

## DES Coordinated Hunger Relief Program – Policy Memo

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**Policy Memo #PM 15-01** – Cell Phone and Data Plan: Allowable Use and Cost Policy  
**Program:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Community Partnership  
**Effective Date:** 10/01/2014  
**Issue Date:** 09/30/14  
**Revised Date:** 12/11/2014

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This Policy Memo is being issued to inform SNAP Community Partners of allowable cost related to cell phone and data plan use. All costs must be allowable, reasonable and necessary.

**A. Reasonable costs** are those that:

- Provide a program benefit generally commensurate with the amount incurred;
- Are in proportion with other program costs for the function; and
- Have a high priority relative to other demands.

**B. Necessary costs** are those that:

- Are needed to carry out essential functions;
- Cannot be avoided without adverse impact on program operations; and
- Do not duplicate existing efforts.

**C. Allowable activities:**

1. Cell phone usage is an allowable cost when traveling to remote locations where land line service is not available
  - Cell phone use is allowable when used to support activities **such as:**
    - Contacting DES (eligibility interview or questions regarding case status)
    - Scheduling appointments
    - Follow-up with applicants regarding SNAP application

Note: Justification is required when requesting multiple cell phones.

2. Mobile Hotspot: A small personal device that creates a small area of Wi-Fi coverage allowing nearby Wi-Fi devices to connect to the Internet. In other words, the device serves as a link between nearby Wi-Fi devices and a cellular data network.
  - Used for internet access on laptop to support activities **such as:**
    - Submitting application online via Health-e-Arizona Plus (HEAplus)
    - Upload documents to HEAplus
    - Locating verification documents
    - Accessing SNAP eligibility prescreening tools such as the ArizonaSelfHelp

**D. Cost:**

The following table provides the maximum cost a partner organization may invoice for each month.

Type of Plan	Maximum Allowable Cost (monthly)
Phone – Voice only	\$25 per month
Smartphone – Voice and Data	\$50 per month
Mobile Hotspot, Wi-Fi, or modem	\$50 per month

**Request for exception to # PM 15-01 – Cell Phone and Data Plan: Allowable Use and Cost Policy:**

1. Explain the reason for your request (justification). The explanation must be clearly stated and provide sufficient information with which to fully evaluate the request.
2. Include job description for staff for whom you are requesting an increase in the costs related to cell phone and data plans and or multiple cell phones.
  - a. Costs must be reasonable, necessary and allowable.<sup>1</sup>
3. Provide documentation that should include historical data;
  - a. A time and activity tracker or time study of activities documenting percentage of time cell phones and or data plans/Hotspots are necessary for staff to accomplish SNAP related tasks.
  - b. At a minimum one month of data, showing the percentage of time used related to the duties outlined in the job description and scope of work.

**Submit the Request for Exception to the Arizona Community Action Association for approval.**

**If the exception is approved then submit a revised:**

1. Budget Narrative
2. Staffing Budget
3. Line Item Budget

Please forward any questions or concerns regarding this Policy update to:

***Coordinated Hunger Relief Program***

Email address: [CoordinatedHungerReliefProgram@azdes.gov](mailto:CoordinatedHungerReliefProgram@azdes.gov)

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<sup>1</sup> (See definitions A,B,C in # PM 15-01)