

Memo To: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders

UH-Downtown/PS 05.A.21

From: Juan Sánchez Muñoz, President

Issue No. 6

Effective date: 05/03/2019

Subject: Wireless Communication Stipend Policy

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1. PURPOSE

This Policy Statement outlines the University of Houston-Downtown policy regarding wireless communication device stipends.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Wireless Communication Devices: Cell phones and any other telecommunication devices that have voice and/or data capabilities.

3. POLICY

3.1 University employees may be eligible to have a wireless communication device provided through the university by way of a Monthly Stipend. Temporary employees and student workers are not eligible to receive a communication stipend.

3.1.1 Supervisors may request approval for a wireless communication device stipend for an employee by completing a [Communication Stipend Request](#) and submitting it to the division head. The request must outline the reason the device is needed, the benefit to the university, the local funding source to pay for the stipend and acknowledgement by the employee of having read this policy, PS 05.A.21.

3.2 Monthly Stipend Plan

3.2.1 If an employee's job duties require the use of a wireless communication device, the university may elect to provide the employee with a communications stipend.

3.2.2 Employees earning less than \$100,000 and meeting one of the criteria below may be eligible for a communications stipend. Due to the nature of their position, select employees earning \$100,000 or more may be eligible for a communications stipend. Exceptions require approval by the respective division head and president.

- a) Employees key for critical need situations requiring 24/7 contact
- b) Employees not normally present at a regularly assigned work station
- c) Employees in positions requiring frequent and/or prolonged business travel

- d) Employees whose job duties require working off-campus extensively and/or frequent telephone interaction with external constituents during on-and-off duty hours
- 3.2.3 The service contract for the wireless communication device is the responsibility of the employee and the university shall have no obligation or make any guarantees to the employee or service provider with respect to such contract.
- 3.2.4 An employee receiving a monthly communications stipend from the university may not receive a stipend or reimbursement for the same or similar equipment or service from another department at UHD or a component university.
- 3.2.5 Equipment and Activation
- a. Loss, theft or damage to device: UHD will not provide replacement costs for any loss, theft or damage to the equipment; it is, therefore, recommended that individuals consider purchasing device insurance through the service provider.
 - b. Individuals are responsible for taking appropriate measures for protecting and securing university information/data received and sent on their wireless communication device in accordance with all applicable policies, regulations, and laws.
- 3.2.6 Monthly Stipend
- a. A monthly communications stipend of \$30, less applicable payroll taxes, will be provided monthly to employees approved for a wireless communication device.
 - b. The monthly communications stipend is provided to offset expenses associated with UHD business. This stipend is not intended to cover 100% of the fees and service charges incurred under an individual's plan.
 - c. Eligible employees may choose any provider and plan. Provider contracts resulting from such choices are between the employee and the provider and in no way obligate UHD.
- 3.2.7 Monthly communication stipends are taxable compensation subject to required tax withholdings (see [SAM 03.D.06, Taxable Fringe Benefits](#)). This stipend is not an entitlement and is not part of the employee's base salary. Stipends do not qualify as compensation for TRS or ORP contribution purposes. Payment of withholding taxes is the responsibility of the employee and shall not be reimbursed to the employee by the university.

- 3.3 Employees must provide the department with the current phone number for the wireless communication device within five working days of activation.
- 3.4 Employees must notify the department within five working days of inactivation of the device or service. An employee is prohibited from continuing to receive a stipend when the service or device is no longer active or needed.
- 3.5 If, at any point, there is no longer a business need for the employee to have a wireless communication device, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to complete an Electronic Personal Action Request (ePAR), revoking the previous arrangement.
- 3.6 The University of Houston-Downtown does not endorse any particular service provider or plan.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Communications Stipend Requests

- 4.1.1 To initiate a communications stipend, the employee's supervisor shall submit a completed [Communications Stipend Request](#) to the appropriate department head. If the Request is approved, the Request will be forwarded to the respective division head.
- 4.1.2 The division head approves or denies the Request. If approved and the employee earns \$100,000 or more, the Request will be forwarded to the President for action.
- 4.1.3 If approved at all required levels, an ePAR will be initiated and a copy of the approved Request will be attached to the ePAR to document approval of the stipend. If denied, the Request will be sent back to the originator.
- 4.1.4 Once the fully executed ePAR is received by the Payroll Department, the communications stipend will be initiated with an effective date of:
 - a. For monthly employees – first working day of the following month, and;
 - b. For hourly employees – first pay period of the following month.

4.2 Termination of Communications Stipend

- 4.2.1 Immediate termination of an employee's communications stipend or access to university-paid communications/internet service may occur for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Employee no longer meets eligibility requirements; or

- b. there is a change in an employee's job responsibilities, such that the monthly stipend plan is no longer applicable; or
- c. the employee has terminated employment with the university.

4.2.2 An ePAR will be initiated to revoke the stipend.

5. EXHIBITS

There are no exhibits associated with this policy.

6. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party: (Reviewer): Vice President for Administration and Finance

Review: Every three years on or before August 1st.

Signed original on file in Employment Services and Operations.

7. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 02/17/09

Issue #2: 09/10/09

Issue #3: 08/12/10

Issue #4: 03/23/11

Issue #5: 07/09/15

8. REFERENCES

[UH System Memorandum 03.A.19](#)

[UH System Memorandum 03.D.06](#)

[Communications Stipend Request](#)