

SAMPLE POLICY - TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Here is an example of one state's Travel Reimbursement Policy, which applies to public school educators in that state. **Find out what policies are in place in your state and district.**

Statewide Accounting Policy and Procedure: Travel

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to state agencies for payment of travel expenses in an efficient, cost effective manner, and to enable state travelers to successfully execute their travel requirements at the lowest reasonable costs, resulting in the best value for the State. Teleconferencing instead of travel should be considered when possible. ...The policy is based on travel industry best practices and with total cost management in mind. As such, it is important for employees to understand the intent of the policy and work with their management on managing work related travel according to this Policy.

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A necessary expense is one for which there exists a clear business purpose and is within the State's expense policy limitations. A clear business purpose contains all information necessary to substantiate the expenditure including a list of attendees, if appropriate, and their purpose for attending, business topics discussed, or how the expenditure benefited the State.

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There are several key points to remember when incurring expenses...

- Under no circumstances should an individual approve his/her own expense report. In most cases he/she should not approve the expense reports of a person to whom he/she functionally or administratively reports (see exceptions below)
- A large number of exceptions or policy violations will increase the likelihood of expense report audits.
- The State will not pay for personal expenses.

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Miscellaneous Expenses

Reimbursable expenses include but are not limited to the following:

- Business office expenses (copy services, postage, supplies) and business related phone calls, faxes and internet fees
- Conference/Registration fees
- Costs related to passports and travel visas when necessary to accomplish the official business purpose of the trip
- Currency conversion fees
- Baggage handling services
- Laundry or cleaning expenses on trips lasting seven (7) days or more

Non-reimbursable expenses include but are not limited to the following:

- Airline, car, and card membership dues and club fees; travel upgrade fees (air, rail, car)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Bank charges for ATM withdrawals, except on international travel
- Childcare costs
- Clothing or toiletry items
- Commuting between home and workplace
- Country Club dues
- Expenses related to vacation or personal days taken before, during or after a business trip
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Laundry, cleaning, pressing costs for trips of less than seven days
- Loss Damage Insurance when State agency is available and another auto agency is utilized
- Loss or theft of cash advance money or airline tickets
- Loss or theft of personal funds or property
- Lost baggage
- Luggage or briefcases
- Medical expenses while traveling
- Mini-bar charges
- Movies
- No-show/Cancellation fees or fees related to hotel late check-out (unless business or weather related)
- Personal reading materials (magazines, newspapers, etc.)

- Personal vehicle maintenance
- Personal entertainment
- Personal Pet care
- Recreational expenses
- Saunas, massages
- Shoe Shines
- Souvenirs or personal gifts
- Traffic citations (moving violations), parking tickets, court fees and other fines
- Travel accident insurance premiums
- Valet services for parking, when self parking options are available, unless there are valid security reasons

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Reimbursement for Travel Expenses

General

Employees are expected to exercise good stewardship of funds when traveling on official business. Any expenditure disallowed by the State is the responsibility of the employee.

Note: IRS guidelines state any expense not submitted within 60 days of the completion of the trip becomes taxable income to the traveler.

Expense Reimbursement Timing

Travelers should submit all expenses for reimbursement and reconciliation ideally within 10 days of the completion of the event or trip but no later than 45 calendar days, but preferably held until a reimbursement of at least \$10 is due.

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Receipts

Travelers must always obtain receipts, except when per diem travel allowances are claimed. Not all receipts must be submitted with a travel expense report, but may be requested for verification or audit. Itemized receipts should include:

- Name and address of the vendor
- Date of service
- Description of service
- Amount paid for each individual item

Credit card slips and statements are not acceptable in lieu of receipts. Travel expense reports may be selected for audit at any time and all required receipts must be retained by the traveler for three years after the travel date if not attached to the expense report.

Receipts are required with the travel expense report for the following expenses regardless of dollar amount:

- Airline fares
- Hotel expenses
- Rental car expenses
- Breakfast, luncheon, or dinner meetings unless claiming a per diem
- Registration Fees
- Visa/Passport fees

No expense will be approved if a required receipt is missing.

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Personal Expenses

Reimbursement of personal expenses shall not be authorized for payment at any time. See Section [above] for a list of non-reimbursable expenses.

Combining Personal Travel with State Business Travel

For in-state and out-of-state trips that combine personal travel with state business travel, reimbursement will not exceed the amount of what it would have cost the state if the traveler did not combine personal travel with business travel. Combining State travel with personal travel does not in and of itself provide justification for using a private vehicle rather than a state-owned vehicle.

For out-of-state trips between points where scheduled airline service is available and where travelers are combining official state travel with a holiday, weekend trip, vacation or other personal travel, payment will be based on the cost of round-trip coach airfare and the meal and lodging per diems to which personnel would have been entitled while traveling by air or by the least expensive reasonable means of travel.

When combining personal travel and state business travel, baggage and luggage fees should be allocated accordingly and be reasonable under the circumstances.