

# District Approved Travel

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District approved travel is generally defined as transportation on Riverview Gardens School District business in excess of one's normal commute. Four components are required for reimbursement of allowable business expenses:

- An allowable business expense
- Substantiation of the expense with original receipts and expense report
- Approval of the expense at the appropriate District level
- Submission of the approved expense report and original receipts to the District Finance Office within ten (10) days of the completion of the District travel

## **District Travel Related Definitions:**

- Appropriate business expense – An expense that is suitable and fitting for a particular valid business purpose.
- Allowable business expense – A necessary, reasonable, and appropriate expense incurred for the primary benefit of the District and is therefore permitted to be reimbursed or directly charged based on the permission of the District or by the terms of federally or privately sponsored agreements.
- Necessary business expense – The minimum purchase or service required to achieve the particular business objective.
- Original receipt – The original merchant receipt or invoice issued by the supplier or service provider to document and substantiate the business transaction. A digital image of the original receipt may be allowable provided that it is legible and the paper receipt has been destroyed.
- Reasonable business expense – An expense that is ordinary and reflects a prudent decision to incur the expense on behalf of the District. Not extreme or excessive.
- Substantiation – Documentation to support an incurred business expense that includes the original receipt, documentation of the business purpose, names of the persons in attendance, and the appropriate expense report for the incurred cost.

## **Approval and Reimbursement:**

For each District business expense reimbursement being requested, the valid business purpose of the expense must be stated, and two approvals will be needed: the individual who has incurred the expense and is requesting reimbursement and the appropriate departmental approver.

## **Deadline to Submit Expense Reports and Related Documentation:**

To record travel expenditures on a timely basis, the District requires that reimbursable business expenses be substantiated within ten (10) days of the completion of the related travel.

It is the responsibility of the traveling District employee to secure timely approval of the completed expense report and supporting documents within the ten (10) days.

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It is the responsibility of the individual approving the travel expense report to determine that the expenses submitted for reimbursement are appropriate, allowable, and necessary.

Accounts Payable, upon receipt of the complete Expense Report, will verify that it has been signed by the traveler and the traveler's supervisor or Professional Development designee. If the Expense Report does not contain the proper signatures it will be returned to the Traveler for revision.

Accounts Payable will, at its discretion, review expenses for reasonableness and compliance with policies and guidelines. Accounts Payable does reserve the right to seek additional information when deemed warranted and there are post audit procedures to assist in evaluating transaction data.

For federal and other grant expenditures, verification that charges on the Expense Report are in compliance with both the grantor and District policies, will be conducted by the Business Office. If the Expense Report contains an unallowable charge, the Expense Report will be returned to the Traveler for revision.

## **Pre-Trip Considerations:**

- **Registration and Conference Fees:** Registration and Conference Fees should be paid for with the American Express Travel Card or billed directly to the District. Registration fees paid directly by the traveler will not be reimbursed until the conference is completed and proof of attendance is submitted.
- **Travel Arrangements:** Airline/Rail tickets and hotel accommodations may be direct-billed to the District or paid for with the American Express Travel Card. Car rentals should be arranged through the District agreement with Enterprise Rent-A-Car where possible.
- **Use of Personal Funds:** Travelers must review travel reimbursement guidelines prior to expending personal funds for business travel to determine if such expenditures are allowable and reimbursable.
- **Spouse or Other Dependent Expenditures:** Incremental costs for travel, lodging, meal, or other travel expenses for spouses or other dependents will not be reimbursed.
- **Travel Expenditures not Reimbursed by the District:**
  - First Class Airfares
  - Airline Clubs
  - Airline Upgrades
  - Additional or over-weight luggage charges
  - Convenience fees such as priority check-in or preferred seat assignment
  - Books, magazines, newspapers for personal use
  - Alcoholic beverages
  - Child-care, babysitting, house-sitting, pet-sitting, or kennel charges
  - Commuting between home and the District Campus
  - Travel within the school district. Certain exceptions at the District's discretion may be approved by the Chief Financial Officer in advance.

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- Private automobile transportation within thirty (30) miles of the District is not reimbursable.
- Costs incurred by the traveler's failure to promptly cancel transportation or lodging reservations due to a change in travel plans
- Haircuts or personal grooming
- Laundry and dry-cleaning
- Personal entertainment expenditures including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theater movies, social activities, and related incidental costs.
- Shoeshine services
- Travel accident insurance premiums
- Other expenditures not directly related to performance of the business travel.
- **Receipts, in General:** The District's reimbursement policy is based on documentation of reasonable and actual expenditures, supported by original itemized receipts. Original itemized receipts must be submitted for all travel expenses including airline, rail, hotels, meals, vehicle rental, and incidentals
- **Travel Advances:** The District does not provide for travel advances.
- **Transportation:**
  - **Airfares:** District approved air travel must be at the most reasonable and economical rate. Travelers are strongly encouraged to book well in advance of travel to secure the lowest rate.
  - **Ground Transportation:** Taxi fares, including tips, are reimbursable where public transportation is not practical. This includes taxis between hotels and railway stations or airports. Receipts are required for reimbursement by the District.
  - **Rental Cars:** The District has negotiated terms with Enterprise Rent-A-Car and that agency should be used when possible. Economy, compact, or subcompact vehicles should be rented. Reimbursement for other types of vehicles will only be made for special situations addressed in advance (e.g., multiple travelers in one vehicle). Travelers should rent the vehicle in the District's name with the authorized traveler as the named driver. Under no conditions should the authorized traveler allow another person to operate the rental vehicle. Travelers should not purchase the collision damage waiver (CDW) from the rental agency. Accidents must be reported to the District Finance Office within twenty-four (24) hours and immediately when the accident results in any personal injury or towing of the vehicle. The traveler should follow the renting agency accident report instructions. Travelers will be responsible for any parking, red-light camera, or other moving violation while operating a rental vehicle.
  - **Private Air Carrier:** The use of private aircraft for District business is prohibited.
  - **Private Automobile Transportation:** Travel using privately owned vehicles may be desirable to save time, transport equipment, or reduce cost when a number of persons are traveling together. The rate of reimbursement is published on the Finance Web

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page and distributed annually to all employees in a memo. This reimbursement covers all fuel, maintenance, insurance, transportation, and operating costs. Fuel costs are included in the per-mile reimbursement rate and are not reimbursed separately for privately owned vehicles. Damage to a privately owned vehicle used for District business is covered by the individual's private insurance, cost for which are included in the per-mile reimbursement rate. The District does not assume responsibility for deductibles or other uninsured loss to the vehicle. Tolls and reasonable parking charges will be reimbursed in addition to the mileage allowance. Costs for parking and moving violations are not reimbursable.

- **Rail Transportation:** The District will reimburse the cost of railroad fare not to exceed the cost of the least expensive airfare.
- **Intercampus and In-town Travel:** Travel mileage between schools and the District Central Office is not reimbursable. Private automobile transportation within thirty (30) miles of the District is not reimbursable.
- **Lodging:** Travelers must book standard accommodations in reasonably priced, commercial-class hotels and motels. Travelers should ask for educational discounts at all hotel and motels, many of which charge reduced rates to those who identify as educational staff. Lodging with friends or relatives is not reimbursed.
- **Meals while Traveling:** Travelers should use reasonably priced restaurants. Original itemized receipts must be submitted with the Expense Report for reimbursement of meal expenses. Meals will not be reimbursed separately when included in the conference registration fees.
- **Other Travel Expenditures:**
  - **Taxes:** Taxes on travel services are allowable and reimbursable.
  - **Telephone Calls:** Telephone calls and faxes, specifically those necessary to obtain transportation and hotel reservations, or to communicate with the District or one's family to indicate safe arrival, are reimbursable.
  - **Tips:** Reasonable tips associated with baggage handling, storage, and other services are reimbursable.
- **Payment Considerations:**
  - **American Express Corporate Card:** This is a personal liability card to be used only for District travel expenses. Personal use of the card is prohibited. Consult the Finance Department for virtual card arrangements to pay for airfare, lodging, and conference registration.
  - **Direct Billing the District:** The District has an agreement in place with Enterprise Rent-A-Car to allow for direct billing.
  - **Cancellations and Refunds:** Arrangements for all changes, cancellations, and refunds associated with District approved travel are the responsibility of the traveler.
- **Reimbursement Process:** To obtain reimbursement for personal funds expended for travel, and to account for any direct billed or American Express Virtual Card expenditures, all expenses must be documented on the District Expense Report, including any prepaid and direct billed expenditures. The complete and approved Expense Report must be submitted to the Finance

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Department within ten (10) days of the completion of the trip. Incomplete Expense Reports will be returned to the traveler. Expense Reports lacking appropriate authorization will be returned to the traveler. The traveler is responsible for completing the expense report and securing the appropriate authorization. The traveler is responsible for securing appropriate approval in advance of the trip for any grant or federal funded travel. Compliance with the grantor or federal regulations is the responsibility of the traveler. The Finance Department will not process Expense Reports without appropriate approvals or expenditure documentation.