

Expenditures for Proper Public Purpose

The Erie County Board of Mental retardation and Developmental Disabilities approves the expenditure of public funds for the purchase of coffee, meals, refreshments or other amenities for events listed below as well as other events of similar character and purpose.

1. Beverages and condiments are provided in the common area for Board staff and visitors to the administrative offices and program offices. The public purpose is to provide common hospitality, fluids and refreshments found in other places of business.
2. Annually the Board shall provide a staff inservice day and provide break and meal provisions as part of the days activities. The public purpose is that it is a captive training event and those in attendance do not have the opportunity to leave for lunch, etc. It is more cost effective to have the training and refreshments at the same place and also facilitates the training schedule.
3. Any time Board meetings are scheduled to extend beyond three hours and occur during the evening or over a regular meal time, beverages and refreshments may be provided to the Board, staff and visitors. This will include but not be limited to annual management evaluations, annual community planning meeting, etc. The public purpose is the Board, public and staff is asked to give up their normal meal time to participate in these activities.
4. On occasion the Board may provide beverages and modest refreshments as part of public awareness activities or public meetings such as open houses or events where the general public is invited into our facilities. The public purpose is one of general hospitality.
5. Food and beverages may also be purchased for use by our consumers and staff for the purpose of training in meal preparation and community inclusion training.

Refreshments purchased with public funds for any of these events shall be modest and appropriate to a work setting. Alcoholic beverages shall never be purchased with public funds or served in any Board facility or at any Board sponsored event.

Refreshments for retirement, birthdays, or other personal celebrations for staff of Board shall not be paid for with public funds.

Gifts, flowers and memorials – As a rule, public funds shall not be used to pay for memorial or congratulatory flowers, gifts or donations. Should extraordinary situations exist, the Board may adopt a resolution at a public meeting to authorize an exception to this policy.

The Board has adopted a policy to recognize Board members, staff and others for their public service and outstanding performance. Such considerations are not considered gifts but awards.

f:\policies\expenditures for proper public purpose
Reference: Ohio Atty. Gen. Opinion 82-006