

Personal Communications Stipend Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I am a supervisor and have staff on the previous cell phone stipend program, do I need to do anything?

A: Yes. As a Clemson Supervisor, you first need to re-evaluate the need for your staff to receive a cell phone stipend based on the new criteria. If they still qualify, you will need to complete their assignment by choosing the most appropriate tier from the new stipend choices, complete the Cell Phone Stipend Form, and return it to your Budget Center.

Q: I am an employee and am currently on the previous cell phone stipend program, can I assume that I am “grandfathered” into the new program?

A: No. Each Supervisor will need to evaluate the need for their staff to receive a cell phone stipend based on the new criteria. If you still qualify, your supervisor will need to complete your assignment by choosing the most appropriate tier from the new stipend choices, complete the Cell Phone Stipend Form with you, and return it to your Budget Center.

Q: Other universities aren't doing this. Why are we?

A: Most universities are in varying stages of implementing very similar programs.

Q: I have one cell phone for business and one cell phone for personal use. I want to keep it this way. What should I do?

A: You can keep your cell phone for business, but the university will still only be able to compensate you at the highest tier. This measure was put in place as a measure to reduce costs to the University. If your VP approves an amount other than the highest tier, he or she will be required to provide a justification.

Q: Can I use a cell phone for personal calls when I purchase it with a taxable allowance from the University?

A: Yes. Because you own the phone, you do not have to document personal calls. You will no longer be required to carry two phones, one for business and the other for personal use.

Q: How do I know I'm getting a fair allowance?

A: With department approval, you will work with your supervisor to

determine how much your allowance will be. You will receive an amount necessary to pay for required business use.

Q: Does everyone get an allowance for a personally owned cell phone?

A: No. You should only receive an allowance if your job requires that you carry a cell phone where other less expensive means of communication are not adequate, and then, only an amount necessary to cover business calls. Just because someone with your same title gets an allowance doesn't mean that you will if your specific duties do not require the use of a cellular phone.

Q: How do I know what cellular telephone or monthly plan to choose?

A: The device and plan you select will be based on several factors. You should consider both business and personal service coverage. Your job may not require a camera phone, but you may find a camera phone to be a good option for you personally. You should consider your calling patterns. Is unlimited long distance necessary? Would free mobile to mobile minutes be a plus? What are the chances that you may exceed your base plan minutes and be required to pay expensive overage minutes? We recommend that you shop around and speak with the different vendor reps before making a decision.

Q: Which monthly plans have the best price?

A: You should speak with the vendor representatives and check their websites. Price should only be one factor in your choice. The lowest price carrier may not meet your coverage and other needs.

Q: What if my choice doesn't work out for me?

A: You should take full advantage of any trial periods offered by the vendors. Pay strict attention to your level of service during that period and return the phone and cancel the plan if you are not receiving the level of service you need.

Q: What about smart phones – PDA/Phone combinations?

A: If your job requires that you have access to email, calendaring or other PDA functions, your supervisor may approve the purchase of a specific smart phone, PC card or other device that is required to perform your job. If you want a smart phone, but your job doesn't require it, you will pay the difference in the allowance amount and the actual cost of a smart phone or other more expensive device.

Q: If I am authorized to use a smart phone to access University e-mail calendaring or other services, can the University recommend

which devices will work best and will be supported by the University?

A: Remember that these products change regularly – so you should speak with the vendor representatives. Your department may specify a device that is supported.

Q: Can I get the same plans and rates that the university gets?

A: Not always. Most plans are available at the same rates the university pays.

Q: I want to terminate my cellular device service contract. Who is liable for the termination fees?

A: If, prior to the end of a cellular device contract, a personal decision, employee misconduct, or misuse of the device results in the need to change or end the cellular device contract, the employee will bear the cost of any associated contract termination fees. If, prior to the end of the cellular device contract period, a Clemson decision is made unrelated to employee misconduct which results in the need to change or end the cellular device contract, Clemson will bear the cost of any associated contract termination fees at their discretion.

Q: The stipend I am receiving is not enough to cover my whole bill. Clemson should be paying for everything.

A: The intent of the stipend is to provide compensation for most of the business related voice activity on your personal cellular device. With Rollover Minutes and the discount provided for your personal activity, Clemson believes this is an equitable arrangement.

Q: I need a new Cellular device. Will I receive an additional stipend to cover the extra cost?

A: No. The intent of the stipend is to provide compensation for most of the business related voice activity on your personal cellular device; however there is some buffer built into the stipend amount to assist with device replacement. If the stipend policy was not in place, then you would need to periodically replace the device anyway. When it is time for a new phone, many providers offer attractive sign-on rebates/deals so the cellular devices are available at reasonable prices or free in some cases.

Q: Are employees responsible for vendor insurance charges for a device? Is that calculated into the stipend?

A: The intent of the stipend is to provide compensation for most of the business related voice activity on your personal cellular device. If the stipend policy was not in place, then these charges would apply to your personal device anyway.

Q: The request form asks for a Start Date and an End Date. What should I put?

A: The start and end dates only apply if known. Specify either date to request starting or stopping the stipend, as appropriate.

Q: My stipend request was denied. I need the device to do my job. How do I get the stipend approved?

A: Approval or denial of the stipend is subject to your chain of command – your supervisor, their supervisor, etc – up to, and including, VP, Deans, and Department Heads. Stipends are not an inherent right simply because you were provided a phone previously. You need to discuss the issue with your supervisor to determine where it was denied.

Q: When will I receive my stipend?

A: The stipends will be processed monthly once your Business Office receives the fully executed stipend request form.

Q. The policy states there are mandatory periodic reviews. What is required of supervisors and employees for the review?

A. Reviews of the employee's placement may be due to employee request, supervisor request, or periodic audit. Also, once initial placement is complete, a change in employee job responsibilities is an example of a trigger for another review.

Q. Can I put two phone numbers on one device?

A. That is a question for your provider. It may be possible to add multiple phone numbers to one device. You could also add the device as a 'Family Talk' plan and continue to carry two devices. Associated charges for either option are between you and your provider. Neither option will cause a change in your stipend.

Q. If I do not have a landline phone, can I get a cell phone?

A. This is not a reason for qualifying for a cell phone stipend. You still need to meet one of the criteria listed.

Q. Why is Clemson not covering more of my bill?

A. We are making every effort to provide some form of reimbursement to University staff and still save the University money. The bill coverage % was the amount chosen based on fairness for a dual-purpose phone and historical plan data for our cell carriers.