

Procedure 509-4 – Internet Services

This procedure is established to ensure that the provision of Internet services and related equipment and allowances are acquired and used in the best interest of the County, is appropriate to the needs of the organization, and is in accordance with the County's policies, procedures, ethics, and values.

Department/agency/office leaders will determine which, if any, of their employees possess a business need for County-provided Internet services to their residence on the basis of the duties and responsibilities of employees' positions as described in this procedure. In unusual circumstances, when the County requires that the employee or official possess the ability to communicate over the Internet, or when the employee does not possess necessary connectivity, the County may provide Internet service. The County does not provide reimbursement for the purchase of residential Internet services. Such services, or the costs for same, may be provided only as described in this procedure.

Tax Consequences

Allowances and County-provided Internet access services, whether direct-bill or direct-access, are taxable pursuant to federal and state law. The value of County-provided Internet services and allowances will be included in employees' taxable wages for reporting and withholding purposes. The Department of Financial Management & Administration will determine the value of the provision of Internet services by utilizing a market value method to compare the cost of services available in the marketplace consistent with the IRS regulations. In addition to the estimated value of the service, the County may also add the value of any equipment, or the annual depreciation of the equipment, and/or installation costs to the employee's taxable income for appropriate tax reporting and withholding, particularly for any equipment affixed to an employee's residence, as required by IRS regulations.

Allowances

Allowances are the preferred method for providing employees with Internet service. The allowance is for the current month's service (i.e., an allowance paid on a June paycheck is for June service). All allowances must be approved by the department/agency/office leader or their designee. Departments/agencies/offices must submit an Internet Service Allowance Authorization Form to the Payroll Division of the Department of Financial Management & Administration (FMA-Payroll) for processing.

Any equipment required for home computing related to the use of the Internet will be obtained by, paid for, and owned by, the employee. The account and service will be registered in the name of the employee and billed to the employee at the employee's home address. The employee is responsible for the entire cost of the service. The County will not reimburse employees receiving allowances for the costs of purchasing or replacing equipment under any circumstances. Departments/agencies/offices are responsible for an annual review of employee business-related Internet service use to determine if existing allowances should be continued, modified, or discontinued.

The monthly allowance will continue until the department/agency/office discontinues the allowance, the employee decides to discontinue receiving the allowance, the employee transfers to another department/agency/office, or the employee separates from employment with the County.

Direct-Bill Internet Service

Rather than provide an allowance, department/agency/office leaders may elect to provide employees with Internet services directly billed to the County. Direct-bill Internet services should be provided only where it is more cost efficient, continues a lengthy business practice, or alternative options are not available. Department/agency/office leaders will select the service agreement, provider or carrier, and type of Internet services provided to the employee. Employees with direct-bill Internet services may not receive an allowance or reimbursement for business use of the Internet.

Departments/agencies/offices must report the expense for all direct-bill Internet services provisions to FMA-Payroll. Where the provision of Internet services is itemized, the itemized expenses shall be apportioned to the appropriate employee or official. For departments/agencies/offices that receive one bill for multiple Internet service plans, the department/agency/office must proportionately allocate the total for the month to all applicable employees.

Records reflecting the use and cost of direct-bill Internet service may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the provisions of the Kansas Open Records Act.

County-Provided Internet Service

In extremely rare circumstances, it may be necessary for the County's Department of Technology & Innovation (DTI) or any other County Information Technology area (e.g., JIMS) to provide direct Internet services or a direct digital communication line into the County's information technology system. This option may be utilized only when no other option is available and the need for access is significant. DTI, JIMS, or other information technology area, and the employee's department/agency/office must report the provision of all County-provided Internet services to FMA-Payroll.

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