



STATE OF VERMONT
JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

MEMORANDUM

To: JFO Staff
From: Stephanie Barrett
Date: January 2020
Subject: Calculating Costs for Interim Committee/Boards etc.

Proposed standard method for estimating the potential cost for new or extended committees, boards and commissions as requested by members and drafters. Based on¹ actual meal, transport, and incidental expenses claimed by members for such meetings in in 2018 and for June-August 2019; there were 358 legislator filed expenses for meals, mileage or incidental expenses in 2018 and 86 such expenses in the 2.5 months of 2019 data reviewed.

The average meal expense ranged from \$8.86 to \$9.74 in 2018 and 2019 respectively.
The average transportation claim ranged from \$61.99 to \$62.11 in 2018 and 2019 respectively.
The average incidental claims ranged from \$2.78 to \$3.22 in 2018 and 2019 respectively.
This results in a range \$73.89 to \$75.07 for daily meal, transportation and other expenses for legislators for each interim committee meeting. Using approximately 1.5% increase to bring the actual 2019 amount forward a year results in \$76.25 per member, per meeting expense for FY21.

The weekly pay for rank and file members for the 2020 session will be \$742.92 and so the 2020 interim at 1/5 of is \$148.50 per day. For public members of committees and board etc., the per-diem in statute is \$50 plus actual expenses and is unlikely to change.

Use the following to estimate the FY21 (2020 interim) cost of new or extended committee, boards or commissions:

Cost of Legislative Members

Cost = **# of Legislator members** X **\$224.75** (\$148.50+\$76.25) X **# of meetings**

Cost of Public Members

Cost = **# of Public members** X **\$126.25** (\$50.00+\$76.25) X **# of a meetings**

This will give a reasonable estimate for per-diem and expense costs. JFO generally recommends that this cost be appropriated, i.e. unlikely to be able to be squeezed into existing legislative or departmental budgets unless some other cost is being eliminated. We also recommend that language clearly state which governmental entity will be charged with reimbursing public members (i.e. Judiciary, Legislature, Agency of Administration, etc.).

Costs related to contracts or consulting needs a committee/board may have will need to be estimated based on specifics of the work.

¹ This includes lodges in other expenses, these rare expenses are prorated based on incidence compared to meals and transportation costs. JFO DM documents #344412 and #344413 contain the detailed data and analysis.