

PERSONNEL

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

**Travel Expense Reimbursements**

It is the District's intent that all eligible travel expenses incurred by a traveler are reimbursed. In limited circumstances, where eligible expenses will not be covered in full, the traveler will be advised in advance and the information will be recorded in all travel documentation. Travel arrangements will only be made by District employees with knowledge of District travel policy and procedure. Standard arrangements include conference registrations, lodging, airfare and other modes of transportation. Any alternative arrangements or special requests for meals, accommodations, etc. are the responsibility of the traveler to communicate to the District and obtain pre-approval by the traveler's supervisor. In return, the traveler will receive from the District all necessary communication regarding the travel prior to the date of departure.

A school board director, administrator, staff member, or designee of the District traveling on official District business ("traveler") is expected to exercise the same care in incurring travel expenses that a prudent individual would exercise if traveling on personal business. For purposes of this procedure, travel expense includes amounts paid for use of personal automobiles, other transportation, meals, lodging and related items that are necessary while conducting official District business outside the Tri-Cities region. In-District mileage and non-travel related reimbursements are handled by different processes – see Other Reimbursements.

Travel must be approved in advance through submission and approval of a travel authorization form. The authorization must be approved by a supervisor with direct knowledge of the traveler's work and/or the person with budgetary authority. (Travel parties of more than 15 from the District to an out-of-state conference will require the approval of the Superintendent/designee). The purpose of the travel must be clearly described in supporting documentation. Excess costs, indirect routes, charges incurred by the negligence of the traveler, costs for personal benefit, alcoholic beverages or luxury accommodations considered unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official District business travel are not eligible for reimbursement. Travelers are responsible for any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience except in cases to comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

To receive reimbursement for travel expenses the traveler must, within 10 days of his/her return, complete and submit a signed request for travel reimbursement. Supervisors are required to verify the travel expenses claimed by the traveler are reasonable, documented and clearly for District purposes. Claims for travel expense reimbursement must be approved by the traveler's supervisor and/or the person with budgetary authority.

## **Travel Reimbursement Types**

### **Mileage**

Travelers are strongly encouraged to carpool when possible to save District resources. Travel must be by the most direct route possible. Travelers operating a private vehicle will: 1) be in possession of a valid driver's license, 2) have vehicle liability insurance, and 3) carry insurance identification verifying they have valid vehicle liability insurance. The reimbursement rate will be at the IRS rate which is adjusted January 1<sup>st</sup> as needed.

### **Rental Vehicles**

Every effort should be taken to minimize the number of rental cars when traveling to the same location. Purchasing upgrades or additional insurance for rental vehicles with District funds is prohibited. Fuel should be purchased at the most economical means to the District.

### **Airfare**

The use of a District purchase order or procurement card is recommended whenever possible for air fare purchases. For reimbursement of airline tickets purchased with personal funds, the traveler must have a completed and approved travel authorization and submit, with a signed request for reimbursement, a confirmation showing the itinerary, cost, and proof of payment.

The District will cover the cost of one piece of checked luggage per person for overnight trips. The District will not cover the cost of any excess checked luggage and/or overweight items. Exceptions may be granted for luggage directly dealing with District materials needed for a conference, meeting, etc. Purchasing travel insurance/protection for airfare with District funds is prohibited.

### **Other Modes of Transportation/Parking**

Taxi, bus and other fares, including parking fees will be reimbursed if required as part of travel. Receipts must be attached to the claim for expenses.

### **Meal Reimbursement**

Per Diem subsistence allowance will be paid for the location where the meal occurred using U.S. General Services Administration Per Diem Rates (adjusted October 1<sup>st</sup> as needed). Rates can be found at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov). Individual receipts are not required. To qualify for meal reimbursement during a partial day of travel the traveler must be in travel status at the following times:

Breakfast: Prior to 8:00 a.m.  
Lunch: From 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
Dinner: After 6:00 p.m.

Meal reimbursement will not be allowed for meals provided for which the traveler did not incur an expense, such as meals included as part of a conference or meeting registration fee or meals furnished by a host facility. Snacks and continental breakfasts such as rolls, juice, and coffee are not considered to be meals.

Meal reimbursements for trips less than 24 hours without overnight lodging are taxable (IRS regulation 1.32.1.7.1). Taxable meal reimbursements are processed by the Employee Services Department and are included in the traveler's monthly paycheck.

Reimbursement of actual expenses for meals and related costs is allowable when acting as host to guests of Pasco School District or other official business functions provided the purpose is clearly shown on a separate reimbursable expense statement. Receipts or other satisfactory evidence of payment must be attached to the claim.

#### Lodging

Prior to making lodging arrangements, District employees with knowledge of District travel policy and procedure should review the lodging allowance for that location using the U.S. General Services Administration Per Diem Rates (adjusted October 1<sup>st</sup> as needed). Rates can be found at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov). Considerations for lodging arrangements exceeding the GSA maximum lodging rate will include safety, benefit from staying in the same location as a conference and the costs associated with not staying at a conference location.

The use of a District issued purchase order or procurement card is recommended whenever possible for lodging purchases. For reimbursement of lodging purchased with personal funds, the traveler must have a completed and approved travel authorization and submit a billing statement from the provider. The statement must differentiate between charges for lodging, meals, telephone, internet and personal items. Reimbursement for lodging expenses shall be at an actual rate for single occupancy standard accommodations, plus applicable taxes. Lodging reimbursement will be made for commercial lodging facilities only. No overnight lodging will be reimbursed for locations within fifty miles of either the traveler's official residence or official office. Reimbursement of expenses is allowed for one travel day preceding a conference and one travel day following the conference.

#### Fees, Registrations and Miscellaneous

Reimbursement will be made for approved receipted fees, registration, and material costs.

#### Combined Business and Personal Time

Combining business and personal time on a trip must be indicated on the travel authorization form and is allowed only where all of the following conditions exist: 1) the primary purpose of the trip is official District business, 2) the traveler uses his/her approved leave for the personal time used and 3) the District does not incur any extra expenses beyond what it would have paid had the trip occurred without personal use. In cases where this may be arranged, it is understood that the traveler will be responsible for the additional costs incurred as a result of personal time.

## **Other Reimbursements**

### **Local Area Mileage**

For reimbursement of local area mileage, a claimant may complete and sign an In-District Mileage Claim Form #Gp-42 to be approved by a supervisor with direct knowledge of the claimant's work and/or the person with budgetary authority. Daily commute transportation expenses between the traveler's official residence and official worksite is a personal obligation and is not reimbursable by the District.

Local area mileage claims should be submitted on a monthly basis. An exception is granted when the amount of the claim is less than \$10, in which case a claim should be submitted when the claim reaches \$10. Claims less than \$10 will be processed at the end of the fiscal year.

### **Non-Travel Related Expenses**

For reimbursement of non-travel related expenses a claimant may submit an itemized claim to be approved by a supervisor with direct knowledge of the claimant's work and/or the person with budgetary authority.

### **Unavailable or Lost Receipts**

A traveler or claimant who, after all reasonable efforts have been exhausted, is unable to acquire or locate a receipt may complete and certify a *Statement for Incomplete or Missing Receipts* for reimbursement consideration.