

Massachusetts College of Art and Design

Mobile Phone Stipend Policy, 2010

Purpose

Cellular telephones and cellular-based wireless communications devices can be an effective resource for campus employees in the performance of their job duties. For employees who spend considerable time outside of their assigned office area, or who must be accessible outside of scheduled or normal work hours, a mobile phone can be a significant benefit.

Traditionally, a "cell phone" has referred to a cell phone capable of voice calls, and, possibly, text messages. A "smart phone" refers to a device that serves as a phone and may also have a data plan attached that enables you to use Internet-based services. This policy document uses the term "mobile phone" to mean either type.

Based on job duties, certain employees may qualify to be provided a stipend to cover the business use of personally-owned mobile phones. The level of stipend will be determined by a person's job duties as it relates to mobile phone use and access. Guidelines to categorize mobile phone use as mandatory, highly beneficial or incidental are defined below. The college will review and set the amounts to be provided for stipends and reimbursement on an annual basis.

Policy statement

In general, employees who require a mobile phone as part of their job will be required to obtain it on their own. The college will provide a stipend to subsidize the cost incurred.

Description

I. General Policy: Institutional Stipend

This policy institutes an institutional stipend to cover presumed business use of personally-owned mobile phones for certain employees. Note that any stipend is to cover essential job-related use; simple convenience is not sufficient to qualify for a monthly stipend.

A. Employee responsibilities

The employee will purchase mobile phone service and equipment and assume responsibility for vendor terms and conditions. The employee is responsible for plan choices, service levels, calling areas, service and phone features, termination clauses, and payment terms and penalties. The employee is also responsible for the purchase, loss, damage, insurance, and/or replacement of phone equipment.

B. Guidelines to receive a stipend

Based on job duties as it relates to mobile phones, three categories are identified to determine if the employee should be provided a stipend to offset the cost of the hardware and monthly service.

1. Mandatory

The college **requires** an employee to have a mobile phone to fulfill job duties. The President upon recommendation from a Vice President will approve qualifying employees in this category. Employees in this category have duties that require access by the college while away from the office or in off-hour situations. Service is required for "on-call" personnel to be contacted in the event of an emergency or service need. Service is provided for life or safety requirements. (Relatively few employees are expected to fall in this category.)

2. Highly Beneficial

The use of a mobile phone is not mandatory but is considered highly beneficial to an employee to fulfill job duties. An area Vice President will approve the stipend paid to employees in their area that qualify under this category. Service is provided primarily for employees whose working conditions require them to frequently be away from traditional communications resources.

3. Incidental or occasional use

Reimbursement for business use of a personal mobile phone would be allowed at a fixed rate for all others. This would be in the form of a business related reimbursement request instead of a monthly stipend.

C. Levels of stipend payment

There are many phone carriers with varying plans for phone equipment and service. The payment levels are intended to cover a presumed level of business use of personally owned service in keeping with institutional benefit. The policy assumes that for most employees the mobile phone will be used for both personal and business use, therefore the overall costs are shared.

Amounts listed in each category below will be reviewed and set annually by the Vice President for Finance and Chief Operating Officer. The stipend amounts (1-3) will be listed on the annual rates listed at inside.massart.edu/technology.

1. Mandatory levels

- 1a. Voice only:** this stipend level is intended to cover a substantial portion of the employee's expense for monthly service costs. This stipend level would cover basic/voice service to meet institutional job duties.
- 1b. Voice + data:** this stipend level is intended to cover a substantial portion of the employee's expense for monthly service costs. This stipend level would cover voice and data (email/web) services that would be required to meet

- institutional job duties, as well as an adjustment to cover replacement of an appropriate mobile phone every 2 years.
- 1c. Text messaging or extra minutes supplement:** this supplement to the stipend is intended to cover a substantial portion of the employee's expense for monthly service costs for text messaging or high voice usage.

2. Highly Beneficial levels

- 2a. Voice only:** this stipend level is intended to cover a portion of the employee's expense for monthly service costs. This stipend level would cover basic/voice service to meet institutional job duties.
- 2b. Voice + data:** this stipend level is intended to cover a portion of the employee's expense for monthly service costs. This stipend level would cover voice and data (email/web) services that would be required to meet institutional job duties, as well as an adjustment to cover most of the replacement cost for an appropriate mobile phone every 2 years.
- 2c. Text messaging or extra minutes supplement:** this supplement to the stipend is intended to cover a substantial portion of the employee's expense for monthly service costs for text messaging or high voice usage.

3. Incidental or occasional use

Voice Only: this reimbursement level will be a "per-minute flat rate" with appropriate documentation provided by the employee.
No text messaging or data services reimbursement will be approved at this level.

D. Additional policy guidelines:

The stipend amount will be considered taxable income to the employee and added to their monthly paycheck.

The department of an employee receiving a monthly stipend, or incidental use reimbursement will provide the appropriate budget funding.

A Personal Mobile Phone Services Stipend Agreement will be completed by the employee and approved by the area Vice President. Updates or changes to phone service (phone numbers, voice/data vs. voice only, stipend amount, etc.) will be reported promptly to the employee's department head. The list of users by departments will be approved for renewal each year and reported to the area VP's.

If the employee resigns, is terminated, transfers departments, or no longer qualifies for an institutional stipend; the department head will promptly notify the Business Office to discontinue the stipend payment.

The employee's department head/dean and area Vice President are responsible for an annual review of the business need for a mobile phone stipend and whether the agreement should be continued.

Exceptions: there may be rare circumstances where the stipend level must be adjusted due to extenuating conditions. The President upon recommendation from a Vice President will approve exceptions.

Certain "departmental assigned phones" will be provided by the college (see section IV).

II. Fees for Contract Changes or Cancellations

The employee will be responsible for any fees associated with a change or termination of the contract caused by a personal decision of the employee, employee misconduct, or misuse of the device or service.

If, prior to the end of the service contract, the decision is made to discontinue the stipend to the employee (for example, because the employee's duties have changed and no longer require a mobile phone), or the employee leaves the college's employ, the employee may be eligible for reimbursement of all or a portion of the service contract cancellation fees. If the employee does not want to retain the current contract, a request for reimbursement of the cancellation fees must be submitted to the college within three weeks from the time of either the decision to discontinue the allowance or the employee's last date of employment. An invoice from the service provider indicating that service has been canceled and the amount of the cancellation fees must accompany the request. The college will reimburse the employee as follows: mandatory plans, 100%; highly beneficial plans, 50%. The college will reimburse fees for the cancellation of contracts with no more than two years remaining.

III. Guidelines for Mobile Phone Use

Personal use: the stipend policy assumes that the mobile phone will be used for both personal and business calls. Since the stipend amount is taxable as income, the employee is not required to track business vs. personal use to report to the college.

Institutional benefit: the stipend agreement requires that the personally owned phone is available for business access. An employee receiving a stipend must maintain active mobile phone service. The employee agrees to carry the mobile phone with them, keep it charged and in operational condition, and be accessible for business use as required by their department head or supervisor.

Appropriate use: the employee agrees to use the phone in ways consistent with college policy and all applicable local, state or federal laws. Inappropriate and unlawful use of mobile phone features, such as camera equipment, is prohibited.

Use of a mobile phone while operating a vehicle: mobile phones users must be aware of state and municipal laws regarding the use of phones while driving. The laws vary widely by location. In addition, use of phones while driving can cause hazardous distraction, especially in adverse weather, heavy traffic, or limited visibility conditions.

IV. Departmental-Provided Mobile Phones

There are some circumstances where a "departmentally assigned mobile phone" may be provided by the college that is not assigned to a specific individual. In these cases, the college will directly provide service and equipment.

A. Service and equipment procurement

MassArt's Technology department will arrange for service and phone equipment (and select the service provider) as appropriate.

B. Monthly billing statements from the carrier

The Technology department will process the carrier invoices for payment. The invoice breaks down the costs by individual telephone number including voice and data service plans, special features, plus any equipment that might have been purchased for that phone number. When new service is ordered Technology requires a budget number from the responsible department to associate with the new phone number.

C. Departmental bill back

The full amount of each individual billing statement is billed back to the responsible departmental budget number on a monthly basis. These charges are submitted electronically and no additional paperwork or summaries will be sent to the department, other than what is available through the normal budget review process.

D. Usage tracking and review

It is the responsibility of the department being charged to ensure that monthly billing statements are accurate. Budget managers may contact the Technology department at any time to obtain copies of the detailed billing statements that have been charged to the department. In the event that billing errors are detected, Technology staff will contact the carrier representative to make adjustments in subsequent billing periods.