payment.

Taxi, Public Transit, Parking and Tolls

The most practical and economical way to travel shall be chosen. Hotel shuttles and public transit shall be used when practical. Use of taxis should be limited to circumstances where it is more economical than other



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means of transportation, when other means of transportation are not available, or when weather conditions or health and safety considerations warrant.

If fees are incurred related to taxis, parking, tolls, transit, etc, receipts should be obtained and submitted wherever practical. 407 ETR charges will not be reimbursed without the invoice showing "Trip Details".

Fines for parking violations or charges related to other illegal or inappropriate actions related to travel shall not be reimbursed.

ACCOMMODATION

Whenever possible, accommodations will be booked and paid for through the Human Resources department using the Human Resources credit card for payment. (This does not apply to FACS Corporate Credit Card holders).

Reimbursement will be made for single accommodation in a standard room. Accommodation in suites or executive floors, etc., is discouraged. For accommodation including suites, executive floors, or concierge services, the Society will only be responsible for payment at the single standard room rate.

Calls to Home

Reimbursement will be made for reasonable costs for necessary personal calls home for each night away.

Incidentals

Other reasonable business expenses will be reimbursed as required. These may include business calls, photocopying, etc. Proper detailed receipts are required.

MEALS

Meal expenses will be reimbursed when employees are required to be outside the headquarters area over a meal period or are required to work through meal periods, including meetings, client appointments, etc. Situations where meal expenses for foster caregivers and volunteers will be reimbursed are outlined in their respective policy and handbooks.

Actual meal costs including taxes and gratuities (not to exceed 15% of pre-tax cost) will be reimbursed. Maximum reimbursement amounts are as follows:



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- Breakfast \$ 10.00
- Lunch \$ 15.00
- Dinner \$ 20.00

Rates are in Canadian funds for expenses incurred in Canada and rates are in US funds for expenses incurred when travelling in the USA. (e.g. breakfast rate is \$10.00 Canadian funds in Canada and \$10.00 US funds in the USA)



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Expenses incurred for business travel in the USA will be reimbursed in Canadian funds. Exchange rate used to convert US to Canadian funds:

- For expenses paid by credit card Canadian funds charged on Credit card statement
- For expenses paid by cash Exchange rate posted by Bank of Canada Currency Converter for the the date the expense was incurred

Original, itemized receipts must be provided with claims for reimbursement of actual meal expenses (including taxes and gratuities). Reimbursement must not exceed the amount actually spent as validated by a receipt accompanying the claim.

For a full day which requires claims for 3 meals, claimants have the discretion to allocate the maximum among the meals (*e.g. \$12 breakfast, \$18 lunch and \$15 dinner*), with a suggested cap of \$20 for any single meal.

No reimbursement for a meal will be made for meals consumed at home prior to departure, or on return, or when the meal is included in the cost of travel, accommodations, or seminars and/or conferences, etc.

Board members and Executive Director will be reimbursed reasonable meal expenses when the claim is accompanied by receipts and appropriately approved.

Claimants will not be reimbursed for any costs associated with alcoholic beverages.

Meals - Clients

Development of the expectation that workers will always take a client (child or adult) out for a meal/snack when visiting is not encouraged. In cases where provision of a client meal/snack is required, the above limits apply and details such as client name/number and purpose of expense must be included in the claim, along with the detailed receipt.

Meals - Overtime

Actual expenses incurred for meals related to overtime worked shall be reimbursed to the extent set out in the Collective Agreement.

Staff Meetings /Events

Working lunches, meetings and events involving only staff members are not encouraged, but when required are approved by a Director. The above meal limits apply.



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HOSPITALITY

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 minimize costs but be consistent with the status of the guest(s), the number of persons attending, and the business purpose to be achieved.

Hospitality will be extended on behalf of the society when:

- engaging representatives of other groups in discussion on official matters
- providing persons from other relevant groups with an understanding/appreciation of the Society's work
- sponsoring formal conferences
- honouring distinguished persons

Hospitality that meets the above criteria must be pre-approved by the Director of Development and Public Relations or the Chief Financial Officer. Hospitality that does not meet the above must have prior approval of the Executive Director.

Hospitality may never be offered solely for the benefit of anyone covered by this policy.

Hosts must ensure that hospitality expense records include:

- the reason for the event
- the form of hospitality
- receipts to cover all costs of the event
- name and location of establishment
- names, titles and company/organization of attendees
- written approvals by appropriate Society official

Prior to hospitality being extended to, or received from current or prospective vendors, the Society's Code of Ethics must be carefully considered, including but not limited to Principle I : Integrity, and Principle IV : Conflict of Interest.



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Recipients of Hospitality

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

Gifts of appreciation may be accepted if token in nature, valued at up to \$50.00. Gifts valued above \$50.00 must be justified and approved by the Supervisor or 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 their Supervisor.

Prior to hospitality being extended to, or received from current or prospective vendors, the Society's Code of Ethics must be carefully considered, including but not limited to Principle I : Integrity, and Principle IV : Conflict of Interest.

CONSULTANTS AND OTHER CONTRACTORS

Under no circumstances can hospitality, incidentals, or food expenses be considered allowable expenses for consultant and contractors under the rules or in any contract between the Society and a consultant or contractor.

Reimbursement for allowable expenses can be claimed and reimbursed only when the contract specifically provides for it.



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DEFINITIONS (for purposes of this policy)

Collective Agreement	The Collective Agreement between The Children's Aid Society of the Niagara Region and The Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2328. When the Collective Agreement is referred to in this policy, the relevant sections are intended to apply to all employees whether or not they are subject to the Collective Agreement.
Geographic Jurisdiction	Includes the areas under the jurisdiction of the Hamilton/Niagara Regional Office of the MCSS/MCYS, and the Golden Horseshoe area including Burlington through to and including Toronto
Headquarters	A person's regular place of business or any Society place of business
Headquarters area	Geographic area under the jurisdiction of the Society
Hospitality	The provision of food, beverages, accommodation, transportation or other amenities at Society expense to persons who are not staff or clients and are not engaged in work for the Society
Supervisor	For purposes of this policy Supervisor implies the individual to whom the claimant reports, e.g. the Supervisor of a Service Director is the Director of Service. For foster caregivers and volunteers, Supervisor implies the individual authorized by the Society to approve travel and meal claims
Work-related	Includes travel related to a direct service or other Society business such as training, meetings, conferences, etc. Commuting between an employee's residence and headquarters is specifically excluded.

POLICY REVIEW:

This policy will be subject to a review cycle of at least once every four years.