

State and federal laws prohibit the donation of public funds but allow actual, appropriate, and necessary business expenditures. The definition of “public funds” is very broad and includes all moneys over which the district has custody or that pass through the district.

**A. General Guidelines**

To be reimbursed for an actual and necessary business expense the following conditions must be met:

1. The expenditure conforms to these guidelines and any applicable codes and regulations.
2. The director of purchasing and material management, the appropriate vice president, or the superintendent/president must approve exceptions to these guidelines in writing in advance.
3. There must be adequate documentation of the expenses, including adequately detailed receipts, description of business purpose, and attendees to a meeting, if applicable.

These guidelines do not apply to purchases for instructional programs; for example, food or beverages for classroom use in the hospitality or restaurant programs. These types of purchases are governed primarily by the California Education Code, Title 5 Regulations, and legal advisories from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office legal department concerning material fees and instructional supplies.

Examples of generally acceptable expenditures from the unrestricted general fund include:

1. General supplies, contracts, and equipment necessary to advance the educational purpose of the district.
2. Certificates, plaques, or other items in recognition of service to the district that have lasting value to the recipient and cost less than \$50.

3. Clothing items with a college and/or program identifier that all staff representing the college are required to wear at an event (e.g. outreach day at a high school, booth at a fair).
4. Clothing items with a college and/or program identifier that all staff in a work area or program are required to wear during assigned business hours on regular basis.
5. Team uniforms.
6. Honorariums with advanced written approval of a vice president or the superintendent/president.
7. Light refreshments for community and/or student-focused events (less than \$20/per student and/or community member).

Examples of generally unacceptable expenditures from the general fund include:

1. Food or beverages for routine faculty or staff meetings.
2. Holiday celebrations, cards, and decorations.
3. Individual personal occasions such as birthdays and retirements.
4. Donations, gifts, and honorariums.
5. Any item of clothing that is not required to be worn as a uniform.
6. Flowers for condolences, thank you, or congratulations.

Examples of absolutely unallowable expenditures from any district fund include expenditures:

1. For any illegal purpose.
2. For any purpose adverse to MiraCosta College board policy.
3. Alcoholic beverages unless for instructional purposes (CEC 32425; MiraCosta Community College District Board Resolution 1-89 and Board Policy/Administrative Procedure 3560, Alcoholic Beverages).

#### B. Grants, Restricted, or Categorical Funds

The same rules that apply to the general fund generally apply to grants and the restricted and categorical accounts except as noted below:

1. The funding documents, funded proposal, or proposal documents specifically allow the expense.
2. The funding source provides appropriate written documentation by mail, e-mail, or facsimile that specifically authorizes a proposed expenditure.

In either case, the above documentation to support the expenditure must either be on file with the Purchasing Department or accompany the purchasing document that is submitted for approval. The grant project director and related manager will be accountable for compliance with the specific rules and guidelines dictated by the funding source, as well as the district's expenditure procedures and guidelines.

C. Trust Funds [Associated Student Government (ASG) and Student Center Fee]

Unless prohibited by the funding source, trust funds may be used for food and beverages. Trust funds may not be used for holiday decorations and personal gifts unless specifically authorized by the funding source, the trust establishment documentation, or by district contract. Although generally allowed, any purchases of food and beverage must be related to the educational purpose of the college district and the specific purpose of the trust.

D. Category of Accounts – Foundation

The same rules that apply to the general fund apply to the foundation funds transferred to the foundation from the district.

The allowable use of unrestricted foundation funds (funds that are not transferred from the district or restricted by the donor) are governed by MiraCosta College Foundation policies and procedures. For purposes of clarification and alignment with district policies, the permitted use of unrestricted foundation funds are detailed here. Unrestricted foundation funds may be used for the purposes of donor cultivation, employee recognition, administrative and faculty recruitment, and building community partnerships. The following expenditures are allowable:

1. The purchase of food and beverages (including alcoholic beverages).
2. Purchases, and there are no preset limits.
3. Holiday celebrations, cards, decorations.
4. Individual personal occasions, such as birthdays and retirements.
5. Donations, gifts, and honorariums.
6. Flowers for condolences, thank you, or congratulations.
7. Image-enhancing gifts are permitted if they contain or include a MiraCosta College Foundation or district logo or identifier.
8. Restricted donations may not be used for the above-stated items except in the following instances:
  - a. The funding documents, funded proposal, or proposal documents specifically allow the expense.

- b. The funding source provides appropriate written documentation by mail, e-mail, or facsimile that specifically authorizes a proposed expenditure.

The superintendent/president must provide prior approval in writing any on-campus event that includes the provision of alcoholic beverages at foundation expense. Documentation approving on-campus events that include the provision of alcoholic beverages must both be on file with the office of the college superintendent/president and accompany the purchasing document that is submitted for approval. The foundation director will be accountable for compliance with the specific rules and guidelines dictated by the funding source, as well as the district's expenditure procedures and guidelines. In addition, all expenditures must comply with MiraCosta College Foundation policies and procedures.

E. Associated Student Government [ASG]

All requests for expenditures from student government funds must conform to the California Education Code and must be approved in writing by the director of student activities or designee and the ASG vice president of finance or president. The district is prohibited from using ASG funds for district operations. All expenditures must serve the educational mission of the district and generally must provide a direct benefit to students.

F. Examples of Authorized Activities and Events

Food and beverages may be purchased for district staff and students for the following types of events provided that the expenditures do not exceed \$45 (all inclusive of tip, tax, service, exclusive of room charges) per person, per day, and that the expenditures must be approved in writing in advance by the appropriate vice president:

1. ASG and related club activities
2. Nursing pinning ceremonies
3. Commencement ceremonies
4. Medal of Academic Merit events
5. All College Day
6. Divisional or departmental retreats (no more than two annually)
7. Board meetings

The district recognizes there are other events and activities that serve a public purpose, such as increasing enrollment, student retention, and other forms of public service, wherein provision of food items is an appropriate and allowable expense. To that end, the purchase of food and beverages is allowed in support

of the following types of functions, not exceeding \$20 per person, which includes all ancillary costs of the food (tax, tip, delivery, serving, and paper goods, etc.):

1. Mid-semester instructional departmental meetings\*
2. Advisory committee meetings
3. Help Huts during registration
4. Puente Project, as defined by the funding source
5. Service-learning student projects
6. Honors and enrichment seminars and events
7. Kids at College events
8. Tutor training sessions
9. Student-ambassador/student-worker training sessions\*
10. Summer Bridge
11. Conversation Café
12. Adopt a School events
13. High school testing/early matriculation sessions
14. Flex workshops\*
15. Divisional meetings for the Instructional, Business Services, and Student Services divisions\*
16. Region 10 meetings (one per year)
17. CalWorks and CARE sessions
18. Art gallery openings
19. Building groundbreakings and dedications

*\* (limited to one meeting each in semester, formal agenda, and sign-in sheet)*

Other events that do not conform to the general guidelines and terms and conditions listed herein must be approved in advance by the appropriate vice president or senate president. Variances to the dollar-spending limits require the approval of a vice president and the superintendent/president.

G. Requests for Interpretation or Clarifications

Direct requests for clarification or interpretation to the Purchasing Department  
In cases where a proposed expenditure appears to conflict with district policy and procedure, the question should be forwarded to the vice president of Business and Administrative Services, who will make the final administrative determination. The final administrative determination may be appealed to the superintendent/ president.