

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.
- (3) "Continental U.S. travel" means travel within the Continental United States, including the lower forty-eight states, excluding Hawaii and Alaska.
- (4) "International travel" means travel outside of the Continental United States, including Hawaii and Alaska.
- (5) "Reimbursable travel expenses" means those expenses which are actually incurred as a necessary part of approved travel. In addition to lodging, meals, per diem, and mileage, it includes:
 - (a) Miscellaneous transportation expenses such as 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 reimbursement request;
 - (b) Commercial transportation expenses paid by the state agent such as taxi cabs, automobile rental, airfare, ferries, subways, bus, trains, and other commercial transportation providers;
 - (c) Registration fees paid by the state agent for professional events such as conferences, seminars, and meetings ;
 - (d) Miscellaneous business expenses such as telephone, facsimile, internet, and other similar charges paid by the state agent for official state business;
 - (e) Miscellaneous living expenses such as laundry, dry cleaning, personal telephone calls, and postage.
- (6) "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, but does not include 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 .
- (7) "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 does not include any volunteer serving without compensation:
- (8) "Travel at state expense" means travel expenses which are paid from moneys appropriated directly to a state agency by the general assembly, but does not include travel by a state agent where expenses are paid pursuant to rule 102-3-08 of the Administrative Code.
- (9) "Receipt" means the original document provided by a service provider or merchant that indicates the merchant's name, date of purchase, transaction amount, and line item detail identifying the service or goods provided.
- (10) "Supporting documentation" means documents that validate expense claims to include, but not limited to the following:
 - (a) Conference material provided by the conference organizer.

(b) Formal meeting agenda provided by the meeting organizer.

(c) Currency exchange rate as evidenced by a foreign currency exchange receipt, bank or credit card statement, or the exchange rate issued by an authoritative source such as "OANDA" (<http://www.oanda.com/currency/historical-rates/>) for the travel period. Expenses shall be recorded on the travel expense report in U.S. dollars. Reimbursements authorized by this rule will be made in U.S. dollars. The original itemized receipt and the currency exchange rate documentation described in this rule is required.

(d) State agency authorizations.

(11) "Conference" means a prearranged gathering with a formal agenda, for consultation or exchange of information or discussion that benefits the state, such as seminars, meetings, and other professional events.

(12) "Paid travel status" means the designation given to a state agent who is traveling on behalf of the state and is in an active pay status.

(B) Authority for travel and reimbursement

(1) Authority for travel

All state agents traveling at state expense or on paid travel status must be authorized prior to travel 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 at state expense 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 by a state agency of his/her travel expenses shall report his/her travel expenses as prescribed by the office of budget and management. A state agent shall submit the travel expense reimbursement request within sixty days of the last date of travel. This time frame may be extended by the head of the state agency or his/her designee if mitigating circumstances exist, but in no case may this time frame exceed one hundred twenty days from the last date of travel. A completed request for travel expense reimbursement may be denied by the office of budget and management for reasons including, but not limited to, a state agent's failure to submit the request in a timely, accurate, or truthful manner.

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

(c) At no time shall a state agent claim or be reimbursed more than is allowable under this rule.

(3) Approval of travel

When the head of a state agency or his/her designee approves of a state agent's travel, 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 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. Reimbursement for travel

expenses shall be via electronic funds transfer to the same bank account that a state agent has established for receipt of his/her compensation in accordance with section 124.151 of the Revised Code.

(5) Submission of receipts

As specified by the office of budget and management, original or a legible electronic copy of receipts shall be submitted to the office of budget and management.

(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 reimbursement request.

(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 a rate up to the internal revenue service's business standard mileage rate, within the discretion of the director of the office of budget and management. The reimbursement rate for mileage expenses incurred on state business may not fall below forty-five cents per mile, unless the internal revenue service's business standard mileage rate falls below forty-five cents per mile, in which case the director may lower the reimbursement rate below forty-five cents per mile. The director of the office of budget and management will review the appropriate mileage reimbursement rate on a quarterly basis.

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. If a state agent is required to report to a location other than his/her headquarters, the state agent will only be reimbursed for the distance from his/her residence to the alternate location less the state agent's normal commute. For example, if a state agent's normal commute from his/her residence to his/her headquarters is ten miles, and a state agent's commute from his/her residence to his/her 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 reimbursement request.

(3) Travel by commercial transportation

- (a) Travel by commercial transportation is authorized at the lowest available rate. When any segment of travel by commercial transportation exceeds eight hours, 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 with commercial transportation unless the state agency is satisfied that failure to cancel or use the reservation was unavoidable. State agency authorization shall be required as supporting documentation.
- (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 in this paragraph 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.
- (d) Reimbursement is authorized for automobile rental if automobile rental is more economical than any other mode of transportation or if the state agent's destination is not easily accessible by any other mode of transportation. The state agent must purchase liability insurance and loss damage waiver for accidents arising out of the operation or use of the automobile and include that cost in determining whether the automobile rental is the most economical mode of transportation.

(4) 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 commercial transportation expenses, and all miscellaneous transportation expenses exceeding ten dollars.

(D) Meal, incidental, and miscellaneous expenses within the Continental U.S.

(1) Restrictions and reimbursement per diem

Meals and incidental per diem for state agents is authorized only when overnight lodging is required. State agents may receive per diem for meal and incidental expenses in accordance with the per diem rates established by the U.S. general services administration (www.gsa.gov), which is based on the lodging location. Per diem is designed to offset the additional cost of travel, not to entirely pay for the state agent's meal and incidental expenses. The amount of per diem shall be adjusted on departure and return days based upon the time of departure and return. The standard meal and incidental expenses allowance is based on a full day of official travel (twenty-four hours) within the continental U.S. Where overnight lodging is required and where a state agent is on travel status for less than a full day, the meal and incidental expenses rate for the departure and return days shall be pro-rated as follows:

- (a) Twenty-five per cent of the standard meal and incidental expenses allowance if the state agent is on travel status for less than six hours;
- (b) Fifty per cent of the standard meal and incidental expenses allowance if the state agent is on travel status for six hours but less than twelve hours;
- (c) Seventy-five per cent of the standard meal and incidental expenses allowance if the state agent is on travel status for twelve hours but less than eighteen hours;
- (d) One hundred per cent of the standard meal and incidental expenses allowance if the state agent is on travel status for eighteen hours but less than twenty-four hours.
- (e) Notwithstanding the restrictions provided in paragraph (D)(1) of this rule, where a state

agency elects to schedule a state agent to travel out of state by air travel and schedules a return flight for the same day, meals and incidental per diem is authorized; however, the meal and incidental expenses shall be pro-rated as provided in paragraphs (D)(1)(a) to (D)(1)(d) of this rule.

- (2) Incidental expenses included in the per diem allowance are listed as follows and are thus not separately reimbursable:
 - (a) All gratuities given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, flight attendants, ship attendants, taxi drivers, wait staff and all other services related to the hospitality industry ;
 - (b) Any transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the temporary lodging or business site;
 - (c) Mailing costs associated with filing travel reimbursement requests.
- (3) A receipt shall be required for any single miscellaneous business expenses charge over ten dollars. State agents shall first use any free internet or phone services prior to incurring these expenses.
- (4) If the state agent is in overnight status in the continental U.S. for more than one week, including a weekend, miscellaneous living expenses will be reimbursed when such expense is reasonable as determined by the head of the state agency or his/her designee. Receipts shall be required for all miscellaneous living expenses.

(E) Meal, incidental, and miscellaneous expenses outside the continental U.S. (international)

- (1) A state agent traveling outside the continental U.S., assigned to a foreign office, or otherwise on approved international travel status, including international conferences, shall be entitled to reimbursement of meals and meal gratuities up to twenty per cent of the cost of the meal at actual cost when such cost is reasonable as determined by the head of the state agency or his/her designee.
- (2) If the state agent is in overnight international travel status for more than one week, including a weekend, miscellaneous living expenses will be reimbursed when such expense is reasonable as determined by the head of the state agency or his/her designee.
- (3) Receipts shall be required for international travel expenses, which include commercial transportation, lodging, meal, meal gratuities, and miscellaneous living expenses. Currency exchange rates shall be provided as supporting documentation.
- (4) A receipt shall be required for any single miscellaneous business expense charge exceeding ten dollars. State agents shall first use any free internet or phone services prior to incurring these expenses. Currency exchange rates shall be provided as supporting documentation.

(F) Lodging

- (1) Continental U.S.

In accordance with the per diem rates established by the U.S. general services administration, reimbursement of expenses incurred while on official travel status within the continental U.S. is authorized per state agent per calendar day for lodging in commercial establishments . at actual cost up to the maximum allowable lodging rate for that location, plus applicable taxes on the entire room.

- (2) Outside the continental U.S. (international)

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. The currency exchange rate shall be provided as supporting documentation.

(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 from both the state agent's residence and headquarters, or;

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

(G) 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 event. If the registration fee includes any meals, the state agent shall not be reimbursed for those same meals under paragraphs (D) and (E) of this rule, and any amount reimbursed to the state agent under paragraphs (D) and (E) of this rule for meals shall be adjusted accordingly.

(2) Meal and incidental

If the event includes or provides a meal, the state agent shall not be reimbursed for that same meal under paragraphs (D) and (E) of this rule. State agents shall receive per diem for any meals not provided by the event and incidentals at the rate prescribed by the U.S. general services administration.

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 the event 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 event 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) Lodging

Lodging at the event site or lodging at a hotel identified in the event registration materials as one of the event 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 expenses exceeding ten dollars. Any applicable conference materials such as agendas, brochures or otherwise shall be required as supporting documentation.

(5) Direct payment

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

(H) Agency contractors

State agencies desiring to reimburse travel, lodging, and meal expenses should negotiate such reimbursement with the contractor or vendor when negotiating the cost of the contract, but shall not negotiate rates higher than those authorized by this rule.

(I) Non-reimbursable travel expenses

"Non-reimbursable travel expense" include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Alcoholic beverages purchased by the state agent;
- (2) Entertainment expenses paid by the state agent;
- (3) Incidental expenses, which include 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;
- (4) Political expenses paid by the state agent;
- (5) Travel insurance expenses paid by the state agent; for purposes of this paragraph, the use of the term "travel insurance expense" does not mean liability coverage and loss damage waiver expenses incurred in renting an automobile pursuant to paragraph (C)(3)(d) of this rule.
- (6) The cost of traffic fines and parking tickets.

(J) Exceptions may be requested by submitting a written request 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.

(K) 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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