29. SMARTPHONE STIPEND POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a monetary stipend to specific County employees who have demonstrated the need to utilize a smartphone on a regular basis as part of their job duties. The specific group of County employees eligible for the stipend shall be limited to members of the Board of Supervisors, Elected Officials, Department Heads, and County Management employees who have demonstrated such a need and have been approved for the stipend by the County Administrative Officer.

Rationale

Smartphone communication provides an opportunity for County Departments to ensure efficient, safe, and high-quality customer service to the citizens of Lake County. This policy allows for a fixed monthly monetary stipend for business or work-related communications on a smartphone.

Issuing a stipend for work-related communications will avoid the problem of employees having to carry multiple devices; those for personal use and those for use in the conducting of County business. It is believed to be more prudent and efficient for the specific employees (listed above under Purpose) to utilize a single device, that being their own personal smartphone, for both personal and work related communications.

Stipend

Privately owned smartphones used by eligible employees for County business are subject to the provisions of this Section, effective December 1, 2007.

> A. Guidelines: The smartphone allowance is intended to cover the costs of personal expenses related to work duties. Initial purchase of the smartphone, accessory equipment, and activation fees will be the responsibility of the employee. The employee shall pay any costs exceeding the amount of the smartphone allowance. No allowance will be paid when an employee is in an unpaid-leave status in excess of 30 days.
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> B. Availability: Employees must make their smartphone contact information know to staff, and be available during working hours.
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> C. Taxability: The smartphone allowance will be paid through the County payroll system as taxable income. For determination of individual taxability, employees should check with their tax advisor.
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> D. Replacement: Replacement or repair of the smartphone will normally be the responsibility of the employee who uses the phone. If the smartphone is lost or damaged as a direct result of County business use, the County Administrative Officer may approve reimbursement to the employee.
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> E. Security: Smartphone users are subject to IT policies to protect the security, integrity and availability of the data stored on these devices. Sensitive County related data must be protected either by encryption, password or some other means. Smartphone users may synchronize their device to the County network and email system.

F. Termination: An employee must notify the County Administrative Officer immediately if service is to be terminated.

The amount of the stipend shall be $75.00 per month for smartphones. The stipend shall be payable by the Auditor-Controller directly to eligible employees on a monthly basis. Department Heads shall submit on behalf of their employees, requests for the stipend to the County Administrative Officer, who shall approve or disapprove their eligibility. Employees will only be offered a stipend if the employee's work-related need is as follows:

1. The employee's work requires wide mobility and simultaneous access to the communications network; or

2. The employee's work requires timely, business critical two-way communication for which there is no reasonable alternative technology; or

3. The employee provides emergency support and backup from a mobile environment.

In no event shall employees who receive said stipend also be provided with the use of a County owned or leased smartphone. Any approved eligible employee who, upon approval, has possession of a County-owned smartphone, may assume the ownership of the phone and the transfer of the service agreement for that phone from the County to himself or herself.

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors, Resolution No. 2005-2009 on 11/22/05. Amended by Board action 12/4/07. Amended by Board action 01/25/2022.