

Attached is the updated Travel Reimbursement Guideline for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (the “District”). Below are some of the highlights:

- The following groups of employees must attend mandatory training around travel reimbursement guidelines: Senior Leadership Team, Executive Assistants and any employee who traveled multiple times in the prior fiscal year
- **Receipts are required for all requested reimbursement**
- The new rate for meal reimbursement is \$46.00 per day and is broken down as follows: Breakfast \$11.00, Lunch \$12.00 and Dinner \$23.00. There is no longer an in-state and out-of-state rate for meal reimbursements.
- If an event/conference provides meals then the meal allocation is not applicable for reimbursement
- If an employee elects to travel by vehicle in lieu of travel by air, an employee will only be reimbursed up to the lowest amount of the airline ticket. For example, if an employee elects to drive to Charlotte, N.C., the employee will only be reimbursed \$423.00 since that is the current cost of a plane ticket.
- Due to Federal Guidelines, gratuities are not an allowable expense for reimbursement
- Hotel lodging within the Greater Cleveland area (Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage and Summit Counties) will not be reimbursed. If a department is having a retreat within this area that requires, an overnight stay then hotel reimbursement is allowed.
- Employees may not benefit from frequent flier miles, discounts or free hotel accommodations or rental car discounts that may be earned during travel on official district business
- Mileage reimbursements to employees will be calculated from the participants’ residence or worksite to the event, whichever distance is less costly for the District.

Any questions regarding reimbursements should be directed to the Accounts Payable Department

Thank you,

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Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Travel Reimbursement Guidelines

Effective January 1, 2017

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINE

To help manage and facilitate travel request and reimbursement processes, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (the "District") has issued this Travel Reimbursement Guideline (the "Guideline"). The purpose of this Guideline is to provide guidance regarding the rules and regulations governing travel by District employees effective August 1, 2016. Reasonable, essential travel expenses incurred by employees of the District affiliated with their official duties may be paid by the District, subject to the terms of this Guideline.

While this Guideline is designed to provide guidance, it is also issued to prevent abuses, foster accountability, and ensure appropriate levels of reimbursement related to business travel to authorized events. Business travel means all authorized travel related to official employee duties. Events means all authorized activities including conferences, workshops, seminars, formal meetings, training, and any other similar professional development events.

Reimbursement Procedure

Employees have the option of paying for all travel costs up front and applying for reimbursement after returning from the trip. To get reimbursement, the employee must complete and submit the **Direct Payment Request and Employee Expense Statement** form along with all supporting documentation to the Accounts Payable Department. Travel expenses must be substantiated by original receipts with itemization of purchases

In lieu of paying all travel costs up front, an employee may enter a Purchase Order for the cost of the registration, airfare and hotel in advance for these expenses. The District currently uses the services of Uniglobe Travel Designers (vendor number 17145) for their airfare and hotel booking needs. Uniglobe Travel Designers may be contacted by phone at (614) 237-4488 or through their website at <http://www.uniglobetraveldesigners.com>.

The employee leave of absence form for all travel must be approved in advance of the travel day in order to get expense reimbursements. Employees should submit a copy of this approved form along with the agenda from the event that they attended with their reimbursement package.

All travel claims should be properly filed within 30 days of returning from a trip. If traveling on grant dollars, reimbursement must be filed in the same fiscal year as the trip.

Ethical Restrictions

Ohio law prohibits a state official or employee from accepting, soliciting, or using his/her position to secure any personal benefit which stems from the conduct of District business. Any benefits which arise from the official business which the state District conducts must accrue to the District, rather than to any public official or employee personally, and an official or employee cannot benefit personally from business the District conducts. For example, an employee cannot benefit from frequent flier miles, discounts or free hotel accommodations or rental car discounts that may be earned during travel on official District business. Please consult the [Ohio Ethics Commission - Frequent Flyer Advisory Opinion](#), [Ohio Ethics Commission - Travel Hints](#), and [Fly America Act](#) for further information.

Exceptions and Additional Provisions

Certain exceptions to regulations in this Guideline may be allowed for Board Members and Chiefs.

Employees will be held responsible for all unauthorized costs and additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.

The District does not intend to address every issue, exception, or contingency that may arise in the course of travel with the Guideline. All questions regarding reimbursements should be directed to the Accounts Payable Department.

I. MEALS

- A. Actual expenditures for meals will only be reimbursed with the original itemized receipt. A tear-off from the bottom of a restaurant check and/or credit card slip is not an itemized receipt.
- B. While traveling on District business, meal reimbursements are limited to a maximum of \$46.00 per day broken down by meals. Breakfast is \$11.00, Lunch is \$12.00 and Dinner is \$23.00. Breakfast is not allowed on the initial day of travel unless you depart prior to 7:00 am. Dinner is not allowed on the return date unless it is after 6:00 pm.
- C. The approved meal reimbursement rate in the Guideline is based off the United States General Services Administration (“GSA”) rate schedule as of July 1, 2016 and is subject to change. Reimbursements will not exceed the published rates unless approved by the Accounts Payable Department. Please refer to the current Meals and Incidental Expenses page located at www.gsa.gov/mie. According to Ohio Administrative Code § 126-1-02(I), alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed. This includes room service meals.
- D. If an employee chooses to order room service, delivery charges or charges associated with room service will not be reimbursed. Only the cost of the meal will be accepted. Employees are required to provide an itemized receipt prior to reimbursement.
- E. Due to Federal Guidelines, gratuities are not an allowable expense to be reimbursed
- F. If the employee is attending an event/conference where a breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner is provided, then the meal allocation for the breakfast, lunch and/or dinner, per the regulations, is not applicable for reimbursement. Duplicate meals shall not be reimbursed.

II. LODGING AND ACCOMMODATIONS

- A. The District will reimburse for the lowest rate available under the standard room rate or government, corporate, conference, or other discounted rate.
- B. Accommodations for lodging will be reimbursed at the single-occupancy rate
- C. Hotel accommodations the night before or after an event will only be reimbursed if reasonable travel accommodations the same day are not available.
- D. The District will not reimburse for Mini-bar usage or for movies purchased.
- E. Hotel lodging within the greater Cleveland area (Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage and Summit Counties) will not be reimbursed.

- F. Employees shall use any free internet prior to incurring any charge for Internet access fees. Internet access fees from a hotel while on travel status is reimbursable with receipts.
- G. Telephone calls for official business, whether local or long distance, or for the reservation of rooms, meals, or transportation will be reimbursed.

III. TRANSPORTATION

- A. The use of air, train, bus, rental, or private vehicle shall be selected on the basis of the most reasonable and appropriate method – taking into account distance, time, and total costs.
- B. Air Travel
 - i. The District will reimburse the lowest available coach or economy fare and will not authorize reimbursement for any airline seats incurring additional costs above the lowest available rate, including the equivalent of first class or business class, and all upgraded seat assignments, such as rows with extra leg room.
 - ii. Employee shall book air travel, whenever possible, well in advance of the travel dates in order to obtain the lowest fare possible.
 - iii. Change fees and cancellation fees will be reimbursed. However, if the change or cancellation is due to personal reasons, the fees will not be reimbursed.
 - iv. One checked bag per flight will be reimbursed with original receipts.
- C. Automobile Travel
 - i. An employee electing to travel by automobile in lieu of travel by air will only be reimbursed up to the lowest amount of an airline ticket. If vehicle travel is less expensive than air travel, the employee will only be eligible for the rate per mile.
 - ii. Rental cars may only be reimbursed with proper receipts. The size and type of vehicle must be consistent with the number of passengers.
 - iii. Gasoline may only be reimbursed for rental cars. Receipts must be provided for reimbursement of this item. No one may receive gasoline reimbursement for personal cars. This is covered in the mileage rate.
 - iv. No reimbursement for personal use mileage of a rental car shall be authorized. Insurance coverage of a District preapproved rental is provided. If you fail to get preapproval for a rental car prior to your trip, the District will not reimburse the cost of insurance coverage.
 - i. Employees using their personal vehicle for business travel will be reimbursed at the current District mileage rate (as of \$0.535 per mile). Mileage reimbursement includes the cost of gas, oil, insurance, repairs and general maintenance. All mileage reimbursements should be submitted at least every three months and must be submitted in the same fiscal year.
 - ii. The rate of reimbursement for mileage will be equal to the District established rate at the time of travel, will be subject to change, and is not to exceed the IRS mileage rate. Travel should be the most direct and economical route.

- iii. Mileage reimbursements to participants will be calculated from the participant's place of residence or worksite to the event, whichever distance is less costly for the District. Mileage to the site will be determined by using the Ohio Department of Transportation or similar online mileage tool.
- iv. If more than one person is approved to attend the same event and transportation will be by personal car, it is encouraged that they travel together. Mileage will be reimbursed to the driver only.
- v. The District is not responsible for any physical damage to an employee automobile, including any physical damage deductibles.

D. Other Transportation Fees

- i. Employees should attempt to obtain the lowest commercial transportation fare to the travel location for reimbursement. Commercial transportation, including but not limited to public transportation, taxis, real-time rideshares (i.e. Uber, Lyft, etc.), shuttles, and mass transit, incurred for travel to and from the airport, event location and the hotel will be reimbursed with an original receipt. The District will not provide reimbursement for commercial transportation to social events and activities that are not directly involved with the event.
- ii. Due to Federal Guidelines, gratuities are not an allowable expense to be reimbursed.
- iii. Toll expenses incurred as a result of travel directly related to the authorized travel will be reimbursed if an original receipt is provided.
- iv. Valet parking is not reimbursable if self-parking is available
- v. Original receipts are required for reimbursement of airport and hotel parking fees
- vi. Fines incurred for parking and traffic violations are not reimbursable.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

- A. Miscellaneous expenses not described above, but directly attributable to, and are reasonable within the approved travel are reimbursed by the District, if properly documented and approved by the Accounts Payable Department.
- B. The District may reimburse the cost of the registration for an event with a copy of the original receipt/invoice. The event registration receipt should show whether meals will be included with the registration cost.
- C. No reimbursement will be made if gift cards or bonus coupons are used at the time of purchase. Discounts will be subtracted from the total before reimbursement. Items being submitted for reimbursement must be on a separate receipt from any personal purchases.