Is it appropriate for family members to attend a University function?

Events such as a new employee orientation, conferences, and departmental retreats are governed by Official Functions, Sensitive Expenses and the Tests of Propriety policies. Only in very rare instances would the University consider allowing a spouse or immediate family member to participate or attend a function or event.

Under the Tests of Propriety, opening the invitation to all spouses and their children cannot be justified as official university business, the most effective way to accomplish the programmatic objectives or as being reasonable. Providing food and refreshments for this purpose is not in the best interests of the University. This orientation event does not meet the criteria for a recognition function, fundraising event or external community relations function.

As detailed in Tests of Propriety,

“Tests of Propriety and Immediate Family Members
Generally, it is the policy of the University not to pay for the attendance of an employee’s immediate family member(s) to attend an event, function, or activity. However, there are limited instances, such as external community relations or fundraising functions, where it is deemed necessary for an immediate family member(s) to attend an event for the purpose of promoting the University. The attendance of immediate family members at such events must be limited to those individuals necessary to represent the University. Limiting attendance by immediate family members will ensure expenses are kept to an absolute minimum.”

Additionally, food and refreshments for training and education events or meetings are governed by the Official Functions policy which defines an official function and the procedures to follow to obtain required approvals. An official function is a meeting, meal, or other function that is hosted by an organizational unit, attended by guests and/or other associates or employees, and held for official university business. Food for normal programmatic operations, recurring staff meetings and daily rounds for faculty and residents is not an appropriate use of University funds and violates the Sensitive Expenses policy.

Unfortunately, these items do not meet the litmus test for appropriate use of University funds. Please refer to the Tests of Propriety Procedural Statement and Sensitive Expenses policy for additional guidance.