

## **Methodist University Cellular Phone Allowance Policy**

### **Background**

Methodist University recognizes that the performance of certain job responsibilities may be enhanced by or require the use of a cellular (cell) phone or Smartphone.

### **Policy**

Employees who hold positions that include the need for a cell phone (see eligibility criteria below) may receive a cell phone allowance to compensate for business-related costs incurred when using their individually-owned cell phones.

The University will not own cell phones for the use of individual employees, nor will the University pay invoices for services provided by vendors classified as cell phone providers. Payment to cell phone providers via a University corporate or procurement card is prohibited.

### **Eligibility**

If a supervisor determines that a university employee's job duties include the frequent need for a cell phone, the employee is eligible for an allowance to cover business-related cell phone expenses. Such an allowance may be requested using the Cell Phone Allowance Request Form. The request may be made any time during the year, but must be reviewed and renewed at the beginning of each academic year (September 1). The allowance will be paid monthly via payroll from the employee's departmental budget. The monthly stipend is a non-taxable benefit, subject to IRS reporting on the employee's annual Form W2.

*This allowance does not constitute an increase to base pay, and will not be included in the calculation of percentage increases to base pay due to annual raises, job upgrades, bonuses, or benefits based on a percentage of salary, etc.*

Direct Supervisors and appropriate department Vice Presidents must approve the cell phone allowance. **In all cases for approval, the employee is required to be on-call (24/7).** The following guidelines should also be considered when identifying the need for a cell phone allowance:

- Safety requirements indicate having cellular phone is an integral part of performing duties of job description.
- More than 50% of work is conducted in the field.
- Required to be contacted on a regular basis.
- The job function requires the employee to have wireless data and internet access
- Critical decision maker

### **Allowance Provisions**

The amount of the allowance is limited to \$45 per month.

The University will pay only the agreed upon cell phone allowance, with a maximum amount of \$45 per month, even if monthly costs exceed the allowance.

The cell phone contract will be in the name of the Faculty or Staff member and said employee will be solely responsible for all payments to the service provider. Only one cell phone

allowance will be provided per employee. The University does not accept any liability for claims, charges or disputes between the service provider and the employee. Recipients of a cell phone allowance must notify the University of the cell phone Number and must continue to maintain the cell phone while receiving an allowance. The University reserves the right to remove a participant from this plan if there are insufficient funds in the designated departmental budget to meet the cost of the monthly allowances.

If, prior to the end of the cell phone contract, a personal decision by the employee, or employee misconduct, or misuse of the phone, results in the need to end or change the cell phone contract, the cost of any fees associated with that change or cancellation will be the responsibility of the employee.

If, prior to end of the cell phone contract period, a departmental decision (unrelated to employee misconduct) results in the need to end or change the cell phone contract, the department will be responsible for the cost of any fees associated with that change or cancellation. For example, the employee's supervisor has changed the employee's duties such that a cell phone is no longer needed for business purposes. If the employee does not want to retain the current contract, any fees associated with the change or cancellation will be reimbursed by the department.

#### Oversight, Approval, and Funding

Departmental supervisors are responsible for overseeing employee cell phone needs and assessing the continual need for allowances and extent of business related expenses. The need for cell phone allowances should be reviewed on an annual basis.

#### Employee Rights and Responsibilities

The employee is responsible for purchasing a cell phone and service contract with a service provider of their choice. The contract with the provider is between the employee and service provider – not the University. The employee is solely responsible for payment to the provider.

The employee's job duties must meet the eligibility requirements consistent with the requirements to receive a cell phone allowance, and the employee must notify the payroll office immediately upon termination of service.

The employee must be able to provide, if requested by his/her supervisor, records to substantiate the existence of a cell phone plan, as well as business-related usage, to determine the need for continued reimbursement.

Cell phones covered by this policy are used in part to conduct University business and/or to create, receive, send, or store University data or educational records regarding student information. As such, information contained on these devices is subject to Federal, State and University policies regarding the protection of such data, including FERPA.