



# Employee Travel

## School Board Policy DEE Local states

Each District employee authorized to travel assumes, with the acceptance of that authorization, a direct responsibility to limit travel claims to those incurred on Travel that is clearly for the purpose of discharging essential official business of the District. Planning of day-to-day Travel should take into consideration the most economical means of accomplishing the authorized mission.

Administrators who are responsible for making travel arrangements and for approving travel plans have the additional responsibility of limiting travel plans to those trips that are clearly in accordance with Board policy, the District improvement plan, or official Board action.

Travel expenses and reimbursement for travel expenses must be made in accordance with the Travel section of the Finance Manual.

## Federal Guidelines (EDGAR)

All travel expenses paid with grant funds shall meet the new EDGAR requirements (200.474), such as 1) all travel costs must be reasonable and necessary; 2) all travel costs must be consistent with the District's travel policy; 3) all travel costs must be directly related to the grant award, and 4) all travel costs must meet the obligation of expenses rules.

## Employee Travel Overview

In general, "Travel" is defined as Travel both inside and outside the District boundaries where employees and students are acting as a representative of the District. In this case, the District may reimburse employees for some or all of the qualified expenses. The District does not pay Travel expenses for spouses, Non-District employees, or other related guests.

A Travel Request for Approval (hereafter referred to as a "Requisition/Travel Request") must be submitted and approved through the Travel Approval process **before** an event. All Travel Requests are approved electronically via the eFinancePlus Requisition process and submitted by the campus/department budget secretary.

The required and completed Employee Travel Request Form and Travel Acknowledgment Form must be attached to the Requisition and should be prepared **15 days before departure**. This allows time to obtain all required approvals and processing levels, including the Principal/Director on the campus/department and the corresponding Assistant Superintendent. The Travel Request is not approved until the Employee receives the Travel Approval PO via email.

All Registrations, Hotel expenses, and Transportation costs are to be paid to the appropriate Vendors by separate Purchase Orders and are only to be entered after the Requisition/Travel Request is approved and converted to a Purchase Order. On subsequent Requisitions related to the Travel, the initial Travel Purchase Order Number will need to be referenced on the comments line (Example – "TPO#42XXXXXXX"). Attach required backup documents (i.e., reservations, registration fee) to the Requisition. See sections on Registrations and Hotels.

## In-District Travel

- No Travel Request is needed for In-District Employee travel if mileage reimbursement is the only expense incurred. When budgeted funds are available, mileage for Travel within the District boundaries will be reimbursed at the stated IRS Mileage Reimbursement Rate. A Requisition must be completed for mileage reimbursement.
- No lodging and/or meal expenses are allowed for In-District Travel.
- A Requisition must be entered, and the CISD Mileage Form must be complete for all mileage reimbursements.
- Miles incurred from CISD building to non-CISD building require supporting documentation from MapQuest and should be attached to the Requisition.
- **The current mileage rate can be found {here} on the Travel Department website.**

## Out-of-District Travel

- Consists of all Travel outside of District boundaries. Out-of-District Travel requires an approved Requisition/Travel Request that must be converted to a Purchase Order before entering any subsequent Requisitions for registration, Hotel, transportation, etc.
  - **Overnight Travel:** All Travel for events away from the Employee's campus/department in excess of 50 miles outside of the District Administration Office that requires overnight lodging accommodations.
  - **50-Mile Rule:** All Travel within 50 miles of the Employee's campus/department is considered **mileage-only expenses** and is eligible for mileage reimbursement. Overnight Travel is not allowed; therefore, lodging and/or meal expenses are not reimbursable.
- When multiple Employees within the same Campus/Department are traveling as a group, one Employee should be designated as the In-Charge Sponsor (hereafter referred to as a "Sponsor"). The Sponsor will ensure the Requisitions are completed and shall attach documentation for the entire group to the Requisitions in eFinancePlus.
- **Scouting** – Scouting will be handled in the same manner as Employee Travel. An approved Requisition/Travel Request must be completed before the Travel event. No lodging or meal expenses are allowed for In-District Travel.
- Employee Travel Requisitions must include the following
  - Employee Travel Request Form
  - Event Documentation (conference flyer, agenda, registration form, etc.)
  - Travel Acknowledgment Form

## Meals – Employee Travel

- Meal per diem rates (not including tips) are paid up to \$36 daily.
- Meal rates are not necessarily to cover the total cost of meals while the Employee is traveling but to provide reasonable incremental costs of meals the Employee may incur under such business travel.
- Meal allowances are paid according to the following rate and schedule:

To Be Eligible For	Rate	Must Depart Before	Must Return After
Breakfast	\$12.00	7:00 AM	8:00 AM
Lunch	\$12.00	11:00 AM	1:00 PM
Dinner	\$12.00	5:00 PM	7:00 PM

**A meal expense is defined as consumable food or non-alcoholic beverages and does not include the purchase of tableware and miscellaneous dining supplies.**

- District employees are eligible for reimbursement of meals. Reimbursements are requested during the recap process.
- If meals are included in the hotel rate or provided at the conference or event, then no reimbursement is allowed for those meals provided.
- Proof of attendance in the form of a name badge, an agenda or schedule of training must be provided during the Travel Recap process.
- The District will not reimburse tips or gratuity.
- According to the IRS, reimbursement for meal expenses when the travel event is not overnight or when the employee is within their normal work schedule, is considered a fringe benefit and is taxable income that must be reported on Form W-2. Therefore, meals will not be reimbursed unless overnight accommodation is required.
- Meal expenses incurred within the District are not reimbursable unless traveling with students. (See Student Travel Manual)
- The District only allows meal advances for Travel of Employees/Sponsors traveling with students. Travel is to be requested at least 15 days before the departure date. Meal advances are requested and approved electronically via the eFinance Plus Requisition process.
- **Funds are deposited electronically into the Employee/Sponsor's bank account.**
- **Federal and State Grants** – Meals will not be advanced at the Per Diem rate when paid with Federal Funds due to Grant compliance. All receipts must be turned in for

reimbursement of meals. Reimbursements will occur with confirmation of the actual cost for meals up to \$12.00 per meal (not including gratuities, alcoholic beverages, or taxes).

## Lodging – Employee Travel

- When employee travel requires a hotel stay, every effort should be made to obtain the most economical and practical accommodations available, considering the event's purpose.
- The conference hotel shall be the first priority for lodging accommodations. Employees should confirm they are receiving the conference rate, when applicable.
- The maximum nights of lodging shall be based on the travel event's start and end times and the travel location's distance.
- District employees are eligible for reimbursement or District payment for lodging expenses incurred when an overnight stay is necessary for an employee to conduct official and required District business outside the designated work location.

### **Reimbursement for Lodging Expenses**

- District employees are eligible for reimbursement of lodging expenses incurred at a commercial lodging establishment.
- The Employee may only be reimbursed for their actual lodging expense not to exceed the maximum lodging rate if traveling with state or federal funds.

### **District Payment for Lodging Expenses**

- Lodging payment in the form of a District check is available for employees traveling.
- The traveler is responsible for verifying if the payment method is allowable and if the lodging establishment has any specific restrictions or guidelines regarding accepting checks.
- If the District check is not accepted when presented for check-in, the Employee will assume the responsibility of payment and will be reimbursed upon return of the trip.
- The District will not reimburse or provide payment for overnight lodging within 50 miles of the District Administration Office.
- Hotel Confirmation / Documentation should be attached to the Requisition and include room amount per night and tax amount. The Original Detail Hotel Bill or Invoice/Receipt must be furnished after the trip. The Hotel Bill should **clearly** indicate the cost assigned to the "In-Charge/District Representative". The Employee is responsible for ensuring hotel bill payment by employee reimbursement via Travel Recap form or district funds (contact Travel Department).



- Hotel/Lodging Requisition must include the following –
  - Confirmation documentation from Hotel that shows the hotel address
  - Dates of stay
  - Room amounts per night
  - Tax
  - Remit information
  - Who: Group/Department Attending, Number of Attendees, and Employee/Student Roster
  - Confirm Hotel will accept a District Check
- **Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax** and **Texas State Sales Tax** will not be paid. The District is exempt from this tax. The Texas Sale and Use Tax Exemption Certificate and Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate are on the Conroe ISD Travel Website. It is the Employee's responsibility is to present a Hotel Tax Exemption Certificate to ensure that taxes are not charged. The District is not exempt from City, county, tourism, etc. taxes. The District will pay State sales tax on out-of-state Travel.
- To avoid cancellation fees, the Employee is responsible for notifying the Hotel before the cancellation deadline. If the Hotel is not informed by the deadline, the Employee may be required to pay any fees assessed by the Hotel.
- Lodging will be paid based on the following:
  - Adults = 2 per room/separate rooms for males and females.
  - Supervisor/Principal/Director = 1 room.
- The District will not reimburse hotel charges for internet connection fees unless the staff member receives prior approval from their supervisor. Approval should be attached to the Requisition/Travel Request.
- The District will not reimburse in-room movies, room service, laundry, phone calls, incidentals, or alcoholic beverages.
- Travel websites and vacation rentals, such as Hotels.com, Expedia, Travelocity, Airbnb, etc., shall not be used to make hotel accommodations due to the inability to provide an itemized hotel receipt suitable for reimbursement.
- An itemized bill must accompany your Travel Recap within five business days of the return from the trip or event. **Review the receipt/invoice for accuracy at checkout.** The District will not reimburse tax or rates that are different from initial approval.

- **Federal and State Grants** – When using grant funds for Travel, the maximum amount allowed per room/per day is set by GSA. The Federal Rate Schedule will be used for lodging for federally funded Travel. To access lodging reimbursement information and rates, visit <http://gsa.gov>:
  - Click Travel, Plan & Book, Per Diem Rates.
  - Select State.
  - Click Find Rates.
  - Find your destination on the list, and apply the maximum lodging rates for the city or area you are traveling to.
  - Please print out the lodging maximum per Employee and attach it with the Travel Recap and itemized hotel receipt for reimbursement. Hotel accommodations above the maximum per diem rate per Employee (except allowable taxes) will need to be reimbursed from a local funding source. Every effort should be made to secure the conference rate (single or double occupancy).
- If the city within Texas you are traveling to is not listed, check the county list. If the county to which you are traveling is listed, use the rate given for that country. If the Texas County to which you are traveling is not listed, use the standard maximum rate of \$96 per night for lodging.

## Transportation – Employee Travel

- **Personal Vehicles** – District Employees will be reimbursed at the approved IRS mileage rate for business use of their vehicle. Employees should carpool in one car whenever possible if more than one person attends the same meeting/travel event. Employees are required to select the shortest and most economical route. Supporting documentation from MapQuest is required for mileage reimbursement. The District does not reimburse fuel charges for personal vehicles. **The District will only reimburse round-trip mileage incurred from the starting location to the ending location.** Commuting miles (i.e. from hotel to conference, etc.) are considered normal travel and will not be reimbursed.



- **Vehicle Rental** – Vehicle rentals require an approved Purchase Order before picking up the vehicle and cannot be paid with an Activity Fund check. Detailed instructions on securing a rental vehicle is provided on the Travel and Purchasing websites. Fuel receipts can be submitted for reimbursement. To avoid higher fuel rates charged by the rental company, the Employee should refuel the car **before** returning the vehicle. If additional fuel is charged by the rental company, the District will only reimburse the national average gas price for that region.
  - The Requisition/Travel Request must be approved and converted to a Purchase Order before requesting a vehicle. See Shopping A-Z > Vehicle Rentals for instructions.
- **Parking** charges are allowable travel expenses when traveling in a rental car, personal vehicle, or District owned vehicle. The District will reimburse valet parking only if self-parking is unavailable. The District will not provide reimbursement for taxes for in-state parking.
  - **Airport Parking** – Parking fees are reimbursable when using off-airport parking facilities (The Parking Spot, EcoPark, etc.) and should not exceed the cost of round-trip taxi or ride share fares.
- **Tolls** are not an allowable expense and will not be reimbursed. Fines resulting from unpaid tolls will be the responsibility of the Employee.
- **Uber, Lyft, Tax, Shuttle, etc.** – Taxi, shuttle, and ride share expenses are allowable for reimbursement at the exact cost with itemized receipts. Tips may be paid at the Employee's discretion but is not an allowable travel expense for reimbursement or payment with district funds. The District will not provide reimbursement for taxes related to transportation costs while in-state.
- **Air Travel** – Employees traveling out-of-state are eligible for air transportation and must use the State Travel Contract for air accommodations. Detailed instructions are provided on the Travel Internal Website.

## Registration – Employee Travel

- Registrations are to be paid to the appropriate Vendor by Purchase Order only once the original Requisition/Travel Request has been approved and converted into a Purchase Order.
- **No Registration payments are made to an employee.**
- Employees must present an invoice brochure, flyer, registration, or completed entry form to be attached to the Requisition. Documentation must show details with the name of the person registered (if applicable), location, date and time of the event, and any meals or other expenses that are provided.
- Registrations are paid in advance of the event and are sent directly to the Vendor.
- When entering the Requisition for registrations, the description should include the following:
  - Who: Group/Department attending, number of attendees, employee names
  - What: Name of the Event
  - When: Date of the Event
  - Where: Location of Event
  - Registration Amount
  - Remit Information
- Purchase Orders should be prepared in advance and considerate of the registration deadlines. No registration can be processed until all required documents are attached to the Requisition.
- **Virtual Training/Classes** – When employees are attending a “virtual” event that does not require in-person participation they do not require Travel Approval. Only the registration Requisition will need to be submitted for these event types.

## One-Day Trips – Employee Travel

- Trips in which the Employee leave and return on the same day are considered **One-Day Trips**.
- Travel must be approved before the event by completing the Requisition/Travel Request process in eFinancePlus.
- Employees are eligible for mileage-only expenses and parking to be reimbursed after returning from the trip.

- Meal reimbursements are not allowed on one-day trips during regular work hours.
  - Exception: Meal reimbursements are allowed for one-day trips outside the regular work hours (i.e., Saturdays, holidays, or evenings).
- Expenses related to one-day trips must go through the Travel Recap process.

## Travel Recaps – Employee Travel

- The Travel Recap Form must be completed and sent to the Travel Department within **five (5) business days after the trip.**
- Failure to submit Recap may result in the denial of future Travel for the Employee and/or Campus/Department.
- Recaps for multiple Employees should not be combined. Separate Recaps must be submitted per Employee per Travel Purchase Order.
- Supporting documentation should include:
  - Original detailed/itemized hotel receipt.
  - Verification of miles from MapQuest for mileage reimbursements.
  - Parking receipts.
  - Gas receipts for rental vehicles.
  - Tabulation of Monies Disbursed to Students/Sponsors form, if applicable.
- Do not send cash through inter-office mail. Repayment of funds in the form of cash must be delivered to the Purchasing Department, and a cash receipt will be provided after verification of the funds.
- Recap forms should not be handwritten.
- The original Travel Purchase Order number for the Employee Travel, Lodging/Hotel, and Transportation must be indicated on the Travel Recap form where specified. The Recap cannot be processed without the required PO#'s.
- The Travel Recap Form must be signed by the Employee/Sponsor and their Supervisor/Principal/Director, dated, and returned to the Travel Department regardless of whether reimbursement is requested.
- A "Request for Recap" will be sent to the Employee/Sponsor for any Travel not Recapped. If no response is returned, the Employee/Sponsor Vendor status will be placed on HOLD. The Supervisor/Principal/Director will be notified. No funds can then be disbursed to the Employee/Sponsor.

## District Non-Allowable Travel Expenses

- Travel arrangements or reimbursements for non-Conroe ISD employees (including spouse and/or dependent children, non-District employees, or related guests)
- Alcoholic drinks or beverages.
- Hotel room service
- Entertainment expenses include in-room movies and fee-based hotel amenities such as gyms, spas, etc.
- Expenses due to the traveler's failure to cancel a registration or travel arrangements (except for extenuating circumstances).
- Early Bird boarding or fees paid for boarding/seating upgrades.
- Hotel internet charges (unless the expense is work-related and pre-approved on travel Requisition/Travel Request)
- Travel expenses incurred after an employee terminates employment with the District.

## Travel Tips

- Plan ahead.
- All Purchase Orders should be prepared in advance and with regard to the deadlines.
- No requisitions can be processed until all required backup documents are attached to the Requisition.
- Contact the Travel Department for assistance with unique and special travel situations if you are unsure of the proper procedure.