

Mt. San Antonio College Food Purchasing Guidelines

Clarification on General Fund Usage and Food Purchases

We want to provide transparent guidance on funding restrictions and required documentation to ensure fiscal compliance, maintain proper budget oversight, and streamline payment processing. Please review the information below to help avoid any financial discrepancies and ensure adherence to district and state fiscal policies.

As stewards of public funds, we must adhere to all applicable regulations regarding public funds, particularly concerning food purchases.

Our general funds are primarily derived from taxpayer dollars and are allocated to support the core educational mission of the District, including instruction, student services, and institutional operations. As such, these funds **should not** be used for food purchases related to employee meals, including but not limited to:

- Staff Meetings/Social Events
- Continuous regular food purchases that only benefit a select few.
- Lavish or extravagant expenses
- Team-building events
- Any other non-student-related functions

The [California Constitution, Article XVI, Section 6](#), prohibits public agencies, including school and community college districts, from using public funds as gifts to individuals (including employees), corporations, or other government agencies.

As a result, school and community college districts cannot authorize expenditures of public funds for purposes that do not serve a clear public benefit under an approved legal framework.

**The above bullet points are not a comprehensive list of unallowable items not allowed to be purchased using general funds.*

All expenditures must serve a clear business purpose that directly benefits students and aligns with the college's educational mission. To ensure fiscal policy and regulation compliance, purchases must support student success, academic programs, or essential campus services. Proper justification is required to maintain financial integrity and accountability in public funds.

Invoice Submission Requirements for Food Purchases:

To ensure proper processing, payment requests, and P-Card supporting documentation **must** include the following supporting documentation:

- **Event Information** – A brief description of the event and how it supports student engagement or success.
- **Advertisement or Flyer** – A copy of any promotional material to announce the event to students.
- **Attendee Roster** – A sign-in sheet or list of participants to verify attendance.

These documents are necessary to ensure compliance with funding guidelines and to demonstrate that the expenditure served a legitimate student-focused purpose. Incomplete submissions may result in delayed processing or may result in the need to repay the district for such expenses.

Guidance for Food Purchases That Fall Outside of the Above Guidelines

Employees and managers must take proactive steps before making any food purchases. If you are unsure whether a food purchase is allowable, or if a purchase request does not clearly fall within these guidelines, please follow these steps:

1. Obtain Vice President Pre-Approval – Some food purchases may be permitted under specific circumstances, but advance approval is required to ensure compliance.
2. Review Allowable Expenditures (if Grant Funds) – If grant funds will be used, confirm that the purchase complies with applicable grant guidance.
3. Consult with the Fiscal Team – Confirm whether an alternative funding source (non-general funds) can be used before making any food purchase.

Important Disclaimer:

Reimbursements for personal expenses that violate the college's general usage and food policy will not be honored. Public funds must be used strictly for official district business, and any unauthorized expenditures, including personal or unapproved food purchases, are ineligible for reimbursement. Employees who spend district funds inappropriately will either not be reimbursed or must repay the district for any funds expended. Additionally, the employee's procurement card will be placed on hold until reimbursement is received.

Furthermore, if anyone other than the designated manager approves a transaction, the employee remains accountable for ensuring compliance with fiscal policies. Employees should consult the fiscal office for guidance on allowable expenses to maintain financial integrity and prevent misuse of funds.

If you have any questions about allowable food expenses or need further clarification on procurement policies, don't hesitate to get in touch with (purchasing@mtsac.edu) or Chrome River Help (chromeriverhelp@mtsac.edu).

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and your continued commitment to fiscal responsibility.