

Policy Name: Food and Beverage for Meetings and Events
Adoption Date: August 16, 2023
Supersedes: NA

BACKGROUND

Tacoma Public Library recognizes that providing light refreshments or meals, on defined occasions, can bring benefit to the Library, meet its business needs, or both; providing refreshments at events can foster a sense of community, encourage civic engagement, and remove barriers to attend library-sponsored events. This policy defines appropriate expenditures for food and beverages and general guidelines for the types of activities that meet these purposes.

This policy does not supersede applicable RCWs or collective bargaining agreements; nor is it meant to conflict with TPL's other policies, specifically Purchasing Policy #23.00, and Employee Travel and Business-Related Expenses Policy #10.05. Furthermore, this policy in no way obligates TPL to provide refreshments or meals at any meeting or event.

POLICY

Tacoma Public Library may serve light refreshments or meals in connection with Library sponsored programs, activities, events, service needs, or meetings, as further described below. Purchases shall be of reasonable / de minimis cost. Every effort should be made to reduce the amount of staff time that is spent on acquiring food, setting up, cleaning up or similar.

Light refreshments include non-alcoholic beverages and pre-packaged items commonly served between meals, but not intended to substitute for meals, such as fresh fruit trays, raw vegetables with dip, popcorn, granola bars, muffins or pastries, nuts and berries, or trail mix. Examples of appropriate occasions for this type of provision include the regular meetings of the Library Board of Trustees and select TPL-sponsored programs, where providing refreshments is expected to produce successful outcomes (e.g., higher attendance at teen programs or community input meetings).

TPL may pay the reasonable costs of meals or provide meals for employees or Trustees when time or location make it impractical for attendees to furnish their own meals, such as for long meetings, trainings, or retreats.

An authorized P-Card may be used to pay for the purchase of business meals.

Library funds shall not be used to purchase alcoholic beverages, for programming offered by community partners, individuals, or other private entities, or for staff events that are social in nature.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

This policy supports the following library strategic priorities:

Tacoma Public Library (TPL) is a municipal library and is publicly funded. As a public entity, it is TPL’s responsibility to apply the utmost integrity when making purchases. Providing refreshments at public events can foster a sense of community, encourage civic engagement, and remove barriers for community members to attend library-sponsored events.

Equity and Access We are committed to racial equity and social justice. It guides our work in serving Tacoma’s diverse communities, especially the most vulnerable and underserved.	x	Cultivate and Engage Community We will be the center for connecting people, ideas, and places.
Learning, Creativity, and Innovation We will be the place for learning, discovery, and innovation.	x	Responsible and Resilient We will be an integral partner in a sustainable network that supports a thriving Tacoma.
Investment in Youth We believe that youth are the future and will prioritize services, programs, and partnerships that nurture and develop young minds.		