

126-1-02

Rates and requirements for reimbursement of travel expenses of state agents.**(A) Definitions**

- (1) "Compensation" means payment for services rendered, whether made on an hourly, per diem, salaried, or fee basis but does not include reimbursement of travel expenses.
- (2) "Headquarters" means the office address at which a state agent has his/her primary work assignment or if a state agent's primary work assignment involves regularly scheduled travel, the place from which he/she can most effectively carry out his/her assigned duties.
- (3) "Continental U.S. travel" means travel within the United States and Canada.
- (4) "Out of country travel" means travel outside of the United States and Canada.
- (5) "Reimbursable travel expenses" means the following expenses, in addition to lodging, meals, and transportation, which are actually incurred as a necessary part of approved travel:
 - (a) Miscellaneous transportation expenses including parking charges, road tolls, and other reasonably incurred transportation expenses directly related to authorized travel, provided such expenses are listed separately on a state agent's travel expense report;
 - (b) Commercial transportation expenses paid by the state agent. A receipt shall be required for each individual ride in a commercial vehicle if the total per trip is over twenty-five dollars;
 - (c) Registration fees paid by the state agent. A receipt is required for all registration fees paid;
 - (d) Telephone, facsimile, internet, and other similar charges paid by the state agent for official state business. A receipt shall be required for any single charge over twenty-five dollars. State agents shall first use any free internet services offered prior to incurring internet expenses.
 - (e) If the state agent is in overnight lodging for more than one week including a weekend, miscellaneous living and business expenses for laundry, dry cleaning, personal telephone calls, postage, and other expenses. Receipts are required for all miscellaneous living and business expenses exceeding one dollar.
- (6) "Non-reimbursable travel expenses" include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) Alcoholic beverages purchased by the state agent;

(b) Entertainment expenses paid by the state agent;

(c) Personal expenses incurred during travel that are primarily for the benefit of the state agent and not directly related to the official purpose of the travel . Examples include, but are not limited to, the purchase of personal hygiene items, magazines or books, movie rentals, and other miscellaneous items;

(d) Political expenses paid by the state agent;

(e) Travel insurance expenses paid by the state agent;

(f) The cost of traffic fines and parking tickets.

(7) "State agency" means every organized body, office, or agency established by the laws of the state for the exercise of any function of state government which uses money that has been appropriated to it directly and whose officers, members, or employees are not excluded under paragraph (A)(8) of this rule.

(8) "State agent" means any officer, member, or employee of a state agency whose compensation is paid, in whole or in part, from state funds but shall not include:

(a) Any officer, member, employee of, or consultant to the general assembly, supreme court, court of appeals, court of claims, any agency of these, or any state university or college as defined in division (A)(1) of section 3345.12 of the Revised Code; and

(b) Any volunteer serving without compensation.

(9) "Travel at state expense" means travel expenses which are paid from moneys appropriated directly to a state agency by the general assembly.

(B) Authority for travel and reimbursement

(1) Authority for travel

All travel by state agents at state expense or on paid travel status must be authorized by the head of a state agency or his/her designee. Travel may be authorized only for official state business and only if the state agency has the financial resources to reimburse the state agent for travel expenses. State agents who are traveling or who are on paid travel status must, at all times, use prudent judgment in the use of state resources, incurring only those

expenses necessary to carry out the official business of the state.

(2) Reporting requirements

(a) A state agent who has traveled at state expense and is requesting reimbursement of his/her travel expenses by a state agency shall report his/her travel expenses on a travel expense form as prescribed by the office of budget and management. A state agent shall complete the travel expense form within thirty days after incurring travel expenses. A completed travel expense form and request for reimbursement may be denied by the office of budget and management for reasons including, but not limited to, a state agent's failure to complete the form in a timely, accurate, and/or truthful manner.

(b) A state agent shall obtain and provide all receipts required by this rule.

(c) At no time shall a state agent claim or be reimbursed more than his/her actual travel expenses.

(3) Approval of travel expense report

When the head of a state agency or his/her designee approves of a state agent's completed travel expense report, such action constitutes certification of the propriety of the reimbursement of such state agent's travel expenses. The head of a state agency or his/her designee may require any reasonable form of verification of an expense, in addition to or in lieu of the receipts required under this rule, if he/she determines that additional verification is necessary to his/her certification of the propriety of the reimbursement or if required receipts are not available.

(4) Reimbursement of expenses

A state agent shall be reimbursed for his/her travel expenses as authorized by this rule upon approval by the head of a state agency or his/her designee.

(5) Retention of report and required receipts and submission of copies to the office of budget and management

The state agency shall retain any reports and the original receipts required by this rule. As specified by the office of budget and management, electronically imaged or paper copies shall be submitted to the office of budget and management. Unless otherwise specified in this rule, all receipts required by this rule shall be submitted to the office of budget and management, and the office of budget and management may specify the manner in which receipts shall be submitted.

(6) Direct payment to vendor

Instead of reimbursing a state agent for his/her travel expenses, a state agency may make direct payment to a vendor who provides travel services for the state agent. A direct payment shall comply with the applicable rates and requirements specified in this rule.

(C) Transportation expenses

The head of a state agency or his/her designee shall, subject to the discretion of the office of budget and management, determine the appropriate mode or modes of transportation to be utilized by a state agent.

(1) Travel by state-owned automobile

Travel by state-owned automobile is authorized only for state agents and for other parties who are properly designated by a state agency and endorsed onto insurance coverage through the department of administrative services. Reimbursement is authorized for incurred service expenses necessary to the efficient and safe operation of a state-owned automobile. The names of all persons traveling in the same state-owned automobile and names of their respective state agencies shall be listed on any travel expense report.

(2) Travel by privately owned automobile

Travel by privately owned automobile is authorized only if the owner thereof is insured under a policy of liability insurance complying with the requirements of section 4509.51 of the Revised Code. Reimbursement of mileage expenses incurred on state business is authorized at the internal revenue service's business standard mileage rate.

A state agent shall not be reimbursed for mileage commuting from his/her residence to his/her headquarters nor from his/her headquarters to his/her residence. For example, if a state agent's normal commute from his/her residence to his/her headquarters is ten miles, and a state agent commutes from his/her residence to his authorized destination is thirty miles, the state agent shall only be reimbursed for twenty miles.

Travel expense reports shall indicate all intermediate destinations (i.e., specify intermediate towns and cities but not stops within a town or city) between the commencement and termination of travel as well as all vicinity mileage after arrival at destination. Reimbursement shall be made to only one of two or more state agents traveling in the same privately owned automobile, and the names of their respective state agencies shall be listed on the travel expense report.

(3) Travel by common carrier

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (C)(3)(c) of this rule, travel by common carrier is authorized. Reimbursement is authorized at the lowest available rate with the following exceptions for international trade missions and shows in which both private business representatives and state agency representatives are participating. Business class air travel is authorized for state agents who are participating in such missions or shows. When an international flight serves as a state agent's overnight accommodation and the state agent's day of arrival in a foreign country is a workday, the head of the state agency may authorize business class travel for the state agent.

(b) State funds shall not be expended to pay for unused reservations on common carriers unless the state agency is satisfied that failure to cancel or use the reservation was unavoidable.

(c) Travel within the state of Ohio by common air carrier at the lowest available rate is authorized for elected officials, directors, assistant directors, deputy directors, board and commission members, and heads of state agencies. State employees not listed above are authorized to travel within the state of Ohio by common air carrier at the lowest available rate only if flying is more economical than other modes of travel.

(4) Car rental

Reimbursement is authorized for car rental only if car rental is more economical than any other mode of transportation or if the state agent's destination is not easily accessible by any other available mode of transportation.

(5) Required receipts for transportation expenses

Except as otherwise provided, receipts are required for all service expenses incurred in connection with the operation of state-owned automobiles; all common carrier expenses; and all miscellaneous transportation expenses exceeding ten dollars. If a state agent accumulates transportation expenses of twenty-five dollars or more in one day, all receipts are required.

(D) Meal expenses

(1) Reimbursement for meals for state agents is authorized only when overnight lodging is required. State agents are expected to pro-rate per diem on travel days based upon his/her travel schedule. The standard meal and incidental reimbursement per diem rates (including tips) are set forth below:

<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Six dollars</u>
<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Nine dollars</u>
<u>Dinner</u>	<u>Twelve dollars</u>
<u>Incidentals</u>	<u>Four dollars</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>Thirty-One dollars</u>

The per diem is designed to offset the additional cost of travel, not to entirely pay for the state agent's meal. The amount of reimbursement shall be adjusted on departure and return days based on the time of departure and return. Where overnight lodging is required but where a state agent is on travel status for less than a full day, reimbursement for meals on the day of departure and day of return is limited to the following:

- (a) Per diem up to a maximum rate of ten dollars if the state agent is on travel status any time after midnight but no later than ten a.m.;
 - (b) Per diem up to a maximum rate of thirteen dollars if the state agent is on travel status any time after ten a.m. but no later than four p.m.;
 - (c) Per diem up to a maximum rate of sixteen dollars if the state agent is on travel status any time after four p.m. but no later than midnight;
 - (d) On the day of departure or return, if the state agent is on travel status for more than one of the above specified time periods, meal reimbursement is authorized in the amount of the total of the individual meal amounts specified for those time periods, plus incidentals. Reimbursement of that total amount does not require an allocation for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Meal reimbursement in that total amount may be allocated for meals as the state agent chooses.
- (2) The per diem amount may be updated annually according to the federal per diem schedule. The office of budget and management shall periodically post the current federal per diem schedule on its website.
- (3) The head of a state agency or his/her designee may require that amounts claimed for meal expenses shall be supported by receipts although meal receipts may not be required under this rule, and the original receipts shall be submitted to the state agency.

(E) Lodging

- (1) Continental U.S.

Reimbursement for lodging in commercial establishments is authorized per state agent per calendar day at actual cost up to the maximum rate of eighty dollars plus applicable taxes on the entire room, or the lowest available government rate in the area with approval from the head of the state agency or his/her designee.

(2) Out of country

Reimbursement for lodging in commercial establishments is authorized per state agent per calendar day at actual cost when such cost is reasonable as determined by the head of a state agency or his/her designee.

(3) Receipts are required for all lodging expenses.

(4) Overnight lodging may be reimbursed only when the state agent is traveling on official state business and is either:

(a) At a location greater than forty-five miles of both the state agent's residence and headquarters, or;

(b) At a location greater than thirty miles of both the state agent's residence and headquarters for conference purposes.

(F) Conferences

Reimbursement is authorized for conference registration fees and conference expenses as follows:

(1) Registration fees

Conference registration fees may be reimbursed to the state agent, or conference registration fees may be paid directly by a state agency in advance of the conference. If the registration fee includes any meals, the state agent shall not be reimbursed for those same meals under paragraph (D) of this rule, and any amount reimbursed to the state agent under paragraph (D) of this rule for meals shall be adjusted accordingly.

(2) Conference meals

If a conference includes or provides a meal, the state agent shall not be reimbursed for that same meal under paragraph (D) of this rule.

When meals are included with registration expense, the number and type of meals must be identified by the state agent. If a meal is offered as part of a conference and the state agent has medical restrictions, the state agent should make every effort to have the conference facilitate his or her needs. If the

conference does not honor the request, the state agent is not required to deduct the applicable meal allowance from the per diem, but must include documentation explaining the situation.

(3) Conference lodging

Lodging at the conference site or lodging at a hotel identified in the conference registration materials as one of the conference hotels may be reimbursed at actual cost, provided such cost is reasonable as determined by the head of a state agency or his/her designee.

(4) Required receipts for conference expenses

Receipts are required for conference registration fees, conference meals not included in a registration fee where overnight lodging is authorized, conference lodging, and miscellaneous conference expenses exceeding one dollar.

(5) Instead of reimbursing a state agent for his/her conference expenses, a state agency may make direct payment to a vendor who provides conference services for the state agent.

(G) Agency contractors

A state agency may not authorize reimbursement of travel, lodging, and meal expenses incurred by agency contractors per this travel rule for state agents.

(H) Exceptions

(1) Upon written request submitted to the director of budget and management by the head of a state agency or his/her designee prior to the expense being incurred, the director of the office of budget and management may grant exceptions to this rule only for travel by law enforcement officials, insurance examiners, state agents on continuous travel status for two or more consecutive days, state agents requiring special travel arrangements due to a disability, and state agents whose workday is other than eight a.m. to five p.m. or if state agents whose in-state travel and lodging arrangements are economically advantageous to the state. Other exceptions may be granted upon a written request submitted to the director of budget and management by the head of a state agency or his/her designee prior to the expense being incurred or, at the director's discretion, after the expense has been incurred. No exception shall remain in effect for more than one fiscal year.

(I) Amendment to this rule

An amendment to this rule applies to travel on or after the effective date of the

amendment.

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Certification

Date

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