



GALVESTON ISD
084-902

DEE-R (REGULATION)

EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Note: Out of State travel reimbursement rates can be found at www.gsa.gov/perdiem

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

Each District employee who is authorized to travel assumes responsibility to limit travel expense claims to costs incurred on travel that is clearly for the purpose of discharging essential official business of the District. Travel planning should take into consideration the most economical means of accomplishing the authorized task.

Administrators who are responsible for authorizing travel plans have the additional responsibility of limiting travel to trips that are clearly in accordance with Board policy, the District Improvement Plan, or official Board action.

Prior approval for all District travel shall be obtained before any expenses, **including but not limited to prepaid registration, car rental, hotel booking, and airfare purchases**. The Authorization for Travel form is used to indicate approval from the appropriate supervising administrator and to provide an estimate of expenses. All out-of-state travel must be additionally approved by the Superintendent.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

For any authorized expense incurred, except for meals associated with overnight travel, the employee shall submit **itemized receipts** to the extent feasible **that support the expense**. Types of documentation include **but is not limited to**, purchase orders completed BEFORE travel occurs, Authorization for Travel, hotel receipts, rental car receipts, conference registration, **proof of attendance, driving directions (map), other receipts**, etc. Credit card statements are not itemized receipts and will not be accepted.



RESPONSIBILITY

It is the budget manager's responsibility to hold their employees accountable for travel. Employees must ensure that their travel complies with applicable laws and rules and must not seek reimbursement for travel expenses that the employee should reasonably know are not reimbursable. The employee traveling is responsible for contacting vendors if receipts or refunds are needed to complete travel. Travel privileges will be removed if an employee has not settled up all prior travel.

Travel arrangements must be made within the campus/department in which the travel originates. This includes hotel, rental cars, airfare, meals, mileage, etc.

All paperwork must be complete and accurate before being forwarded to the Finance department for check processing. Any incomplete paperwork will be returned to the budget manager.

FAILURE TO ATTEND

Expenses **may be sought by the School District from the employee if they fail to attend an event, conference, training, or workshop without proper notification to their immediate supervisor.** An employee will not be responsible for expenses incurred due to cancellation of an event by the vendor.

MULTIPLE PEOPLE TRAVELING TOGETHER

Mileage: When more than one person is travelling to the same area for a meeting/conference, minimizing mileage reimbursement by riding together is suggested when possible.

Hotels: Double occupancy of rooms should be utilized whenever possible and/or feasible.

OVERNIGHT TRAVEL

Overnight travel expenses occurring outside the boundaries of Region 4 are reimbursable. Region 4 boundaries include Waller County (**Montgomery**), Harris County, Liberty County, Chambers County, Galveston County, Brazoria County, and Fort Bend County.

NON-OVERNIGHT TRAVEL

Non-overnight travel is defined as travel occurring inside the boundaries of Region 4. This includes in-district travel, travel to other districts in Region 4, and travel to destinations within the boundaries of Region 4.

Overnight travel within the boundaries of Region 4 **MAY** be reimbursable with **PRIOR** written approval from the Superintendent.

Meals will only be reimbursed for overnight travel out of Region 4



EMPLOYEE MEALS

boundaries for all GISD Employees. If **the** conference registration indicates **that** meals **are** included, **those** meals will not be reimbursed to the employee. In the event of traveling with students for extracurricular activities, the employee will be allowed a *per diem* rate based upon the *In State and Out of State* allocations listed below. **An employee travel reimbursement request must be submitted along with the required documentation for check payment.**

In State:

The per-diem rate is **\$54.00** per day:

Breakfast - **\$13.00**

Lunch - **\$16.00**

Dinner - **\$25.00**

Out of State:

Meals will be reimbursed based upon the GSA (General Services Administration) per diem rates.

Travel days are reimbursed at a flat 75% of one full day's meal allowance: (Breakfast + Lunch + Dinner) x 0.75 = Travel day allowance.

Use the GSA website (www.gsa.gov/perdiem) **to find per diem rates.** For areas not listed, use the rate for the nearest city or county.

PER DIEM PAYMENTS

Meal expenses for overnight travel shall be paid on a per diem rate. **No** receipts shall be required for meal expenses paid to employees **out of General funds.** **** For travel funded out of Federal & Grants Funds, the employee must submit receipts for meals upon returning from travel to be reimbursed; those meals will be reimbursed according to GISD per diem rates. ****

GRATUITIES

Tips or gratuities **related to meals (Federal & Grant Funds) and/or Uber & Taxi charges** are not reimbursable.

MILEAGE

Rate: Mileage will be reimbursed to conduct business only and may not exceed the product of the actual miles driven for business. The mileage will be based upon the Standard Federal Mileage Rate set by the IRS (www.irs.gov).

Route Determination: The route will be the shortest, safest, actual and



most cost-effective distance between two points per Google Driving Directions (<https://www.google.com/maps/dir///>)

Mileage will be determined by the employee's home campus/building address to ending location address, portal to portal, unless employee leaves from home and home is closer to the destination.

*** Note: Mileage may be reimbursed if driving your personal vehicle to an event center or to obtain a meal if the destination is not in a safe area for walking. The mileage reimbursement shall be approved by the immediate supervisor and CFO. ***

After the mileage is determined, print Google driving directions showing mileage and attach it to the requisition for Purchase Order along with the rest of the required travel documentation.

Monthly mileage reimbursement: To be reimbursed for **Monthly** in-district mileage, complete the Monthly Mileage Reimbursement Form and turn it in **along with the required travel documentation** to the business office monthly. **Any mileage reports not turned in monthly are subject to not being reimbursed.**

REGISTRATION

Employees should make every attempt to receive early registration discounts. The Budget Manager should read the registration documents carefully to make sure the proper vendor is chosen, and correct fees are requested for the purchase request.

If you have questions about a registration event, call the organization contact number printed on the registration form. If the event requires membership to register, include fee for membership. Forward purchase order and completed registration form to vendor. Vendor will mail invoice to GISD. **No registration must be made BEFORE the travel is approved by the employee's supervisor.**

HOTELS

District Credit Cards (DCCs) will be utilized to reserve rooms prior to travel. **DCCs** will be used to pay for room and hotel parking.

Double occupancy of rooms should be utilized whenever possible and/or feasible.

Rate: For maximum reimbursement allowable for hotel/motel expense, refer to <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>

If an employee **needs** to stay at a hotel charging more than maximum



allowed, they **must have immediate supervisor & CFO approval.**

To avoid cancellation fees, the employee is responsible for notifying the hotel prior to the cancellation deadline. If the hotel is not notified by the required deadline, the employee may be required to pay the cancellation fee or the rate for a night's accommodation.

In Texas, a *Hotel Tax Exemption Certificate* **and a Sales Tax Exemption form** must accompany payment to the hotel to avoid paying **State Occupancy and State Sales tax**. The Campus/Department processing the travel must ensure that the employee that is traveling has all the required documentation for the Hotel check-in to avoid tax charges.

If using a third-party booking agent, **please note that** they will not accept the District's tax exemption forms so the form, **please contact them directly for a reimbursement on the tax charge (s).** *Please avoid using 3rd party booking websites since we have experienced fraudulent transactions in past reservations. We encourage you to make all room reservations directly with the hotel.*

Upon check-out, **the employee must review the hotel bill** to ensure that state occupancy and sales tax are not charged. *It is the employee's responsibility to make sure that they are not being taxed on the bill. If not done so, employee will be responsible for seeking reimbursement from the hotel for those charges or to pay back to the district out of their own funds for the tax charges.*

Internet Connection fees will be reimbursed if employee has prior approval from their supervisor.

Hotel bill charges for movies, room service, and other personal charges are not allowed to be paid with the DCC, nor to be reimbursed to the employee.

If charged to the DCC, the employee will be responsible for paying back those amounts to the District.

HOTEL EXCEPTIONS

- a. If the event has a negotiated hotel rate, evidenced by the event, the event rate will be paid. However, the government rate should be requested, if available.
- b. All other exceptions must be approved by the Superintendent or CFO in writing PRIOR to travel date.
- c. All travel being paid with Federal funds MUST follow federal guidelines.



AIR TRAVEL

Air travel will be limited to less than first class fares. Special discounted fares should be used when available. An effort should be made to plan trips far enough in advance to qualify for discounted fares. A travel card can be checked out to make air travel arrangements. Please contact the Finance Department.

Paperless ticketing is encouraged. Should the employee lose an issued paper ticket, the cost of replacing the lost ticket will be at the expense of the employee.

Any changes made to air travel that incur a cost to the district should be paid by the employee if it is the employee's choice. If weather causes a delay or requires changing the travel arrangements, the cost incurred will be covered by the district.

TRANSPORTATION TO/FROM AIRPORT

It is expected that employees will use the best means of traveling to and from the airport. Consideration should be given to cost, time and transportation availability.

- Public transportation is permissible. Receipts are required for reimbursement.
- Airport shuttles will be reimbursed for actual charges incurred while conducting official approved business. Receipts are required for reimbursement.
- Ground Transportation will be reimbursed for actual charges incurred while conducting official approved business. Receipts are required for reimbursement.
- Private automobile mileage will be reimbursed based on Google driving directions at rates established by the IRS.
- Rental cars require prior approval and must be documented with approved purchase order and original invoice.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE

District convenience – When employees use their personal car for transportation while on official school business, they are entitled to payment at a rate in accordance with the rate established by the IRS.



Personal convenience – Use of a personal automobile for District out of state travel in lieu of public transportation must be approved in advance, in writing, by the Superintendent or CFO. For out-of-state travel, proof of Liability and Property Damage coverage must be provided to the Finance Department.

Payment will be based on the lower of:

1. Airline tourist or economy rate or other common carrier rates if location is not serviced by airline, or
2. The District's mileage rate as established by the IRS, or
3. Use of Car rental and associated fees

Any employee involved in any type of traffic violation (including parking) is solely responsible for payment of fines and court costs.

PARKING FEES

Parking will be reimbursed upon return with receipts. District credit cards can be used to pay parking fees at the hotel & local parking options.

Maximum parking rate is \$15 per day; otherwise, advance approval is needed. Self-parking is preferred unless is an unsafe area, then valet is allowed. Must retain receipts for reimbursement - The District sales tax exception opportunity should be utilized with all efforts if the if the opportunity exists. IE: Hotel Check out.

UBER/LYFT & TAXI

Uber/Lyft and taxi fees will be reimbursed upon return from the trip with appropriate receipt or documentation. Rideshare & Taxi services are allowed when:

Out of State:

- Traveling out of state for transportation from and to the airport/hotel.
- Traveling out of state for transportation to restaurants near the hotel area to obtain meals, if determined to be unsafe.
- To get to the event location if different from the hotel that the staff member is staying at.

In State:

- If an employee drives their vehicle to an event and the trip includes an overnight stay where the District is paying the mileage for the individual's travel, the District will NOT reimburse the individual for UBER/LYFT or TAXI expenses. However, the individual may seek



reimbursement for the mileage to a restaurant to obtain meals if the area is determined to be unsafe. *Approval shall be obtained by the immediate supervisor and CFO. *

DISTRICT CREDIT CARDS

A district credit card ("DCC") **must** be used for **employee travel expenses** such as, hotel and parking. The DCC **should** not be used for **employee meals**. **Meals are to be covered by the employee and reimbursed upon return on a per diem basis.**

The DCC **should** not be used for non-travel purchases unless authorized, in advance by the CFO.

Original or emailed **itemized** receipts must be submitted **to the finance department via requisition for purchase order** to support each DCC purchase.

Tax exempt forms should always be used. If **sales** tax is charged **on a credit** card purchase, the card holder/purchaser will be responsible for reimbursing the district for the tax.

To maintain budgetary control, and administrative oversight of travel, a requisition is still necessary prior to making DCC purchases.

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the loss of DCC privileges, **and/or to be responsible for any unauthorized DCC purchases.**

The following are prohibited purchases with the District Credit cards when traveling:

- Alcohol / Tobacco Products
- Cash Advances
- Fuel
- Gifts / Gift Cards
- **Employee meals**
- Gratuities
- Sales Tax
- **State Occupancy Tax**

