



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNICATIONS ALLOWANCE POLICY

Section 10.105(c) Jacksonville Ordinance Code

Effective August 12, 2014, the City Council approved Ordinance 2014-410-E (attached) to revise the mobile or converged communications device policy which provides fixed allowances for City Council Members upon request. In addition, effective March 17, 2016, the 12-month period for allowances was changed from *Council Year* to *Fiscal Year* to align payments to participants with the City Council budget. This policy provides a uniform communications allowance to be paid monthly to participating Council Members.

AMOUNT AND TERMS OF PAYMENT

Council Members and authorized members of staff who maintain cellular telephone service may receive a monthly allowance for a calling plan, texting, and/or data plan, not to exceed \$100.00 per month. This allowance excludes expenses for taxes, fees, equipment, and/or secondary lines.

Allowances will be paid the first payday of each month for the previous month. (EXAMPLE: The allowance for service(s) for the month of October will be paid the first payday in November.) In addition, allowances will only be paid for each full month of service. If a Council Member or staff member terminates employment prior to the end of a month, no Communications Allowance will be paid for that month. (EXAMPLE: Termination of employment on June 16th would result in no Communications Allowance paid for the month of June.)

REQUEST DEADLINE & PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The "Annual Request" period coincides with the Fiscal Year. Therefore, annual requests are due by September 30th and expire on September 30th of the following year. Although these requests are submitted annually, 30 days before the onset of the Fiscal Year, eligible participants may request the allowance at any time during the year. However, funding must be available and off-schedule requests must be received no later than the 1st day of the month for which the allowance is being requested and all requests expire September 30th, regardless of the date the request originated. Nothing in this policy authorizes retroactive payment for allowances that are not requested and approved prior to established deadlines. EXAMPLE: If an eligible participant requests an allowance beginning with the month of October, the request form is due no later than September 30th and expires September 30th of the following year. The first allowance will be paid the first payday in November.

Upon receipt and approval of the *Communications Allowance Request* form, a communications allowance will continue to be paid the first payday of each month for service(s) for the previous month (ending September 30th of each year) unless one of the following occurs:

- a. The participant requests to discontinue receiving the allowance.
- b. The participant notifies the Director/Council Secretary that a service will be terminated.

It is the participant's responsibility to notify the Director/Council Secretary immediately if the telephone number and/or rate plan is changed or the service is terminated. It is also the participant's responsibility to submit a new request form including required documentation prior to the end of each Fiscal Year in order for the allowance to continue.

ALLOWANCE REQUEST FORM

The *Communications Allowance Request* form (attached) must be completed, signed, and submitted in accordance with this policy prior to the payment of any allowance. By signing this form, participants certify and acknowledge the following information:

- a. Receipt of this policy.
- b. Each service is currently active.
- c. The deadlines for submitting request forms.
- d. The notification requirement to the Director/Council Secretary immediately upon change of the telephone number, rate plan, or termination of service.
- e. The City's right to verify service(s) at any time.

In order to receive the allowance(s), an eligible participant must complete and sign the *Communications Allowance Request* form and submit it to the Director/Council Secretary no later than September 30th of each year (Fiscal Year: October 1 – September 30). A copy of the participant's current statement for cellular service that includes the service provider's name, type(s) of service, rate plan(s), participant's name, cellular telephone number, and billing date must be attached to the request form.

CHANGE OR TERMINATION OF SERVICE FORM

A participant receiving the communications allowance must notify the Director/Council Secretary immediately upon any change or termination of the service for which the allowance is being received. The *Communications Allowance Change of Service* form (attached) must be completed, signed, and submitted to the Director/Council Secretary immediately to ensure the service(s) can be verified and that no allowances are paid to the participant for terminated/cancelled service(s). If the service was changed, a copy of the participant's cover page of their first statement reflecting the change(s) must be submitted immediately upon receipt. The service provider's name, type(s) of service, rate plan(s), participant's name, cellular telephone number, and billing date must be included on the statement.

VERIFICATION

The City reserves the right to verify service(s) at any time to ensure allowances are not overpaid or paid for terminated/cancelled service(s). In order to do so, it is required that participants make the Director/Council Secretary immediately aware of any changes to service(s) that would prevent this verification, i.e. changing the telephone number, cancelling/terminating service, changing providers, etc.

Revised 10/1/2018
Revised 8/29/2016
Revised 3/17/2016
Revised 8/14/2014
Revised 6/29/2011
Approved 8/16/2005

Sec. 10.105. - Postage and communication expenses of Council members.

- (a) *Postage.* No Council member shall receive any postage allowance for official mail originating from City Hall; the cost of such postage shall be paid from the appropriations for postage generally for the Council. If a Council member is authorized to maintain an office at public expense outside City Hall, the Council Secretary or designee is authorized to procure and furnish United States postage stamps to such Council member in an amount not exceeding \$75 monthly for use on mail originating from such office in connection with his official business. The Council member and any person to whom he entrusts custody of the postage stamps shall be accountable for their safekeeping and use on official business only, and the accountable person shall be subject to audit by the Council Auditor for this purpose.
- (b) *Telephone.* No Council member shall receive any allowance for telephone expense for official calls originating from City Hall; the cost of such telephone calls shall be paid from the appropriations for telephone expenses generally for the Council. If a Council member is authorized to maintain an office at public expense outside City Hall, the Information Technology Division, at the request of the Council member, is authorized to have installed at such office one telephone set, which shall be an extension of the City's central telephone exchange and the installation and service charges for which shall be paid from the appropriations for telephone expenses generally for the City. Regardless of whether a Council member is authorized to maintain an office outside City Hall, he may have installed at public expense one telephone line either at his home or at his place of business, with the approval of the Council President. If the request is approved, the Information Technology Division is authorized to have installed at the designated place one telephone set, which shall be an extension of the City's central telephone exchange and the installation and service charges for which shall be paid from the appropriations for telephone expenses generally for the City. For each telephone installed outside City Hall pursuant to this subsection, the Council member on whose behalf it was installed may expend in long-distance telephone tolls no more than \$100 monthly, and he shall maintain a record of long-distance calls on the forms prescribed by the Information Technology Division for use by the Council Secretary. In reconciling telephone charges, long-distance tolls shall be paid from the appropriation for telephone charges by the Council. Only telephone calls in connection with his official business shall be made or authorized by the Council member on whose behalf a telephone line was installed and he shall be accountable for all unofficial telephone calls and charges and for all charges in excess of the monthly allowance provided by this subsection; provided, that, if the monthly toll charges exceed the amount authorized, the Council member may direct that the excess amount be charged against his following month's telephone expense allowance. The monthly allowances herein authorized shall not be cumulative, but shall be available only for one month.
- (c) *Emergency, mobile or converged communication device.* Effective July 1, 2005, and notwithstanding anything in Chapter 10 to the contrary, City cellular phones shall not be issued to any elected or appointed official or employee in the legislative branch except as provided herein. Based on an annual request for an emergency mobile communications allowance, City Council Members and appointed officials or employees of the legislative branch as authorized by their Director may receive a monthly

allowance not to exceed \$100 for cellular phone service and converged data device service. The use shall be requested and verified. The Personnel Committee is authorized to promulgate the policy and rules for this subsection.

- (d) *Other communications.* All other communications by a Council member in his official capacity shall be paid for by the Council, subject to the general approval of the Council President concerning the use of communication equipment and services and the amounts to be spent thereon. Reimbursement for expenses incurred by or on behalf of a Council member under this subsection shall be requested by the Council member upon his personal certification of the amount and purpose of the communication expense and he shall be accountable for improperly certified expenses.
- (e) *Allowances not to be paid in cash.* The allowances authorized by this Section shall not be paid in cash to any person, except for the purchase of the goods or services authorized. No part of any allowance hereunder shall be deemed to be income nor paid as compensation to any Council member or any other person, nor shall any Council member have any right to demand payment in cash of any allowance to which he is entitled under this Section.

(Ord. 83-591-400, § 1; Ord. 1999-418-E, § 2; Ord. 2000-793-E, § 2; Ord. 2005-509-E, § 1; Ord. 2005-943-E, § 1; Ord. 2011-732-E; Ord. 2014-410-E, § 1)

Editor's note— Ordinance 2007-839-E, § 18, authorized updated department/division names pursuant to reorganization.



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COMMUNICATIONS ALLOWANCE REQUEST

Name: _____
Print Name

Cellular Telephone #: _____

Department #: _____

Employee ID #: _____

Complete Selection(s):

I request a monthly communications allowance* in the amount of \$_____ (not to exceed \$100) for the Fiscal Year 21/22 in accordance with Chapter 10, *Ordinance Code* for mobile and/or converged data device telephone service.

I have been given a copy of the City Council Communications Allowance Policy. I certify that each service selected above is currently active. I understand that this request will expire on September 30th and that a new request form must be submitted before September 30th to continue receiving the allowance(s). I will notify the Director/Council Secretary in writing immediately upon changing the telephone number, rate plan, or termination of this service. By my acceptance of the allowance(s), the City reserves the right to verify service(s) at any time.

Signature

Date

Approved by Director/Council Secretary

Date

* Monthly Allowances are paid the first payday of each month for the previous month.



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**COMMUNICATIONS ALLOWANCE
CHANGE OR TERMINATION OF SERVICE**

Name: _____
Print Name

Cellular Telephone #: _____

Department #: _____

Employee ID #: _____

Mark Selection(s):

_____ The service(s) for which I receive a Communications Allowance will change effective _____ in the following manner:

_____.

_____ The service(s) for which I receive a Communications Allowance will be terminated effective _____.

I hereby notify the Director/Council Secretary of change(s) or termination of service(s) for which I receive a communications allowance. I certify that the change(s) or termination occurred on the effective date noted above.

Signature

Date

Approved by Director/Council Secretary

Date