

HOWARD UNIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Number:	400-016 Governance, Risk and Compliance
Policy Title:	ALCOHOL PURCHASE AND HOSTING WAIVER POLICY
Responsible Officers:	President; Chief Financial Officer
Responsible Offices:	Office of Finance; Office of Development and Alumni Relations
Effective Date:	September 24, 2026

I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Howard University (“the University”) to maintain a dry campus and prohibit the general purchase, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages on campus or through the use of institutional funds, except as expressly authorized by University policy.

The University recognizes, however, that certain institutional engagement activities—including fundraising, donor cultivation, alumni relations, executive representation, and corporate partnership development—may reasonably require the purchase or service of alcohol in professional settings customary to such engagements.

Accordingly, this policy establishes a controlled waiver and approval process that permits the limited and appropriate use of institutional funds for alcohol-related expenses associated with approved off-campus fundraising, development, and executive engagement activities while ensuring accountability, compliance, stewardship of institutional resources, and protection of the University’s reputation and interests.

This policy shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary by the Responsible Officer.

II. RATIONALE

As a dry campus institution, the University is committed to maintaining an environment that supports student well-being, institutional integrity, and responsible stewardship of resources. At the same time, the University acknowledges that alcohol service may be customary in certain professional and advancement-related settings involving donors, alumni, corporate representatives, governmental officials, and institutional partners.

This policy provides a framework for the limited and controlled use of institutional funds for alcohol-related expenditures in connection with approved external engagement activities. The policy is intended to:

- Support fundraising and donor development efforts;
- Promote consistency and accountability in institutional expenditures;
- Ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and University policies;
- Reduce legal, financial, and reputational risk; and
- Reinforce responsible and professional conduct in all University-sponsored engagements.

III. ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

This policy applies to all University employees and authorized representatives engaged in approved fundraising, development, alumni relations, partnership development, or executive engagement activities, including but not limited to:

- The President and Executive Cabinet Members
- Development Officers
- Deans
- Senior Administrators
- Authorized Representatives engaged in fundraising or partnership development activities

This policy applies to:

- Off-campus engagement dinners
- Off-campus receptions
- Donor cultivation events
- Alumni engagement events
- Corporate partnership meetings
- Conference hosting where alcohol service is customary
- Decanal and faculty partnership engagement activities

This policy does not govern general alcohol service at campus events open to students or the public, which remain subject to separate University policies, approvals, and applicable legal requirements.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- Dry Campus:** refers to a campus environment in which the possession, purchase, service, or consumption of alcohol is generally prohibited except as expressly authorized by University policy or approved exception.
- Alcohol-Related Expenditure:** any institutional expense associated with the purchase, service, hosting, or reimbursement of alcoholic beverages.
- Development Activity:** refers to an event, meeting, or engagement conducted for purposes of fundraising, donor cultivation, alumni relations, institutional advancement, or strategic partnership development.
- External Constituents:** include donors, alumni, corporate representatives, governmental officials, institutional partners, prospective supporters, and other non-University participants engaged in official University advancement activities.
- Institutional Funds:** University-controlled funds, including operational budgets, discretionary funds, foundation accounts, and approved gift funds.
- Waiver Approval:** refers to the written authorization required before institutional funds may be used for alcohol-related expenditures under this policy.

V. POLICY PROCEDURES

The following procedures establish the requirements governing alcohol-related expenditures associated with approved fundraising, development, and executive engagement activities.

A. General Requirements

The University shall remain a dry campus. Alcohol may not be purchased, served, or consumed on campus unless separately authorized under an applicable University event approval process and in compliance with all legal and insurance requirements.

Institutional funds may be used for alcohol-related expenditures only when:

- The event or activity is directly connected to fundraising, donor cultivation, alumni relations, executive engagement, or institutional partnership development;
- The expenditure is reasonable, moderate, and customary for the professional setting;
- The event primarily involves external constituents; and
- Prior written approval has been obtained in accordance with this policy.

Alcohol service shall be incidental to a legitimate business purpose and shall not be the primary focus of any event or activity.

B. Guiding Principles

All alcohol-related expenditures shall adhere to the following principles:

Mission Alignment

The expenditure must support fundraising, donor engagement, alumni relations, or strategic institutional partnerships.

Moderation

Alcohol purchases must be reasonable, appropriate, and not excessive.

Professional Context

Alcohol service must occur within a professional business setting.

Compliance

All activities must comply with applicable laws, licensing requirements, tax regulations, venue policies, and University requirements.

Stewardship

Institutional and donor funds must be managed responsibly and transparently.

Inclusivity

Alcohol shall never be presented as obligatory or central to participation, and non-alcoholic alternatives must always be available.

C. Allowable Expenses

Permitted alcohol-related expenditures may include:

- Wine, beer, or cocktails served during meetings or dinners at licensed establishments;
- Hosted bars at approved off-campus donor receptions;
- Alcohol served at private venues during pre-approved engagement activities;
- Alcohol included as part of a catering package at an approved off-campus venue.

The following expenditures are prohibited:

- Alcohol purchased for internal staff-only gatherings;
- Alcohol associated with student events;
- Bulk alcohol purchases for storage or future use;
- Personal alcohol purchases unrelated to an approved business purpose;
- Alcohol purchased from unlicensed vendors.

D. Funding Sources

Alcohol-related expenditures may be charged only to:

- Development operational budgets;
- Approved discretionary funds;
- Foundation accounts, where permitted by applicable foundation policies;
- Gift funds where donor restrictions permit such expenditures;
- Office of the Secretary operational budgets.

Alcohol-related expenditures may not be charged to:

- Government grants;
- Sponsored research funds;
- Student fee accounts;
- Restricted gift funds prohibiting such expenditures.

E. Approval Process

1. Pre-Approval Requirement

All alcohol-related expenditures using institutional funds require advance written approval prior to the event or activity.

Approval requests must include:

- Event purpose;
- List or description of attendees;
- Estimated total cost;
- Event location and venue;
- Funding source.

Waiver requests must be submitted no fewer than two (2) weeks prior to the event or activity.

2. Approval Authority

Approval authority shall be as follows:

- Development Officers — Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations
- Deans — Provost
- Vice Presidents — President's Office or Chief Financial Officer
- President — Chair of the Board of Trustees

Blanket approvals may be issued for recurring donor cultivation or advancement-related events during a fiscal year, subject to established spending limits and oversight requirements.

F. Spending Guidelines

Alcohol expenditures shall remain reasonable and customary for the setting and purpose of the event.

As a general guideline, expenditures should not exceed approximately two alcoholic beverages per attendee.

Excessive or unreasonable expenditures may be denied reimbursement and may require personal repayment.

G. Documentation and Reimbursement

Expense reimbursement requests must include:

- Pre-approval documentation;
- Itemized receipts showing alcohol purchases separately identified;
- Business purpose statement;
- Names and affiliations of attendees.
- Credit card statements alone are insufficient documentation for reimbursement purposes.

H. Legal and Risk Management Requirements

- Alcohol must be served by licensed vendors or at properly licensed venues.
- University personnel may not personally provide, distribute, or serve alcohol.
- Events and activities must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws.
- The University reserves the right to require insurance coverage or additional risk management measures for larger receptions or events.

I. Behavioral Expectations

University representatives hosting or attending approved events shall:

- Model responsible consumption;
- Avoid conduct that may expose the University to reputational, legal, or financial risk;
- Ensure non-alcoholic beverage options are readily available;
- Refrain from pressuring any attendee to consume alcohol.

VI. INTERIM POLICIES

There are no interim policies associated with this policy.

VII. SANCTIONS

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Denial of reimbursement;
- Required personal repayment of unauthorized expenditures;
- Disciplinary action in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures.

VIII. ANNUAL REVIEW

The Office of the President, Office of Finance, and Office of Development and Alumni Relations shall review this policy annually to ensure continued compliance, effective risk management, and alignment with institutional values and operational needs.

IX. RESOURCES

[Howard University Financial Policies and Procedures](#)

[Howard University Code of Ethical Conduct Policy](#)

[Howard University Procurement Policies](#)

Applicable Local and State Alcohol Beverage Control Laws

Howard University Risk Management and Insurance Requirements

Questions regarding this policy or requests for additional guidance may be directed to:

[Office of Finance](#) and the [Office of Development and Alumni Relations](#).