

FINAL OF TRAVEL POLICY REVISION – 1/12/10

17.00 TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

17.01 GENERAL POLICY

17.01.01 The policy of the HOTWDB is that employees are to be fully reimbursed for necessary and reasonable job-related expenses incurred in the authorized conduct of the HOTWDB business, including business-related travel. Employees must complete a "Request for Travel" form before any out-of-region travel. The request should include an estimate of costs to be incurred. At the discretion of the Executive Director, a cash advance may be made for a specific trip in an amount not to exceed estimated trip expenses. Regardless of whether a cash advance has been made or a request submitted for reimbursement of expenses, all travel expenses are subject to requirements of documentation and reasonableness, and will be reimbursed in conformity with adopted policies and procedures, provided that the travel was properly authorized and that funds are available in the HOTWDB budget. In some cases, the HOTWDB may prepay expenses such as registration fees, hotel costs, and/or airline or other public transportation costs directly to the entity involved. All travel requests must have documentation attached showing verification of meeting such as conference agenda, schedule or program. Request for travel within the region is not required; however, employees should ensure that supervisors are aware of their travel status.

17.01.02 If a cash advance is made prior to a trip, the employee must file an expense report in accordance with HOTWDB Travel Procedures. Allowable expenses claimed will be used to offset the cash advance. If the employee's trip expenses exceed the cash advance amount, the employee will be reimbursed for the difference. If the employee's cash advance exceeds the allowable trip expenses, the employee reimburses the difference to THE HOTWDB when the trip expense report is filed.

17.01.03 Expenses which are not permitted under the terms of grants, contracts, or agreements with other agencies will not be charged as costs to those grants, contracts, or agreements.

17.01.04 HOTWDB's mileage reimbursement rate will be set in accordance with the State approved rate. When conference rates for lodging are higher or state rates are not available, it must be documented to be allowable for reimbursement. As under State rules, the Executive Director will be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary actual expenditures."

17.02 TRANSPORTATION AND SUBSISTENCE

17.02.01 General Information. Employees in full travel status shall be entitled to transportation, accommodations, and other services which are reasonable and meet adequate quality standards for convenience, safety, and comfort. This policy means that travelers shall, whenever possible, use the most economical accommodations which meet reasonable requirements. Employees and key officials engaged in necessary and authorized travel in conduct of the HOTWDB business will be reimbursed for costs necessary to conduct the business for the HOTWDB based on state guidelines. Receipts are required for expenses other than meals.

17.02.02 Mileage:

Mileage reimbursement shall be at the state rate in effect at the time the travel occurs. Miles traveled may be calculated by using vehicle odometer readings or MapQuest. If using MapQuest, a copy of the MapQuest website printout must be attached to the travel expense report.

17.02.03 Lodging

Lodging reimbursement for both in-state and out-of-state travel will be determined using the General Services Administration federal travel rates.

The lodging rate of in-state locations not specifically listed will be the rate specified on the State Comptroller's website, currently \$85 per night.

17.02.04 Meals:

Meals are paid at the current approved limit for the location and only if the employee's duties require him/her to stay overnight. The daily approved per diem is divided among the following three categories:

Breakfast: 25% of the full daily allowance if departing before 6 a.m.

Lunch: 25% of the full daily allowance if departing before 11 a.m. or returning after 1 p.m.

Dinner: 50% of the full daily allowance if departing before 6 p.m. or returning after 6 p.m.

Example: At a current approved daily rate of \$36, the following rates would apply:

Breakfast: \$ 9.00 if the traveler departed before 6 a.m.

Lunch: \$ 9.00 if the traveler departed before 11 a.m. or returned after 1 p.m.

Dinner: \$18.00 if the traveler departed before 6 p.m. or returned after 6

p.m.

Reimbursable subsistence expenses will generally be for registration, lodging, telephone calls, parking, tolls, taxi and transportation. Receipts, or a statement of expense explaining why a receipt was not available, must accompany any request for reimbursement.

Note: The reimbursement of meals is based on actual expenses up to the maximum allowed. For locations not listed, the maximum reimbursement rate will be the rate specified on the State Comptroller's website, currently \$36 per day.

For both in-state and out-of-state, an employee may reduce his meal claim and use the amount of the reduction to increase the maximum lodging rate for the duty point.

17.02.05 Standard policy for airline travel will be coach fare unless coach passage is unavailable. The Executive Director must authorize airline travel other than coach class. HOTWDB will not reimburse more than coach class airfare if an employee chooses to drive a long distance (plus what the cost of traveling to and from the airport would have been).

17.03 PERSONAL VEHICLE

Where use of a personal vehicle is judged to be the most reasonable and economical means of transportation in the conduct of official HOTWDB business, reimbursement will be at the current mileage rate. Employees are expected to report the shortest distance between points of departure and destination for all travel. Travel between an employee's residence and the HOTWDB office is not eligible for reimbursement. Mileage reimbursements will be made based on the appropriate report being completed and submitted by the employee and approved by the Executive Director.

17.04 RENTAL VEHICLES

When use of a rental vehicle is deemed to be the most reasonable means of transportation in the conduct of official HOTWDB business, the HOTWDB rental car account should be used when possible. If that is not possible, reimbursement may be made for rental of a vehicle, reasonable insurance coverage and necessary gas or mileage reimbursement may be requested at the prescribed rate based on actual mileage between points of departure and destination. The class of rental vehicle should be limited to no more than a full-size vehicle, unless such vehicles are unavailable, a luxury or premium class vehicle is available at the same or lower rate, or a larger vehicle is necessary to accommodate a group traveling together. Reimbursement will not be authorized for luxury automobile rates.

17.05 EXPENSE REPORT

As soon as an employee returns from a trip he/she should complete an expense report form documenting any actual expenses incurred on the trip which were not prepaid directly by the HOTWDB to the entity involved. These expenses will be included on the travel report. The HOTWDB will issue a reimbursement check to the employee for allowable out-of-pocket expenses. The expense report must show the amount of any cash advance given the employee, and if the trip expenses did not exceed the advance, the report must be accompanied by a check from the employee for the balance of the cash advance amount. The Executive Director must approve all reimbursements.

17.06 EXCEPTIONS

17.06.01 When two or more employees travel in a single automobile, only one employee will receive per-mile or other automobile reimbursements.

17.06.02 Conference registration fees normally will be paid directly to the organization sponsoring the conference.

17.06.03 Travel and/or moving expense involving applicants, new employees, or transferred employees may be reimbursed by approval of the Executive Director. The approval of these types of expenses will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

17.07 PROHIBITED EXPENDITURES

Costs of tips or gratuity, personal entertainment, spouse's expenses, amusements, social activities, alcoholic beverages, traffic citations, personal phone calls, or illegal activities are not allowable for reimbursement.

17.08 REFERENCES

The state guidelines are found at the following websites:

<https://fm.x.cpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php>