



# NEW LEAF

LIVING AND LEARNING TOGETHER INC.

Policy: Expense Rules Directives	
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## 1. Purpose, Application and Scope

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Set out rules and principles for the reimbursement of travel, meals, hospitality, and other expenses to ensure fair and reasonable practices.
- Provide a framework of accountability and transparency to guide the effective oversight of public funds in the reimbursement of expenses that support New Leaf: Living and Learning Together Inc.'s (hereinafter **NEW LEAF**) objective; and
- Ensure that **NEW LEAF** complies with the Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive.

The expense rules apply to any individual in **NEW LEAF** making an expense claim, including but not limited to the following:

- appointees,
- board members,
- employees, and
- consultants and contractors engaged by **NEW LEAF**, providing consulting or other services.

In addition, every funding agreement between **NEW LEAF** and a ministry or agency of the Government of Ontario or any other funding agency is deemed to include the requirement of this Directive. This Directive prevails over any relevant terms of an agreement if there is any conflict or inconsistency between them.

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## **2. General**

**NEW LEAF** reserves the right to refuse, in whole or in part, reimbursement of expenses.

Expenses for a group can only be claimed by the most senior person present – expenses cannot be claimed by an individual that are incurred by his/her approver (e.g., a supervisor/manager cannot submit his/her Directors claim for lunch even if they were at the same event).

Alcohol cannot be claimed and will not be reimbursed as part of a travel or meal expense. For rules regarding reimbursement for the service of alcohol as part of a hospitality event see section 9 Hospitality.

Should any individual fail to adhere to the expense rules, the following will occur:

- The manager will upon notification of failure to adhere take appropriate corrective action.
- If necessary, a written notification from Finance will be issued to the employee and their supervisor and/or appropriate management levels.
- The employee's agency credit card may be zero balanced and suspended, and their authorization to travel will be reviewed, and
- The employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

This directive does not prevail over a collective agreement between **NEW LEAF** and a bargaining agent representing employees of **NEW LEAF**.

This Directive is posted on **NEW LEAF**'s website ([www.newleaf.ca](http://www.newleaf.ca)) so it is available to the public.

## **3. Principles**

This policy is based on the following key principles:

**Accountability:** **NEW LEAF** is accountable for public funds used to reimburse travel, meals, hospitality, and other expenses. All expenses must support business objectives. Since expense accounts can become matters of public record through audit or other means, expenses must be incurred and claimed in a manner that is publicly defensible and will not harm **NEW LEAF**'s reputation as a good manager of its resources.

**Transparency:** **NEW LEAF** is transparent to all stakeholders. The rules for incurring and reimbursing travel, meals, hospitality, and other expenses are clear, easily understood, and available to the public.

**Value for Money:** **NEW LEAF** dollars are used prudently and responsibly. Plans for travel, meals, hospitality, and other expenses are necessary and economical with due regard for health, safety and efficiency of operations.

**Fairness:** Legitimate authorized expenses incurred during the course of the business of **NEW LEAF** are reimbursed.

## **4. Requirements General**

Good record-keeping practices must be maintained in Finance for verification and audit purposes. Finance is required to review and request additional information for any expense submitted, where appropriate documentation does not appear reasonable, etc.

Claims submitted to Finance without appropriate documentation will be returned to the approver.

Electronic approval is considered written approval for the purpose of this policy if the approver has sufficient information to make an informed decision. Individuals are responsible for maintaining a record of their own claims.

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*Individuals Making Claims (Claimants) Must:*

- comply with the principles and spirit of the directive,
- obtain appropriate approval from their supervisor/manager (or as otherwise indicated) before incurring expenses,
- submit original, itemized receipts with all claims (credit and debit card slips are not sufficient),
- clearly document the description and purpose of the expenses submitted,
- submit claims no later than the first week of the month following the month in which the expense was incurred,
- if the information above is not available or is not possible, submit a written explanation with the claim to provide the approver with adequate information for decision-making,
- if leaving employment with **NEW LEAF**, submit any claims before leaving.

*Receipts*

Receipts for all expenses should be original (photocopies and scans will be accepted only in exceptional circumstances) and must include a detailed record of the items purchased along with the name of the company. Credit Card and Debit transaction records by themselves are inadequate to support an expense claim.

*Time Limit for Claims:*

All claims must be submitted in a timely manner and no later than the first week of the month following the month in which the expense was incurred. Expense claims must be submitted prior to leaving a position (e.g., vacation, leave of absence or permanently leaving **NEW LEAF**), if time off extends beyond the month expenses were incurred.

All requests for exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Executive Director or Director of Finance.

*Individuals Approving Claims (Approvers) Must:*

- exercise managerial discretion judiciously
- ensure they have personally gathered sufficient information to determine that the expenses were incurred on **NEW LEAF** business prior to signing to approve expenses and understand they cannot delegate their accountability to another staff member
- ensure staff are aware of the requirements of the Policy
- take appropriate action in the case of non-compliance
- provide approval only for expenses that were necessarily incurred in the performance of **NEW LEAF** business
- provide approval only for claims that include all appropriate documentation (e.g. original itemized receipts and the purpose of the expense submitted, etc.)
- not approve their own expenses

### **5. Accountability Framework:**

The Executive Director has the authority to establish additional rules regarding expenses and may modify the rules or level of approval upward to a more senior level.

Approvers are accountable for their decisions which must be:

- subject to good judgment and knowledge of the situation,
- exercised in appropriate circumstances and,
- comply with the policy.

In some cases, the level of approval is identified and also whether the authority can be delegated. In other cases, a requirement is stated (e.g., prior approval is required) without identifying an approval level. Where no approval level is identified see the section entitled Managerial Discretion.

### **6. Managerial Discretion**

For the purpose of this policy, managerial discretion is the administrative authority to make decisions and choices with some degree of flexibility, while maintaining compliance with this Directive and the rules. All decision made under the expense rules should be made very carefully. There is no discretion to depart from the mandatory requirements of this policy.

When a situation arises and discretion needs to be exercised, approvers should consider whether the request is:

- able to stand up to scrutiny by the auditors and members of the public,
- properly explained and documented,
- fair and equitable,
- reasonable,
- appropriate.

It is the responsibility of both the approver and the individual to work out appropriate arrangements which would meet the test of being fair and equitable.

Where an approver exercises discretion in making an exception, in order to ensure a proper record for audit purposes the rationale must be documented and approved by the Executive Director and accompany the claim.

### **7. Travel General**

For the purpose of this policy, travel does not refer to a person's regular commute to work. Expenses related to a person's regular commute are not reimbursable.

When planning any travel, consider business continuity when deciding whether senior management or people with specialized knowledge or expertise should travel together.

The method of travel selected should be the most practical and economical way to travel, consider using audio or video conferencing whenever possible, as an alternative to travel.

Only employees with a valid driver's licence are authorized to drive for **NEW LEAF** business purposes.

### *Levels of Approval Required*

Economy (coach) class is the standard travel option. Any exception to this must have prior approval by the Executive Director.

All travel requires at least prior verbal approval (travel outside of Ontario requires prior written approval). The exception to this is regular recurring travel included in the approved budget, which is considered prior approval.

The following chart identifies the level for approval required for travel:

Role	Travel within Ontario	Travel outside Ontario	Travel outside North America
Employee	Manager/Supervisor	Executive Director	Executive Director
Executive Director	Not Required	Not Required	Board of Directors

### *International Travel*

If travelling internationally (outside North America), in addition to the obligations set out elsewhere in the policy, the following rules apply.

Requests for international travel must include:

- Acknowledgement that all appropriate approvals are in place.
- Written rationale demonstrating critical value of travel for **NEW LEAF** priorities and interests, and details how the travel will produce a benefit for **NEW LEAF**.
- Documentationshowingdetaileditemizationofanticipatedexpenses(note that the lowest cost and most reasonable method of travel must be used).

### *Cell Phone Use*

The use of a handheld communication device (cell phone, tablet, etc.) is prohibited while driving. Any use of a handheld communication device must be in compliance with the Ontario Highway Traffic Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8 section [78.1](#) and relating subsections.

Whenever possible, the least expensive means of communication must be considered prior to the use of **NEW LEAF** cell phones. All employees must be aware of the limitation of the cellular and data plans including overages and restrictions.

### *Travel Method*

When road transportation is the most practical, economical way to travel, the order of preference is:

- **NEW LEAF** vehicle,
- Rental vehicle,
- Personal vehicle if it is more economical than a rentalvehicle.

The approver must decide on the type of vehicle used for travel (personal or rental) based on the frequency of travel as well as the distance per trip.

### *Rental Vehicle*

When renting a vehicle, a compact model or its equivalent is required. Any exceptions must be:

- Documented and approved prior to the rental if possible; and
- Guided by the principle that the rental vehicle is the most economical and practical size, considering the business purpose, number of occupants and safety (including weather) considerations.

The Collision Damage Waiver insurance option offered through the car rental company must be selected. **NEW LEAF** will reimburse the cost for insurance coverage provided the rental is a cost-effective mode of travel.

Where possible rental cars must be refueled prior to returning it to avoid higher gasoline costs charged by the rental company.

Luxury and sports vehicles are prohibited.

Individuals must abide by all rental car policies.

### *Personal Vehicle*

Individuals using personal vehicle while on **NEW LEAF** business must comply with the following:

- The vehicle must be insured at the vehicle owner's expense for personal motor vehicle liability and the policy must have a limit of Third-Party Liability not less than \$1,000,000.
- It is the driver/owner's responsibility to discuss their coverage needs with the insurer
- **NEW LEAF** will not reimburse the cost of insurance coverage for business use, physical damage, or liability.
- **NEW LEAF** is not responsible for reimbursing deductible amounts related to insurance coverage.
- In the event of an accident, they will not be permitted to make a claim to **NEW LEAF** for any resulting damages.
- **NEW LEAF** assumes no financial responsibility for personal vehicles.

Carpooling is recommended for multiple people attending the same meeting/function. Business continuity is to be considered as per section 7. Travel – General.

### *Reimbursement Rates*

Rates are based on Kilometres accumulated from January 1<sup>st</sup> of each fiscal year.

Rates are established in collective agreements; the same rates apply to individuals outside of collective agreement.

Individuals are to use the actual kilometres travelled when calculating kilometre distances and clearly document the starting point, destination, and purpose of the trip. The rate of reimbursement for employees, board members, students and volunteers is \$0.48 per kilometre.

When claiming reimbursement, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- Each day must be reported separately and, where possible, keep multiple daily trips separate.

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- When reporting mileage, the date of travel, and the start and end points (full civic address), purpose, person/program supported (if applicable) and distance travelled must be clearly indicated.
- In the event an employee travels directly to a non-office destination from home, mileage will be reimbursed only for the excess of mileage incurred over the normal travel distance to work.
- Mileage reports are to be submitted to the finance department no later than one week following the month end and must have supervisor approval.

### *Parking and Tolls*

Reimbursement is provided for necessary and reasonable expenditures on parking, as well as tolls from bridges, ferries, and highways, when driving on **NEW LEAF** business.

Individuals may choose to use the 407 ETR. The transponder is available for pick-up at the main office. It should be returned back the following day at the latest.

On occasions when the approved use of 407 ETR is taken without **NEW LEAF** owned transponder, charges will be reimbursed by **NEW LEAF** to the employee, provided appropriate documentation, including rationale for usage, accompanies the expense claim.

Traffic and Parking violations will not be reimbursed.

### *Other Travel Expenses*

#### *Accommodation*

No reimbursement will occur for personal expenses such as movie or game rentals, bar services, spa services etc. while staying in a hotel.

Reimbursement will be made for a single accommodation in a standard room unless is fiscally responsible for a suite or double accommodation or a house (Airbnb)

For extended stays at a single location, accommodation must be arranged with prior approval. This will take advantage of lower weekly or monthly rates.

Penalties incurred from non-cancellation of guaranteed hotel reservations are the individual's responsibility and may be reimbursed only in exceptional circumstances.

Private stays with friends or family are acceptable, and a cash payment of gift may be provided to the friends or family:

- A maximum of \$30 per night is allowed for accommodation including any meals with friends of family, in lieu of commercial accommodation. Instead of a receipt, you must submit a written explanation describing the purpose of the trip, identifying the host and the number of days you stayed.
- The \$30 value may be given in the form of a small gift (which must be accompanied by a receipt) or by cash).

#### *Tips and Gratuities*

Individuals may be reimbursed for reasonable gratuities for porter, hotel room services, and taxis. Keep a record of gratuities paid.

Examples of reasonable amounts for gratuities include:

- Up to 15% on a restaurant meal,

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- Up to 10% on a taxi fare,
- \$2-\$5 for housekeeping (up to two night in a hotel), up to \$10 for a longer stay,
- \$2-\$5 per bag for a porter.

*Telecommunication*

If individuals are away on **NEW LEAF** business, reimbursement will be made for:

- Reasonable, necessary personal calls home for each night away; and
- Additional business expenses, such as:
  - Business calls and facsimile transmissions,
  - Emergency calls from air or rail phones,
  - Internet connections and computer access charges.

**8. Meals**

Alcohol cannot be claimed and will not be reimbursed as part of a travel or meal expense.

Reasonable and appropriate meal expenses may be reimbursed. Individuals may incur a meal expense when they are on **NEW LEAF** business and they:

- are away from the office area (i.e., at least 24 km) over a normal meal period; or
- have prior approval for the expense with the purpose of the meeting documented (e.g., a business meeting within the office area that must occur over lunch or dinner); or
- while supporting people when they participate in various aspects of their community.

Original, itemized receipts are required, and reimbursement must not exceed the actual amount spent or the meal rates.

Reimbursement will not be provided for meals consumed at home or included in the cost of transportation, accommodation, seminars, or conferences.

Meal reimbursements/allowances relating to overtime hours worked are established in collective agreements, for individuals outside a collective agreement the reimbursements/allowances will be consistent with collective agreements.

If an employee travels as a regular part of their job, meals will not normally be reimbursed unless the employee has obtained prior approval.

*Meal Rates*

Reimbursement for meal expenses, will be subject to **NEW LEAF** meal allowance amounts stated in the Collective Agreement. These rates include taxes and gratuities. For non-unionize employees and other individuals the rates must be confirmed by Executive Director or designate prior to travel.

The rates are not an allowance. The individuals must be on travel status over the meal period and submit an itemized receipt to submit a claim for reimbursement.

When an individual is on travel status over more than one meal period in any one day, they may allocate the

combined maximum rates. For example, if they begin travelling prior to lunch for the remainder of the day, the combined lunch and dinner rate is applicable and this now becomes the maximum rate for that specific day regardless of what is spent on each meal or if both lunch and dinner are eaten. The claimant is responsible for providing sufficient and appropriate documentation when this situation occurs.

For all occurrences where there are meals paid for others on the expense claim, the claimant is to clearly indicate on their itemized receipt or expense claim who they had the meal with and the circumstances surrounding the meal.

Reimbursement rates for meal expenses incurred in the United States of America are the same as the above maximum rates in Canada, however in US funds.

Reimbursement rates for meal expenses outside North America are as set out in the appendices of the Treasury Board of Canada Travel Directive, October 1, 2021, or successor directive.

The reader can find this document on the federal government website

[https://www.njc-cnm.gc.ca/directive/app\\_d.php?lang=eng%22%20/l%20%22s140-tc-tm](https://www.njc-cnm.gc.ca/directive/app_d.php?lang=eng%22%20/l%20%22s140-tc-tm)

## **9. Hospitality**

Hospitality is the provision of food, beverage, accommodation, transportation and other amenities to people who are not engaged in work for **NEW LEAF**, other designated Broader Public Sector organizations or any of the Ontario government ministries, agencies and public entities covered by the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive | Ontario.ca

Functions involving only people who work for the above noted organizations are not considered hospitality functions and cannot be reimbursed. This means that hospitality may never be offered solely for the benefit of anyone covered by this Directive, or by the Ontario Public Service Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive. Examples of such expenses would be: office social events, retirement parties and holiday lunches.

Hospitality may be extended on behalf of **NEW LEAF** when:

- providing people from national, international, or charitable organizations with an understanding or appreciation of **NEW LEAF** and its objectives,
- conducting prestigious ceremonies for distinguished guests from the private sector,
- the business of **NEW LEAF** includes hospitality functions; and
- other hospitality functions as approved by the Executive Director, providing they conform to the rules listed in this section of the Policy.

All hospitality requires at least prior verbal approval.

Hospitality may include the consumption of alcohol at a meal or a reception with invitees, but only when there is a business case and prior written approval. Alcohol should be provided in a responsible manner, e.g., food must always be served when alcohol is available. Preference should also be given to wine, beer and spirits produced in Ontario.

A “Hospitality Event Approval Form” must have prior written approval by the Executive Director for hospitality events where alcohol will be served.

If the hospitality event is hosted by the Executive Director, the Executive Director must seek prior approval from the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Use a **NEW LEAF** facility for hospitality events if there is one available and appropriate. If a **NEW LEAF** facility is

not available and another is chosen, the Executive Director must provide prior approval.

### **10. Business Related Events/Meetings**

Modest and reasonable expenses such as meals and/or refreshments which relate to business related events and meetings which extend over the normal meal hours will be reimbursed. Meetings are to occur on **NEW LEAF** premises, if this is not possible due to a lack of availability a Senior Manager must provide prior approval to the meeting occurring off site (this would include off site retreats relating to team building, professional development, etc.).

Expenses such as meals and/or refreshments relating to events which are more social than business related will not be reimbursed (examples include: holiday lunches, retirement parties, etc.).

All individuals are to ensure that prior to an expense being incurred which would fall under “business related events and meetings” that they are confident that it will be able to stand up to scrutiny by auditors and members of the public and is therefore fair, reasonable and appropriate.

### **11. Hosting other Institutions**

**NEW LEAF** may provide support including modest and reasonable meals and/or refreshments when hosting staff from other institutions, including: Other Agencies, organizations and provincial ministries or agencies, during discussions or conferences on issues of mutual interest and/or cooperation that seek to further **NEW LEAF**'s objectives. Such expenses must be approved by a Senior Manager.

### **12. Expenses for Consultants and Other Contractors**

In no circumstances can hospitality, incidental or food expenses be considered allowable expenses for consultants and contractors or in any contract between **NEW LEAF** and a consultant or contractor.

See the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive ([Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive | Ontario.ca](#)) for information about procurement and contracts.

Reimbursement for allowable expenses can be claimed and reimbursed only when the contract specifically provides for it.

### **13. Gifts**

No gifts are to be purchased by **NEW LEAF** for anyone covered by this Directive, or by the Ontario Public Service Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive.

Token gifts of appreciation, valued at up to \$30, may be extended to individuals not covered by this Directive, or by the Ontario Public Service Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive in recognition of support of **NEW LEAF**'s objectives.

Gift giving between employees / managers for special life events / celebrations are not discouraged and are sanctioned. However, practices must be applied consistently and this will be at the personal expense of managers and employees.

### **14. Charitable Donations**

**NEW LEAF** typically does not make charitable donations. Where a gift to another non-profit or charitable organization is deemed to assist in achieving the purposes of **NEW LEAF**, the purpose must be documented and approved by the Chair of the Board or designate.

**15. Charitable Event Sponsorship/Participation**

Permitted where it is deemed to assist in achieving the purposes of **NEW LEAF**. The purpose must be documented and approved by the Chair of the Board or designate.

**16. Political Events**

**NEW LEAF** will not reimburse the cost of attending political events such as fundraising dinners.