

POLICY ON EXTERNAL SPONSORSHIPS, USE OF CITY FUNDS, AND FAMILY MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Purpose

This policy establishes standards governing the use of City funds and resources for external events or third-party activities, the City's provision of sponsorship or in-kind support, and the attendance of elected officials', employees', and appointees' family members at City-funded events. All expenditures must serve a lawful public purpose consistent with the City Charter, ordinances, and the Constitution and laws of the State of Georgia.

Legal Framework

Municipal funds may be expended only for lawful public purposes. Public funds may not be given as gratuities to private individuals or entities absent from statutory authority. All expenditures must be appropriated through the adopted budget or approved amendment. This policy shall be interpreted consistently with those requirements.

EXTERNAL SPONSORSHIPS

General Standards

The City may provide financial or in-kind sponsorship for external events only when:

1. The event serves a documented public purpose (e.g., tourism promotion, economic development, recreation, education, cultural enrichment, or public health);
2. The benefit to the public outweighs any private benefit.
3. Funds are available and properly appropriate.
4. Sponsorship is approved in advance.

Prohibited Sponsorships

The City shall not make donations or gifts to private individuals, fund partisan political or issue advocacy activities, sponsor events closed to the public without clear public benefit and provide funding that primarily benefits a private business without lawful authority and documented public return.

Forms of Support

Permissible sponsorship may include direct financial contributions (within budget limits), In-kind services (facility use, sanitation, staff support), and fee waivers approved by the governing authority. All sponsorships must be documented by written agreement.

Approval Requirements

- Sponsorships exceeding \$499.99 must be approved by the City Council by resolution.
- Sponsorships below \$500.00 may be approved by Finance if authorized in the adopted budget.
- Multi-year commitments require Council approval.

USE OF CITY FUNDS FOR EXTERNAL EVENTS

Public Purpose Requirement

City funds may be used to:

- Participate in regional governmental conferences.
- Support cooperative intergovernmental initiatives.
- Promote economic development as authorized by law.
- Support community-wide events aligned with City strategic goals.

Funds shall not be used for:

- Personal benefit of any official or employee.
- Purely private celebrations or social gatherings unrelated to City business.
- Expenses for non-City individuals unless specifically authorized under this policy.

Documentation and Accountability

All expenditure must be supported by invoices or receipts, comply with procurement policies, be reviewed by the Finance Department and be reported in accordance with applicable transparency requirements.

ATTENDANCE OF FAMILY MEMBERS

General Rule

City funds shall not be used to pay for travel, meals, lodging, registration fees, or entertainment expenses for family members of elected officials, employees, or appointees unless:

1. The family member's attendance serves a legitimate public purpose.
2. The presence of a spouse or family member is customary and directly related to official representation of the city.
3. The expenditure is reasonable and pre-approved.
4. The expense is specifically authorized by the governing authority or City Manager.

Absent these conditions, family members must pay their own expenses.

Permitted Circumstances (Limited)

City payment for a spouse or family member may be allowed when:

- Attendance is part of an official delegation where spouse participation is customary and supports City representation.
- The event is a formal governmental function recognizing the City.
- The governing authority determines the expenditure serves a documented public purpose.

Reimbursement shall be limited to reasonable and necessary costs only.

Prohibited Uses Related to Family Attendance

City funds shall not be used for vacation extensions, entertainment or recreational activities unrelated to official duties, travel upgrades are attributed to accompanying family members and per diem payments for family members.

Disclosure and Transparency

When City funds are used for events where a family member attends in an authorized capacity. The purpose shall be documented in writing, the expense shall be itemized, and the approval shall be reflected in official records.

ETHICS AND CONFLICTS

Conflict of Interest

Officials and employees shall not participate in decisions involving sponsorships or expenditures where a family member has a financial interest and/or the official or employee may receive direct or indirect personal benefit. Disclosure and recusal shall be required consistent with City ethics policies.

ENFORCEMENT

Violations

Improper use of City funds may result in repayment of funds, disciplinary action, and referral to appropriate authorities if required by law.