

## Staff Travel and Expense Reimbursement

Expense reimbursement for staff traveling on approved district business will be governed by the following procedures. Travel expenses include mileage, rental vehicles, meals and lodging and expenses incident to travel. Only travel expenses as are ordinary and necessary in the conduct of approved travel for district business purposes and directly attributable to it will be authorized. As used in this regulation an ordinary expense means one that is common and accepted in the profession; a necessary expense means one that is essential and appropriate in order to conduct district business. The following procedures will also apply to Board members traveling on district business.

Employees are expected to be conservative in lodging and transportation expenses. Travel must be conducted in the most expeditious and cost-effective manner, as determined by the district. This includes car-pooling when possible. In some cases, low cost airfares may be more cost effective when compared to additional hotel days and vehicle rentals.

### Authorizations

All travel must be pre-approved by the site administrator, grant administrator, the superintendent, or the Board. It is the administrator's responsibility to monitor all travel expenditures that affect their budget.

### Visa Card and Gas Card

All hotel accommodations will be charged on the district's Visa card. Parking and shuttle fees may also be charged to the Visa card. **These are the only approved expenses for the Visa card.** Any other charges on the Visa card must have prior approval from the superintendent or business manager. **Meals are NOT to be charged to the Visa card** unless prior approval has been received from the superintendent or business manager. Failure to follow the procedures set by the district may result in the employee having to personally pay for unauthorized expenses.

The district prohibits the accrual of travel credits (i.e., frequent flyer miles) for individuals traveling on approved district business.

**Any personal expenses**, such as telephone or room service charges, are the sole responsibility of the employee and **must be paid for by the employee prior to charging** the room cost to the Visa card. No personal expenses should be charged to the district's Visa card. This includes charges for additional nights for personal reasons.

Gasoline purchases will be made using the district's gas card. We receive a discount on all fuel purchases made on the gas cards; therefore, the Visa card should not be used.

Visa and gas cards must be returned to the business office immediately upon completion of the trip, or the first day the employee is back to work.

Important: No employee should pay for travel expenses, or any other purchases, using their own credit cards or personal funds. There are procedures in place to ensure that all expenses can be paid through the District by means of a purchase order, district check, direct-billing on district accounts with our vendors or the district Visa. **No reimbursements will be paid to any employee who makes a purchase using their own credit card or personal funds without prior authorization from the Superintendent or business manager.** In addition, any employee who makes a purchase on the district's vendor accounts, without having first obtained an approved purchase order, will be required to personally pay the unauthorized charges.

## Meals

Reimbursement will be made for ordinary and necessary meal expenses incurred in the course of approved travel for district business **when there is an overnight stay**, or when the trip is long enough that the individual needs to stop for sleep or rest to properly perform his/her duties (as defined by the IRS). The meal reimbursement covers the cost of food, beverages, taxes, and gratuity. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed by the district.

Meals provided at a conference or included in the fees for a conference will not be reimbursed to the employee. Food that is substantially a meal will constitute a provided meal for purposes of this policy and no reimbursement may be substituted. No reimbursement will be given if an employee chooses to purchase their own meal in lieu of the meal provided.

Expenses in excess of the current established limit are the responsibility of the employee. Receipts for all meal expenses should be submitted with the reimbursement request.

## In-District Travel (Local) - Use of Private Vehicles

Staff will use district-owned vehicles, whenever possible, in conducting district business that requires travel within district boundaries, and within a 40-mile radius of Rogue River.

Travel in a private vehicle for the purpose of conducting district business may be approved when:

1. A district vehicle is not available;
2. The destination is not conveniently accessible by commercial/rental carrier, or the use of a commercial/rental carrier is not practical;
3. Carrying articles by commercial/rental carrier would not be feasible;
4. Commercial/rental travel is deemed to be less economical.

Approved use of a private vehicle will be reimbursed at the current IRS Mileage Reimbursement Rate. Employees will be expected to carpool to meetings whenever feasible. Mileage reimbursement may be claimed by submitting an approved Mileage Reimbursement form to the business office.

**Mileage reimbursement guidelines:** Employees may only be reimbursed for mileage that is beyond their normal home-to-work miles traveled. In-District mileage reimbursement will not be granted to an employee, other than a district-approved tutor, for traveling from his/her residence to the place where work normally begins for the day or for returning home from the last place worked during the day, without prior approval from the superintendent.

### **Out-of-District Travel (In-State) - District-Owned and Rental Vehicles**

Staff will use district-owned vehicles whenever possible in conducting approved district business that requires travel outside district boundaries.

When a district-owned vehicle is not available or practical, staff will use a rental vehicle under the district's ORCPP agreement with a participating vendor (currently Enterprise Rent-A-Car). This is generally the most cost-effective means of travel, and also provides liability protection for staff members. Rental vehicles are insured by the rental agency, thus protecting the employee and the district in the event of an accident.

### **Out-of-District Travel (In-State) - Use of Private Vehicles**

Use of private vehicles when traveling on district business is strongly discouraged. Private vehicles may **only** be used with prior approval from the superintendent. Employees who choose to use their personal vehicle rather than a rental car or district-owned vehicle are entitled to reimbursement at the Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Rate if Government Vehicle is Available rate set by the U.S. General Services Administration. In addition, reimbursement for use of a private vehicle shall not exceed the cost of renting a vehicle for the trip.

All requests for mileage reimbursement must be submitted to the business office no later than June 15, in order to meet the fiscal year-end time-line. Requests received after this date will only be reimbursed with approval from the business manager.

### **Out-of-State Travel**

Out-of-State travel that is further than 60-miles of the Oregon border requires prior Board approval.

### **Travel Advances**

Travel advances in general are discouraged. Meals and mileage will be reimbursed to the employee upon return from the trip and submission of all receipts.

When an advance is required, an approved request must be received by the business office at least **10 days prior to the trip** in order to process a check. Advances will be given for meals and for mileage when proper approval has been received to use a private vehicle.

When a group of employees are traveling together and an advance is required, one check will be issued for the entire group. It will be the responsibility of the employee who receives the check to distribute the appropriate amounts to all persons traveling in the group.

### **Cancelled Trips**

If an employee must cancel a trip, it is his/her responsibility to cancel all reservations, including hotel, rental car, and conference registrations. It is also the employee's responsibility to arrange for refunds of any fees paid or tickets purchased in advance. Most places of business require a minimum 24-hour cancellation notice.

If an advance has been issued for meals and/or mileage, the money must be returned to the Business Office immediately.

### **Insurance Coverage**

Insurance costs are included as part of the mileage reimbursement for employees who have approval to use a private vehicle to conduct district business. It is the responsibility of the owner or driver of the vehicle to be certain that the vehicle is adequately covered by insurance.

The responsibility of the district for damages resulting from vehicle accidents is not the same as set forth in the district's general liability insurance policy. **The employee's insurance coverage provides primary coverage when the employee is driving his/her own vehicle on approved district business.**

All district employees operating private vehicles on approved district business are required to provide verification of vehicle liability insurance that meets or exceeds Oregon statutory minimum limits. This verification is required prior to any district approval to conduct district business in a private vehicle. Employees are required to update their verification of vehicle liability information maintained on file with the district upon **any** change in the employee's vehicle insurance coverage.

### **Personal Travel Combined with District Business Travel**

If an individual traveling on approved district business engages in both business and personal activities, travel expenses incurred will be reimbursed only for expenses that are ordinary and necessary in the conduct of district business. Expenses incurred as a part of personal business are the sole responsibility of the traveler.

When personal travel is combined with approved district business travel and the individual is traveling by less than the most expeditious and cost-effective manner, any additional costs must be paid by the traveler. In most cases, employees will be required to use a rental vehicle. The district will pay the cost of the rental vehicle for the days necessary to conduct district business. Any additional rental days added due to conducting personal business must be paid by the traveler.

Vacation or other personal leave may be taken in conjunction with approved district travel subject to the following:

1. No additional days of travel beyond the conference and the minimal amount of time needed to reach the destination and/or return will be paid by the district. Employees who otherwise extend a trip shall do so at their own expense and time. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the superintendent;
2. The employee must pay any additional costs incurred as a result of the personal travel. This would include extra vehicle rental days, lodging expenses, meals, increased fare, etc.;

3. All subsistence and local transportation while on vacation status or other appropriate leave must be paid by the employee;
4. The employee will not be required to pay any of the basic transportation costs incurred as a part of the approved district business, even though he/she spends a substantial part of the total time away from home on vacation or other personal leave, provided the employee was traveling on approved district business.
5. An employee, who decides on his/her own to conduct district business without prior approval, while on vacation or other personal leave, cannot then use this as justification to have the district pay any of the travel costs.

### **Expense Reimbursement Request and Accounting Procedures**

1. Appropriate approval must be secured prior to the attendance at any meeting or conference. Site supervisors are responsible for approval. Site Administrator approval is required any time the employee is to be absent from his/her regular assignment.
2. Estimated travel expenses should be filled out on a Travel Application and Advancement Request form and submitted to the appropriate administrator for approval. Once approved, a copy should be sent to the business office. The site bookkeeper should keep the original form until the employee returns from the trip and turns in all receipts.
3. If an advance for meals and/or mileage is required, be sure to mark it on the travel request form and submit to the business office at least 10 working days before the trip.
4. Group travel may be requested on one travel request form for a group traveling together as long as one person has complete responsibility for reporting expenses and distributing any advances received.
5. Employees should contact the district office at least three days before their trip to reserve a Visa card and a gas card.
6. Employees should contact the business office to make arrangements for a vehicle rental. The approximate dates/times for picking up and dropping off the vehicle need to be provided. If the employee wants to arrange for the rental car agency to pick them up or drop them off at their home or workplace, that information can also be provided.
7. Lodging, parking and shuttle expenses will be charged to the district's Visa card. Rental vehicles will be billed to the district's account with the rental agency. Gasoline purchases will be made using the district's gas cards. All receipts must be kept and turned in upon return.
8. Meals shall not to be charged on the district's Visa card unless prior approval was given by the superintendent or business manager. The employee will be reimbursed upon return if an advance has not been paid.

9. Upon return from the trip, the bottom portion of the Travel Application and Advancement Request form shall be filled out with actual expenses. All receipts for meals, lodging, gas, vehicle rental, parking, etc. should be attached to the form and submitted to the business office. Any reimbursement due the employee for meals and/or mileage will be issued within ten days.
10. If the completed travel reimbursement due to the employee is less than the amount of a travel advance received by the employee, the difference must be returned with the report to the business office within 3 working days.
11. Any claims for mileage reimbursement only may be submitted on a Mileage Reimbursement form, detailing the miles driven and the business conducted. The form needs to be signed by the employee and by the approving administrator, and then sent to the business office for payment. A check reimbursing the employee will be issued within 10 working days after receipt of the approved mileage form.
12. All travel expense reimbursement and mileage reimbursement requests shall be submitted to the business office as soon as possible, but no later than June 15, in order to meet the fiscal year-end time-line. Requests received after this date will only be reimbursed with approval from the business manager.
13. Reimbursement of costs that are considered to be personal, such as telephone calls made from a hotel room and expenses incurred because of employee error, will not be allowed. The employee must pay for personal charges prior to charging the balance to the Visa card.
14. Reimbursable Expense Limitations:
  - a. Meals will be paid at the rates established by the district. Those rates (which are subject to change) are currently:  
  
\$13 for breakfast  
\$14 for lunch  
\$23 for dinner
  - b. Mileage for approved in-district travel using a privately owned vehicle will be reimbursed at the current IRS mileage reimbursement rate. In-district travel is considered to be any travel with-in a 40-mile radius of Rogue River.
  - c. Employees are expected to use a district-owned vehicle or a rental vehicle for all out-of-district travel. When an employee chooses and receives approval to use their personal vehicle, mileage will be reimbursed at the current Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Rate if Government Vehicle is Available rate set by the U.S. General Services Administration.
  - d. The Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Rate if Government Vehicle is Available rate as of January 2007 is \$0.285. This rate is subject to change, and will be reimbursed at the current rate as of the date of travel.
  - e. In-District mileage reimbursement will not be granted to an employee, other than a district approved tutor, for traveling from his/her residence to the place where work normally begins for the day or for returning home from the last place worked during the day, without prior approval from the superintendent.

- f. Reimbursement will be made only for those miles actually traveled in the course of completing approved district business.