



## **POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT**

NUMBER: 5.5093  
UNIT: Information Technology Services  
TITLE: Cellular Allowance Policy  
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April 20, 2023

AUTHORIZED: AVP for Information Technology Services

### **I. Purpose and Scope**

This policy provides protocols, guidelines, and establishes procedures for the authorization, deployment, and use of University funded cellular services. The purpose of this policy is to contain costs, ensure departmental and personal accountability/responsibility, and to prevent improper use of cellular services.

### **II. Policy**

The University will not provide university-owned cellular phones for the use of individual employees. Employees whose duties and responsibilities require them to maintain significant contact with the University while away from the office or to be accessible after normal working hours may be eligible for compensation in the form of a monthly allowance. An employee with a cellular allowance must maintain active cellular service for the life of the allowance or shall notify their supervisor immediately when service is disconnected so the allocation can be terminated.

#### **General**

Mobile devices are an effective resource for Western Kentucky University as they enable communication in areas or situations where conventional resources are not readily available or are impractical. However, the cost incurred by devices leveraging cellular services must be weighed carefully.

In general, a cellular allowance may be provided to an employee for whom the nature of their work requires wide mobility, immediate or timely response for example, but not limited to: University management and those serving in on-call capacities.

#### **Terminology**

The term "Western Kentucky University," "WKU," and "the University" are used interchangeably. The term "user" and "personnel" refers to the individual or individuals using the cellular service. The term "RF" refers to the radio frequency; "FCC" refers to the Federal Communications Commission; and "FDA" refers to Food Drug Administration.

### **III. Procedure**

#### **1. Procedures**

##### **1.1. Cellular Allowance**

Qualified employees whose job duties require the frequent need for cellular service as listed in section 1.2.1, may receive supplemental compensation (in the form of a monthly cellular allowance) to cover business-related use of an individual's personal cellular service. The policy assumes that for most employees, the device will be used for both business and personal use, and it is appropriate for the University and employee to share the overall costs. Thus, the allowance amount is not intended to cover 100% of the monthly service plan's cost.

Qualified employees are eligible for a monthly allowance up to \$30.00.

A cellular allowance may be modified should the nature of the employee's job change.

Employees who receive a cellular allowance agree to utilize the covered services (voice, messaging, and/or data) for business-related purposes as instructed by departmental management and per applicable requirements of the employee's position. It is highly recommended that management place and retain such requests and requirements in writing.

Recipients further understand and agree that their cellular contact information may be made available to and used by University officials outside their department for purposes of emergency or essential services activation.

Those who receive an allowance are subject to review by the University to verify the necessity of the cellular allowance. Upon request, employees will be required to provide the University their cellular billing statements, detailing University-related usage.

The University as a public institution is subject to the Kentucky Open Records Act, KRS 61.870 through KRS 61.884. Receiving a University cellular allowance may expose your device and service to open record requests and may require those who receive a cellular allowance to provide electronic communication to the University to determine whether the communication is a public record subject to disclosure.

#### **1.2 Authorization**

##### **1.2.1 Who Has Authorization**

It is the responsibility of an employee's department, or higher as desired by division leads, to determine whether the employee's position necessitates that a cellular allowance should be granted. Work-From-Home scenarios are not solely justification for an allowance as the university's phone system and similar collaboration solutions should cover standard communications needs. The University defines the following business purposes as qualifying instances where a cellular allowance may be granted:

- The employee holds responsibilities in where they must be available to be contacted and/or respond in the event of an emergency.
- Employees who are frequently "on call" officially or implicitly and/or need to be contacted in an immediate or timely manner (during or after regular business hours) to respond to situations pertinent to their assigned responsibilities. If the contact is deemed by the department as rare or occasional usage, reference section 3 of this

document.

- Employees who commonly perform work out of the office or in a mobile capacity where they require reliable communication.
- Employees who frequently travel or are out of the office and need to be in contact with University personnel or affiliates to conduct University business.

### **1.2.2 Getting Authorization**

Authorization is subject to Department Head/Director approval. Upon approval an EPAF will be created and an approval process, which includes Chief Divisional Officer or appropriate Vice President, Dean, Director, or Department Head, will need to be completed before the allowance will take effect.

The employee is responsible procedurally and fiscally for the purchase of the cell phone equipment. Costs for cosmetic or other peripherals that have no business purpose are the responsibility of the employee.

### **1.2.3 Contact Information**

For questions regarding the cellular allowance policy and procedures, contact Information Technology using the method of your choosing found at <https://www.wku.edu/its/contact>.

### **1.2.4 Department Responsibilities**

Departments must conduct annual reviews of both the necessity of and approved amount of cellular allowances. The department may at any time modify or terminate the cellular allowance as necessary. A new EPAF must be created each fiscal year for every cellular allowance. It is recommended to complete these prior to June.

The Cellular Allowance EPAF Instructions can be found at:  
<https://www.wku.edu/its/cellular/>

### **1.2.5 Termination of Cellular Allowance.**

To terminate or modify a cellular agreement an EPAF must be created, approved, and fully processed to completion.

## **2. Employee Cellular Support**

The employee is personally responsible for the equipment and monthly cellular service charges. All support for cellular service is provided by the cellular service company chosen by the employee. The University is under no obligation to provide support for individually owned cellular devices or services. The qualified employee will be responsible for his/her contract; therefore, the individual will need to contact the cellular provider with any billing/service issues.

WKU Information Technology Services will provide support for WKU services such as email, calendars, and other relevant services such as iWKU app.

## **3. Reimbursement of Cellular Services**

If an employee is covered by a cellular allowance but experiences an atypical situation creating a cost burden directly resulting from business use, the employee may request reimbursement for the expenses beyond the normal allocation. The individual should make personal payment to the provider then submit a request for reimbursement from the department.

- Example 1: An employee will be traveling internationally and on a temporary basis applies

an international plan to their cellular service. A situation such as this should be approved in writing, with documented costs, prior to the modification of cellular service and resulting fiscal liabilities.

- Example 2: An employee will be traveling for a length of time resulting in a situation where the employee utilizing higher than normal cellular data services directly related to University business functions. If the employee has an amount limited data plan but is required to utilize more data than the plan allows resulting in overage charges, a reimbursement may be requested.

These types of reimbursements should be an exception. It is recommended for individuals who have frequent reimbursements to work with their Division leads, Dean, Director, or Department Head to determine the most cost effective and policy compliant options for the situation. WKU Information Technology Services can be consulted in such situations.

#### **4. University Owned, Shared-Use Cellular Devices**

WKU Information Technology Services will maintain a centrally managed cellular services account for the rare/unique use-cases of departmental cellular devices. These services will be rebilled to the applicable department.

##### **4.1 Departmental Device Request**

WKU Information Technology Services, with approval by an applicable departmental budget authority, will procure cellular services and applicable devices for specialized departmental use cases. For these services, submit a request through the ITS Service Desk. Contact options can be found at <https://www.wku.edu/its/contact>.

IRS policies are clear about personal use of business sponsored cellular devices/services; therefore, the University advises that personal use of University sponsored devices should only be in emergencies. However, if personal use of a university device occurs, the personal use of the wireless device must be reimbursed to the University account covering the costs of the device/service by the employee. Departments will be responsible for collecting any reimbursements amounts from employees.

Noncompliance with this policy will result in termination of the wireless device and service. The department will be responsible for any charges resulting in the termination of service.

##### **4.2 Departmental Device Cancellation**

If your department would like to cancel service on a departmental cellular device, place a request with the ITS Service Desk. Contact options can be found at <https://www.wku.edu/its/contact>.

##### **4.3 No University entity can extend existing or enter into new cellular service contracts, except the Information Technology Services Unit.**

Direct payment, via WKU procurement Card or other any other means, for cellular services, or devices is not allowable on WKU, nor foundation accounts, except under the agreement listed in section 4 of the document.

#### **5. Mobile Device Use While Driving**

Kentucky State law prohibits any form of reading and/or sending messages on a device while

driving. The law states in part the following. Please reference the KRS for full details.  
"No person may write, send or read a text-based communication (including text messages, instant messages and emails) while operating a motor vehicle that is in motion"

All Local, state, and Federal laws to be followed. Responsibility fully rests with the user of the service/device.

If an employee has an accident while using the wireless device, WKU assumes no liability.

If driving, it is recommended that the user pull completely off the road and come to a complete stop in a parking area or other safe place before using a mobile device.

#### **6. Health Risks Concerning Wireless Device**

There is no proven evidence to date that radio frequency (RF) from personal cellular devices will cause any health problems. WKU does not assume any responsibility for unknown risk from wireless device use. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Food Drug Administration (FDA) each regulate wireless devices. The FCC ensures that all wireless devices sold in the U.S. follow safety guidelines that limit RF energy.

#### **7. Misuse of Cellular Service**

The misuse of the cellular service - using it in ways inconsistent with University policy or with local, state, or federal laws - will result in immediate cancellation of the cellular allowance and departmental devices.

### **IV. Related Policies**

### **V. Reason for Revision**

01-09-23 - Formatting and language changed for consistency with other ITS policies.

04-20-23 – Revised with no changes per WKU Policy 0.0004