

Reimbursement of Employee Expenses:

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TRAVEL REGULATIONS

POLICY:

It is the intent of these policies that employees not suffer additional cost as a result of travel incurred to carry out assigned duties. Employees shall be reimbursed for such expenses subject to the limitations provide in this travel policy and the accompanying Reimbursement Rate Schedule.

PRACTICE:

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. **AUTHORIZATION FOR TRAVEL REQUIRED.** Travel may not be undertaken unless it is authorized by proper authority and is necessary to perform the duties of the job.
2. **ACCOUNTABILITY.** Agency employees, when traveling, should be as conservative as circumstances permit. In the event an alternate means of travel is available or multiple prices exist for travel related costs, the lower cost should be selected whenever practical.
3. **RECEIPTS REQUIRED.** Receipts are required for all items or fares unless stated otherwise herein.
4. **APPLICATION.** Deliberate disregard for these regulations while traveling on agency business or filing of an intentionally misleading or fraudulent travel claim is grounds for disciplinary action including termination of employment.
5. **ESTABLISHMENT OF REIMBURSEMENT RATES.** The agency shall adopt a Travel Reimbursement Rate Schedule that generally follows the schedule established by the State of Tennessee as its maximum rates of reimbursement.

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

1. **ROUTINE TRAVEL.** Travel undertaken, as a routine part of the employee's job duties does not require advance authorization. Such travel shall be approved by a Team Manager or Director upon submittal of an appropriately completed travel claim.
2. **PRIOR AUTHORIZATION.** Prior approval of the Executive Director is required for each employee involved in overnight travel (both in-state and out-of-state).

OFFICIAL STATION

1. **GENERAL PROVISION.** The official station of an employee shall be designated by the Executive Director. It is normally expected that the official station is that location at which the employee performs the major portion of his/her assigned duties. The workstation closest to an employee's residence should be designated as the official station for employees with multiple workstations. If an employee works predominantly from a home residence and reports to an office or other station less than twice a week, the employee's official station should be the home residence.
2. **ON CALL STATUS.** The residence of the employee usually becomes the official station for an employee required to be on call at times other than the employee's normal working hours (e.g., nights or weekends).
3. **OFFICIAL TRAVEL STATUS.** The employee is considered to be on official travel status, and as such, eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses, at the time of departure from the employee's official station or residence, whichever is applicable, for the purpose of authorized travel on agency business.

CLAIMS REIMBURSEMENT

1. **GENERAL PROVISIONS.** Reimbursement for claims for travel expenses shall be made in the form and method prescribed by these procedures:
 - a) Standard Agency travel voucher(s) will be used for all claims for travel expense. Any recovery of the cost of travel by other methods is not allowed. The forms must show movement and detail of expenses day by day.
 - b) All travel claims should be authenticated by the original signature of the employee claiming reimbursement. A separate claim for expenses must be filed by each claimant.
 - c) Claims for reimbursement for travel expense should be submitted no later than thirty (30) days after the completion of the month in which the expenses were incurred. Claims submitted after this period must provide written explanation for the delay. In accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidance (IRS Publication 463), reimbursement paid sixty (60) days after the date of travel may be considered as taxable income.
 - d) Where required, receipts must accompany the travel form.
2. **TRAVEL ADVANCES.** Advances to employees will not ordinarily be allowed. Under special circumstances advances may be made through written authorization of the Executive Director. In lieu of travel advances, an agency charge card may be provided to the traveling employee, if authorized. In addition, hotel room costs may be prepaid by the agency.

3. **HONORARIUMS.** For those employees who receive honorariums for appearing at meetings while on official agency business, the employee may, at his/her option, accept the honorarium as full reimbursement for the travel expenses including airfare, or choose to surrender the honorarium to the agency, and be reimbursed in accordance with established travel regulations.

TRANSPORTATION

1. **GENERAL PROVISIONS.** Reimbursement for travel will be based upon the most direct or most expeditious route possible. Any individual traveling by an indirect route must assume any extra expense incurred thereby.
2. **TRAVEL BY COMMON CARRIER.** Transportation for travel out of state should be by common carrier (air, train, bus) whenever practicable.
 - a) Fares for common carriers must not exceed the regular tourist or coach fares charged the general public.
 - b) Advantage of round trip rates must be taken when available.
 - c) Reservations for travel by common carrier shall be made as far in advance as possible to take advantage of early booking discounts.
 - d) A receipt must accompany the expense claim.
 - e) The use of air travel is encouraged when time is an important factor, or where the trip is so long that other methods of travel would prove more expensive because of subsistence allowance.
3. **TRAVEL BY AGENCY OWNED VEHICLE.** Employees should make use of agency-owned vehicles whenever possible.
 - a) Agency-owned vehicles should be used only on official business. Only properly authorized agency employees may operate an agency vehicle and must possess a valid driver's license for the type of vehicle being operated.
 - b) Persons driving agency vehicles may be furnished a charge card, and need not indicate expenses as may be chargeable on courtesy cards on the travel claim. Emergency out of pocket expenses such as gasoline, oil or other services and emergency repairs will be reimbursed but must be accompanied by proper receipt.

4. TRAVEL BY PERSONALLY OWNED VEHICLE. Use of personally owned vehicles in traveling on agency business is allowed with the following restrictions:
 - a) The Executive Director may authorize employees to use personally owned vehicles for longer trips (both in and out-of-state) with the following limitations:
 - i) The cost of such reimbursement does not exceed the comparable cost of commercial transportation including taxi fares and parking fees, and
 - ii) Unnecessary meals and lodging expenses which result from the use of an automobile for reasons of the employee's personal convenience, or which are due to travel by an indirect route, will not be allowed.
5. REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL BY PERSONALLY OWNED VEHICLE.
 - a) Reimbursement for use of personally owned vehicles is at the standard mileage rate established by the agency multiplied by the authorized mileage. The standard mileage rate includes all operating expenses such as gasoline, oil, and repairs precluding any separate claim for such items.
 - b) At the discretion of the agency, the actual reimbursement for travel in a personally owned vehicle may be capped at a daily or total monthly dollar amount.
 - c) Mileage as shown by an on-line mapping service (Google Maps or MapQuest) will be regarded as official for both in-state and out-of-state routes
 - d) Reasonable vicinity mileage will be allowed. Vicinity mileage must be reported on a separate line and not included with point-to-point mileage.
 - e) Only mileage on official business may be claimed for reimbursement.
 - f) Procedures for calculating mileage are based on the fact that the agency cannot reimburse employees for normal commuting mileage.
 - i) If an employee begins or ends the trip at his/her official station, reimbursable mileage will be the official mileage from the official station to the destination.

- ii) If an employee begins or ends the travel at her/his residence, without stopping at the official station, reimbursable mileage will be the lesser of the mileage from the employee's residence to the destination or the official station to the destination. On non-scheduled days (weekends, holidays, other shifts), the employee may typically be reimbursed for actual mileage from his/her residence to the destination.
 - iii) If an employee travels between destinations without returning to the official station or the residence, reimbursable mileage will be official actual mileage between the destinations.
 - iv) If work is performed by an employee in route to or from the official station, reimbursable mileage is computed by deducting the employee's normal commuting mileage from the actual mileage driven.
6. AUTOMOBILE RENTAL. Advance authorization from the Executive Director must be secured for automobile rental, whether in state or out-of-state travel. Charges for insurance coverage for rented automobiles are not reimbursable costs.
7. TAXI FARES – AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION. Reasonable taxi, bus, limousine, or light rail service to and from airports will be used when available and practical. In traveling between hotel or lodging, and meeting or conference sites, reasonable taxi fares will be allowed. Under normal circumstances, a receipt is required for reimbursement of taxi fares.
8. TOLLS AND FERRY FEES. Reasonable tolls and ferry fees will be allowed as necessary. Under normal circumstances, no receipt is required for reimbursement of these fees.
9. PARKING. Necessary charges for parking will be allowed subject to the following provisions:
- a) Charges for routine parking while on travel status or charges for routine parking incurred as a result of the daily performance of assigned duties will be reimbursed. Receipts are required if the parking charge exceeds the allowance stated in the rate schedule.
 - b) If travel is by air, the employee will be reimbursed for the lesser of: (a) the allowable mileage reimbursement for one round trip and long-term airport parking; or (b) the cost of one round trip taxi fare from the employee's official work station (or residence on weekends/evenings). The employee may also be allowed the appropriate mileage reimbursement for two round trips from home when driven by a friend or relative, at the employee's option.
10. PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. Fees for the handling of promotional materials or equipment will be allowed up to the maximum indicated in the Travel Reimbursement Rate Schedule.

LODGING

1. The employee will be reimbursed for actual lodging costs plus taxes incurred up to the applicable maximum amounts as indicated on the U.S. General Services Administration for federal employees within the continental United States (CONUS). Lodging receipts are required and must itemize room charges and taxes by date. If a convention rate exceeds the maximum reimbursement rate and is documented by a convention brochure of registration form, a higher reimbursement rate will be allowed. Miscellaneous lodging expenses such as energy or utility surcharges are fully reimbursable and should be added to the lodging cost in a similar manner in a manner similar to local hotel or sales taxes.
2. The maximum reimbursement rates for out-of-state travel are the same as those maintained by the U.S. General Services Administration for federal employees within the continental United States (CONUS). The CONUS list, available on the General Service web site, contains a standard reimbursement rate for lodging and meals and incidental, and several pages of exceptions. Most destinations for out-of-state travel fall within the list of exceptions.
3. If a room is shared with other than an agency employee, actual costs subject to the applicable maximum rate in the reimbursement rate schedule apply. In the event of double (or more) for agency employees on official travel, each employee should attach an explanation to the travel claim detailing dates and other employees with whom the room was shared. The lodging cost may be claimed by the employee who incurred the cost, or a proportionate share of the occupancy charge may be allowable for each employee.

PER DIEM RATES FOR MEALS AND INCIDENTALS

1. The maximum per diem rates include a fixed allowance for meals and incidental expenses (M & I). The M & I rate, or fraction thereof, is payable to the traveler without itemization of expenses or receipts. Incidentals are intended to include miscellaneous costs associated with travel such as tips for baggage handling, etc. Reimbursement is made only when overnight travel is required. Generally, the applicable maximum per diem rate for each calendar day of travel shall be determined by the location of lodging for the traveler.
2. The per diem rates for meals and incidentals are established on the Reimbursement Rate Schedule. The M & I rates for in-state and out-of-state travel are the same as those for federal employees, and are available on the General Services Administration's web site. As with lodging, there is a standard rate for the continental United States (CONUS), and a list of exceptions.
3. Reimbursement for meals and incidentals for the day of departure shall be three-fourths of the appropriate M & I rate (either the in-state rate or CONUS rate for out-of-state travel) at the rate prescribed for the lodging location. Reimbursement for M & I for the day of return shall be three-fourths of the M & I rate applicable to the preceding calendar day.

4. Reimbursement for a single meal (or meals) for employees on one-day travel status with no overnight stay is not permitted. While on travel status if more than a single full meal is provided, as part of an approved training session or conference, the employee should deduct the cost of those meals from the per diem for that day, using the schedule provided in the reimbursement schedule. This also applies to the day of departure and the day of return. In those instances where all meals are provided, only the \$2.00 incidental rate should be claimed.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS COSTS WHILE ON TRAVEL STATUS

GENERAL PROVISIONS. Telecommunications charges incurred by agency employees on official business will be reimbursed subject to the following limitation:

1. Costs incurred for local phone calls on official business will be reimbursed.
2. Long distance telephone calls on official business will be reimbursed provided a statement is furnished indicating the date, name and location called.
3. FAX charges will be reimbursed provided a statement similar to that for long distance calls is furnished.
4. Hotel Internet access charges may be reimbursed when it is anticipated that the employee will be working from the hotel room on official agency business.

PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL, ADVOCACY, AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

POLICY:

Employees are encouraged to participate in professional, advocacy, and civic organizations that promote professional development and enhance professional networking.

PRACTICE:

1. Employee participation in the activities of these organizations is generally outside working hours. However, such participation can be considered hours worked if the agency or its clientele benefits or expects to benefit from the activity.
2. If membership in a professional, advocacy, or civic organization or a professional designation is job related and is beneficial to an employee and the agency, the employee may request that his/her dues be paid for by the agency. The employee should make a written request to the Executive Director. The employee will be advised whether any or all of the dues will be paid by the agency.
3. The agency will pay and/or reimburse employees for registration fees and reasonable expenses to attend professional, advocacy, or civic organization meetings, seminars, and conventions when approved.
4. Employees must have advance approval from the Executive Director before seeking or accepting any official position in a professional, advocacy, or civic organization if the duties of such position may interfere with or conflict with duties at the Agency. If approval is granted, the approval will include agreements about limits on work time and other resources in performing office duties.
5. Employees are encouraged to contribute articles, make presentations, and give speeches to professional, advocacy, and civic organizations.

USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES TO TRANSPORT SERVICE RECIPIENTS

POLICY:

The agency encourages employees to safely use their personal vehicles when providing transportation for people supported.

PRACTICE:

1. Prior to utilizing a personal vehicle for agency business:
 - a) The employee must have a valid Tennessee driver's license;
 - b) The employee must have appropriate insurance coverage on the vehicle;
 - c) The driver's license number and expiration date and proof of insurance must be in an employee file;
 - d) The employee must demonstrate that the vehicle they will be driving is in safe operating condition, including brakes, tire thread, heating and cooling, lights and signals, etc.
2. It is the employee's responsibility to keep this information up-to-date, including reporting to the Human Resources Coordinator or Executive Director any moving violations or changes in driving status within five (5) days of the violation or change.
3. If an employee claims reimbursement for the use of his/her personal vehicle to transport persons supported, then all policies and procedures that apply to agency owned vehicles should apply during the period in which a person supported is being transported, including:
 - a) assuring that all passengers are secured by a seat belt or other proper restraining device(s);
 - b) promptly addressing any maintenance needs or operating problems with the vehicle;
 - c) ensuring that passengers behave in an orderly and responsible manner, exhibiting behaviors that do not negatively reflect on the agency or the individuals it serves;
 - d) obeying all applicable traffic laws and regulations;
 - e) prohibiting the use of tobacco. (See 6-6, 6-21)
4. The agency may limit the actual reimbursement for travel in a personally owned vehicle by setting a daily or monthly dollar cap on the reimbursement.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR WORK-RELATED EXPENSES

POLICY:

To the extent possible, the Agency will reimburse employees for expenses incurred in supporting persons to participate in community activities and events and for other work-related expenses.

PRACTICE:

1. **USE OF PERSONAL CELLULAR PHONES.** When necessary an employee may use his/her personal cellular phone in conducting official business. Employees shall be reimbursed for any additional cost incurred in using their personal cellular phones for business by one of two methods:
 - a) An itemized statement indicating the date, name, location and cost of each call plus a billing statement indicating that additional cost was incurred may be submitted for approval;
 - b) The employee may increase the number of monthly hours on his/her cellular calling plan and receive a monthly stipend to offset the increased cost of the plan.
2. **USE OF HOME PHONE.** When an employee needs to make work-related long distance telephone calls from his/her place of residence, those calls may be reimbursed. The employee should submit an itemized statement indicating the date, name, location and cost of each call plus a billing statement indicating that additional cost was incurred.
3. **OTHER WORK-RELATED EXPENSES.** When employees incur other work-related expenses, they may be reimbursed subject to the following provisions:
 - a) Documentation must be presented to demonstrate that an expense was actually incurred (e.g., a receipt).
 - b) The expense incurred was reasonable (i.e., if goods or services were purchased they cost no more than the general public would expect to pay).
 - c) The expense for which the reimbursement is requested must relate to the employee's job duties and be necessary for the completion of those duties.
 - d) An itemized statement indicating the date, name, location, cost, and reason for the cost plus a receipt is required for reimbursement.

PERSONAL PROPERTY DAMAGED BY PERSONS SUPPORTED

POLICY:

Under certain conditions the agency will reimburse agency employees for the cost or a portion of the cost of personal property damaged or destroyed by persons supported.

PRACTICE:

1. When the direct action of a person supported results in damage to or destruction of personal property owned by agency employees, then reimbursement may be requested under the following conditions:
 - a) The personal property was in use when the employee was engaged in his/her work duties;
 - b) The employee demonstrated reasonable care in protecting the personal property;
 - c) The personal property was a necessity for the employee to be on the job (e.g., clothing, eye glasses, personal vehicle, etc.), not optional (e.g., jewelry).
2. In order to receive compensation for damaged personal items:
 - a) The employee should submit a written request for reimbursement within 10 calendar days of the incident, detailing the incident, including a description of the item(s) damaged.
 - b) The employee should present the item(s) for inspection by a review committee.
 - c) Documentation of a basis for cost should be presented to the review committee (e.g., a receipt, price quote for repair or replacement, etc.)
 - d) If the item is to be repaired, payment will normally be made directly to the repair shop, not to the employee.
 - e) Reimbursement may be capped at a maximum dollar amount.
3. When there is a request for compensation for personal articles, the Incident Management Coordinator will present the request to the Incident Management Team. The committee will review the information available and make a decision. The committee will submit the decision to the employee in writing.