

The Workforce Connection

Subject: TRAVEL

Reference Number: 2016-100-03

Approved:

Effective:

Status:

Modifications: Ongoing
05/01/07-Name Change

Purpose/Introduction:

The purpose of the General Travel Policy is to establish policies and procedures governing the travel activities of The Workforce Connection, Inc. members, staff, and partners /stakeholders whose travel expenses will be paid from Workforce Board grant funds.

References: None

Background: This policy was established to clearly identify allowable costs that may be allocated as travel expenses under Workforce Board grant funds and the procedures established to properly file claims.

Responsible Party:

Authority and Responsibility:

- A. The Executive Director has the authority to approve travel requests for Workforce Board staff.
- B. Prior approval of travel of the Executive Director for in-State meetings (IWP and other Workforce Board and Business related meetings) and the National Association of Workforce Boards Annual Forum is established during the budget process and is not required on a case-by-case basis.
- C. Travel Reimbursement requests of the Executive Director for all travel must be signed by an officer of the Workforce Board.
- D. Travel requests of Board Members will be approved by Board leadership.
- E. The Executive Director is responsible for managing the travel budget of the Board and Board staff.

Definitions:

The following terms are used throughout the General Travel Policy:

Allowance: A fixed amount of money permitted.

Duty Post: The place where the employee spends the largest portion of the regular workday or working time.

Hours Worked: In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) non-exempt employees may be eligible to have some hours counted as “hours worked” while in travel status. “Hours worked” may generally be counted under the following circumstances:

1. Travel that occurs during the employee’s workday; this may include travel from job site to job site.
2. When travel out of the two county areas is required and an overnight stay is not required; all time spent traveling between the two destinations may count as “hours worked.” However, time spent traveling between an airport or other stations and the employee’s residence during the employee’s departure or return is not considered “hours worked.”

3. When travel out of the two county areas requires an overnight stay; time spent traveling to the destination is counted as “hours worked” only to the extent that it coincides with the employee’s regular work hours. Travel which occurs outside of the employee’s regular work hours may not be counted as “hours worked” unless the employee performs work for the Workforce Board while in travel status.

Incidental Expenses: Expenses of a minor nature related to business or to the traveler’s activities while in travel status.

Lodging Rate: The base rate defined by the vendor prior to the application of taxes, etc.

Meals: Foods served and eaten in one sitting. These include breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Continental breakfasts which only include donuts, bagels, muffins, juice, coffee, etc., are not considered a meal for the purposes of this policy.

Non-reimbursable Expenses: Expenses generated by the traveler which are not considered to be essential.

Per Diem: A daily allowance for lodging (excluding taxes), meals, and related incidental expenses.

Pre-Paid Expenses: Any expense paid prior to the completion of travel.

Travel Expenses: Costs for registration, transportation, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses directly related to travel.

Travel Status: When an Employee or Workforce Board Member is conducting appropriately approved, necessary business at least 50 miles away from his designated duty post or residence.

Policy:

- a. Travel is warranted when personal contact is the most effective method of conducting official business.
- b. The purpose of the travel must be related to Workforce Board business activities.
- c. Travel must be completed within the annual budget as approved by the Board and Chief Elected Officials.
- d. All authorized travelers, when representing The Workforce Connection, Inc. in travel status, may claim allowances and expenses and be reimbursed as provided by law and policy.
- e. Claims for unauthorized travel expenses will not be honored and are not reimbursable.
- f. The travel must be at least 50 miles away from the traveler’s designated duty post.
- g. A local conference and/or seminar are not considered travel.
- h. Attendance at conferences, seminars, and meetings should only be approved with essential contact can be made or significant information obtained which is important to the operation of the Board and programs.
- i. The Board should send the fewest number of individuals possible to the same seminar, conference, or meeting.
- j. Travel will be arranged by the Board Assistant.
- k. Under no circumstances shall expenses for personal travel be charged to, or be temporarily funded by, The Workforce Connection, Inc. or fiscal agent.
- l. Travelers who knowingly and willfully submit falsified travel claims shall be subject to any action deemed necessary by Board leadership, which may include criminal action.

Travel Guidelines:

- **Most Economical Plan**

To maximize the effectiveness of resources allocated to travel activities, all travel plans should be a combination of the most economical and safest travel, lodging and costs of employee time. Employees are encouraged to maximize the use of available reduced fares; use public transportation if possible when traveling into Chicago; and make travel arrangements in sufficient time to take advantage of “early bird” registrations and available room block rates.
- **Foreign Travel**

OMB cost principles for non-profit organizations state “Direct charges for foreign travel costs are allowable only when the travel has received prior approval of the awarding agency. Each separate foreign trip must receive such approval. For purposes of this provision, “foreign travel” includes any travel outside Canada, Mexico, the United States, and any United States territories and possessions.”
- **Extended Travel**

In the event a traveler must extend the duration of travel due to an emergency (snow storm, etc.) notification must be made to the WIB Executive Director at the traveler’s earliest opportunity.
- **Completion of Travel**

All travel documents and the completed *Travel Expense Report* must be submitted for reconciliation and reimbursement within 14 days of completion of travel. The *Travel Expense Report* must contain the appropriate signatures for processing.

Procedures:**A. Transportation**

Costs related to the use of various modes of transportation may be claimed as an expense only if receipts accompany claims. Transportation other than air or motor vehicle, such as trains or buses, may be used and is actually encouraged for travel into the Chicago area, if their use is economical and will not require excessive travel time. Travel should be limited to the most cost-effective method available giving consideration to safety and other concerns. The most economical means of transportation will be used in traveling to and from airports (i.e., bus, shuttle or taxi service, or mileage for use of personal vehicle plus parking).

1. Commercial – Air

Transportation by scheduled airlines shall be at the lowest available airfare rate at the time of the trip authorization. A fare other than the lowest rate may be used only when seats are not available at the lowest fare or air travel at a higher cost will result in an overall cost savings.

Internet booking of air flights will be used after authorization is received from the Executive Director of Rock River Training, as fiscal agent for the Workforce Board, to use the credit card; and verification is made by the Accountant of Rock River Training that funds are available on the card to cover the charges.

Any promotional benefits or material received from an airline or other commercial establishment in connection with official travel may be retained for personal use (i.e., air miles, etc). Flight insurance purchased by the traveler is not reimbursable.

2. Rented Motor Vehicles

The use of rented motor vehicles must be for the advantage of the Workforce Board and not for the personal convenience of the traveler. The use of rented motor vehicles should only be considered when rental of a vehicle would result in an overall reduction in the budget expenditure for a particular trip. The request to rent a vehicle must completely justify need and budget savings and receive prior approval. The traveler must verify that he or she holds a current driver's license and that the driver's license is not expired, suspended, revoked, etc. Rented motor vehicles are restricted to sub-compact, compact, or mid-size sedans unless a larger vehicle is necessary for cost efficiency because of the number of authorized travelers.

3. Related Transportation Costs

Related transportation costs may include:

- Gasoline – reimbursed when a rented motor vehicle is used.
- Tolls – simply list on the *Travel Expense Report*; no receipt required.
- Local Transportation – taxi, bus, etc may be reimbursed if use is in the best interest of the Board; receipts are required.
- Parking – Short-term parking may be reimbursed with a receipt.

B. Per Diem Expenses

A traveler must be in authorized travel status to be eligible for reimbursement of per diem and related travel expenses. The per diem allowance for each travel day is established on the basis of the actual amount the traveler is required to pay for lodging plus the maximum allowable rate for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE).

1. Meals and Incidental Travel Expenses (M&IE)

- a. An allowance for a meal (which includes tips) will be reimbursed utilizing the M&IE rates established by Rock River Training Corporation, fiscal agent for the Board. The traveler is not entitled to a reimbursement for a meal if it is provided free (included with lodging) or included in the conference/seminar registration fees.
- b. Fees and tips will be reimbursed at a combined total of \$2.00 per day for each day that the traveler is in travel status.
- c. Additional incidental expenses (i.e., internet, fax, copies) may be reimbursed if they are related to WIB business and are accompanied by a receipt.
- d. Non-reimbursable expenses cannot be claimed. The following expenses are examples of non-reimbursable expenses: in-room movies; valet service; valet parking; liquor; and entertainment.

2. Lodging

- a. Lodging costs incurred within 50 miles of the traveler's designated duty post or residence or within Boone, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties cannot be claimed as a travel expense unless the lodging is in the best interest of the Workforce Board and has been pre-approved.
- b. Lodging must be at a commercial establishment, and the traveler should always request the lowest available rate (i.e. government, corporate, conference). If possible, and upon authorization by the Executive Director of Rock River Training, as fiscal agent for the Workforce Board, the Rock River Training Corporation credit card will be utilized once verification is made by the Accountant of Rock River Training that funds are available on the card to cover the charges.
- c. A receipt for lodging must be listed and attached to the *Travel Expense Report*.

Action Required: This information should be disseminated to TWC Board members, staff, and partners /stakeholders whose travel expenses will be paid from Workforce Board grant funds.

Inquiries: Questions regarding any aspect of this policy should be directed to The Workforce Connection Executive Director.

Effective Date: