

General Personnel

Administrative Procedure - Federal and State Grant Travel Expense Procedures

Employees must follow these procedures, in addition to the requirements of the Board policy 5:60, Expenses subhead entitled Additional Requirements for Travel Expenses Charged to Federal and State Grants, when their travel expenses are charged to federal grants and State grants governed by the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA).

Use of Expense Forms

Employees will submit their estimated travel expenses using 5:60-E2, Employee Estimated Expense Approval Form, in advance of travel and 5:60-E1, Employee Expense Reimbursement Form, following completion of travel. When travel expenses will be charged in part to grant funds and in part to non-grant District funds because certain expenses exceed those permitted to be charged to a grant by policy 5:60, Expenses, and/or these procedures, the Superintendent or designee notes that fact and the amount to be charged to each funding source in the "Comments" field on 5:60-E1, Employee Expense Reimbursement Form, and/or the "Comments" field on 5:60-E2, Employee Estimated Expense Approval Form, as applicable.

Lodging – General

1. Employees are not eligible for actual reimbursement of lodging expenses unless they are on official travel status for more than 12 hours. Travel status begins when the employee leaves his or her work location or, if reporting directly to a destination, from his or her residence or other location. It ends when the employee returns to his or her work location or, if reporting directly from the original destination, to the employee's residence or other location at the completion of the authorized travel. See 80 Ill.Admin.Code §3000.140.
2. Employees must first contact any preferred hotel vendors of the District.
3. It is the employee's responsibility to request the lowest available lodging rate the time of making a reservation. However, if the employee requires special lodging consideration due to a disability the employee may be reimbursed the actual cost of the least costly lodging that is substantially accessible. Employees should always inquire if a hotel offers a discounted rate for local government employees, including public school district employees. If applicable, employees should be prepared to show their school identification to prove school district employment when checking-in.
4. Employees should make hotel reservations as far in advance as possible. Employees need to be aware of hotel cancellation policies. In busier times, cancellation policies will sometimes require the traveler to cancel 72 hours in advance or be charged for the room. If an employee must cancel a reservation, the employee needs to cancel before the deadline, if at all possible. Employees making reservations for several nights in a row need to be aware of hotel early check-out policies. Some hotels charge an early check-out fee if a guest checks out prior to their scheduled departure date.
5. Employees must carefully review the bill upon check-out to ensure that the room charge reflects the appropriate rate and that no unauthorized charges have been added. For example, some hotels will automatically add a security charge or phone usage charge to a bill. If these services are not used, the charges should be removed before checking-out. Energy surcharge and lodging resort fees will be reimbursed if not optional.
6. If direct billing, employees must ensure that all personal or incidental charges are paid when checking-out, i.e., pay movies, personal phone calls, etc.
7. Employees must obtain a copy of the hotel bill to attach to 5:60-E1, Employee Expense Reimbursement

Form.

8. If traveling by car, an employee needs to inquire regarding self-parking options to minimize parking expenses.

Lodging – Excessive Lodging Requests

When lodging at or below the State or federal rate for a particular location is unavailable, employees must:

1. Document on 5:60-E2, Employee Estimated Expense Approval Form, that lodging at the scheduled rate for the location is unavailable.
2. Attach documentation to 5:60-E2, Employee Estimated Expense Approval Form, showing that a minimum of three budget to mid-fare hotels were contacted (where available). If there are less than three hotels available in a location to contact, the employee must document that fact on the form. The employee must inquire if the hotels will honor the government rate when obtaining quotes. If the District has any preferred hotels at the location, the employee must contact those hotels first.
3. Submit all excessive lodging requests to the Superintendent or designee for pre-approval. The Superintendent or designee will place a note in the “Comments” field on 5:60-E2, Employee Estimated Expense Approval Form, to reflect approval of an excessive lodging amount.

Note: An excessive lodging request is not required if an employee stays in accommodations arranged by a conference/seminar organization or in the lowest-priced room available at or near a hotel where a conference or seminar is located.

Meals

Per diem rates and actual reimbursement amounts for meals may not exceed the rates established by the Governor’s Travel Control Board or federal travel regulations, whichever is less. To determine the lesser amount, compare the State rates with the federal per diem rates. Historically, the State meal allowances have been lower than the federal meal allowances. State rates are available at:

www.illinois.gov/cms/employees/travel/pages/travelreimbursement.aspx. Federal rates are available at:

www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates.

Airfare

When booking airfare, employees:

1. May not book airfare and lodging as a package through third party vendors. When booked as a package, third party vendors do not provide a detailed receipt which causes an issue verifying that the lodging rates are within the proper guidelines.
2. Should always know the restrictions and potential penalties applicable to the fare in case cancellation or change is necessary, regardless of how an airline ticket is booked.

Ride Sharing Services

When using a ride sharing service such as Uber and Lyft, employees must use the lowest cost service the ride sharing service offers such as “UberX” and “Lyft Standard.” Employees will not be reimbursed for premium services offered by ride share companies such as “Uber XL,” “UberSELECT,” “UberBLACK,” “UberSUV,” “UberLUX,” or “LyftPlus.” Employees need to be aware that ride sharing services may charge users more during times of high demand. Ride sharing services typically let riders know in advance when prime time or surge pricing is in effect. Rides obtained during these higher cost periods are not reimbursable.