

The Workforce Connection, Inc.

Subject: TRAVEL

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Purpose/Introduction:

The General Travel Policy is to establish policies and procedures governing the travel activities of The Workforce Connection, Inc. (TWC) board members, staff, and partners /stakeholders whose travel expenses will be paid from TWC funds.

Authority and Responsibility:

- A. The Executive Director has the authority to approve travel requests for TWC staff.
- B. Prior approval of travel of the Executive Director for in-State meetings (IWP and other TWC and Business related meetings) and the National Association of Workforce Boards Annual Forum is established during the budget process.
- C. Travel Reimbursement Forms of the Executive Director must be signed by an officer of TWC.
- D. Travel Reimbursement Forms for TWC staff must be signed by the Executive Director.
- E. Travel requests of Board Members will be approved by Board leadership.
- F. The Executive Director is responsible for managing the travel budget of the Board and staff.

Definitions:

The following terms are used throughout the General Travel Policy:

Allowance: A fixed amount of money permitted.

Office Location: The place where the employee spends the largest portion of the regular workday or working time.

Hours Worked: In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) non-exempt employees may be eligible to have some hours counted as “hours worked” while in travel status. “Hours worked” includes travel that occurs during the employee’s workday as well as other time considered to be "hours worked" under the FLSA.

Incidental Expenses: Expenses of a minor nature related to business or to the traveler’s activities while in travel status.

Local Travel: Reimbursement for transportation costs, including parking and tolls for costs incurred when conducting appropriate necessary business locally.

Lodging Rate: The base rate defined by the vendor prior to the application of taxes, etc.

Non-reimbursable Expenses: Expenses generated by the traveler which are not considered to be essential.

Pre-Paid Expenses: Any expense paid prior to the completion of travel.

Travel Expenses: Costs for registration, transportation, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses directly related to travel.

Travel Status: When an Employee or Board Member is conducting appropriately approved, necessary business which includes pre-approved lodging.

- a. Travel is warranted when personal contact is the most effective method of conducting official business.
- b. The purpose of the travel must be related to TWC activities.
- c. Costs associated with travel must not exceed the budgeted amount approved by TWC Board and/or otherwise specifically authorized by the TWC Board.
- d. All authorized travelers, when representing TWC in travel status, may claim allowances and expenses and be reimbursed according to policy.
- e. Claims for unauthorized travel expenses are not reimbursable.
- f. Attendance at conferences, seminars, and meetings should only be approved when essential contact can be made or significant information obtained which is important to the operation and programs.
- g. The fewest number of individuals possible from TWC should be sent to the same seminar, conference, or meeting.
- h. Travel for Board members will be arranged by the Board Assistant.
- i. Under no circumstances shall expenses for personal travel be charged to, or be temporarily funded by TWC.
- j. Travelers who knowingly and willfully submit falsified travel forms for approval shall be subject to any action deemed necessary by Board leadership, which may include criminal action.

Travel Guidelines:

- **Most Economical Plan**
To maximize the effectiveness of resources allocated to travel activities, all travel plans should be based upon the most economical, safest means of travel, and reasonable/minimizing travel time. Employees are encouraged to maximize the use of available reduced fares; use public transportation if possible when traveling into Chicago; and make travel arrangements in sufficient time to take advantage of “early bird” registrations and available room block rates.
- **Extended Travel**
In the event a traveler must extend the duration of travel due to an emergency (snow storm, etc.) notification must be made to the TWC Executive Director at the traveler’s earliest opportunity.
- **Completion of Travel**
The completed *Travel Reimbursement Form and supporting documentation* must be submitted for reconciliation and reimbursement within 14 days of completion of travel and include appropriate signatures for processing.

Procedures:**A. Transportation**

Costs related to the use of various modes of transportation may be claimed as an expense only if receipts accompany the reimbursement form. All forms of transportation are acceptable, provided it is economical and will not require excessive travel time. Travel to and from the destination should be limited to the most cost-effective method available giving consideration to safety, minimizing travel time and other concerns. The most economical means of transportation will be used in traveling to and from airports (i.e., bus, shuttle or taxi service, or mileage for use of personal vehicle plus parking).

1. Commercial – Air

Transportation by scheduled airlines shall be at the lowest available airfare rate at the time of the trip authorization. A fare other than the lowest rate may be used only when seats are not available at the lowest fare or air travel at a higher cost will result in an overall cost savings.

Booking air flights should occur after sufficient available funds are verified by Fiscal Manager and authorized approval from the Executive Director. Any promotional benefits or material received from an airline or other commercial establishment in connection with official travel may be retained for personal use (i.e., air miles, etc). Flight insurance purchased by the traveler is not reimbursable.

2. Rented Motor Vehicles

The use of rented motor vehicles must be for the advantage of TWC and not for the personal convenience of the traveler. The use of rented motor vehicles should only be considered when rental of a vehicle would result in an overall reduction in the cost for a particular trip. The request to rent a vehicle must completely justify need and budget savings and receive prior approval. The traveler must verify that he or she holds a current driver's license and that the driver's license is not expired, suspended, revoked, etc. Rented motor vehicles are restricted to sub-compact, compact, or mid-size sedans unless a larger vehicle is necessary for cost efficiency because of the number of authorized travelers.

3. Related Transportation Costs

Related transportation costs may include:

- Gasoline – reimbursed when a rented motor vehicle is used.
 - IRS Mileage Rate for use of the traveler's personal vehicle.
 - Tolls – simply list on the *Travel Reimbursement Form*.
 - Local Transportation – taxi, bus, etc. may be reimbursed if use is in the best interest of the Board; receipts are required.
- Parking – Short-term parking may be reimbursed with a receipt.

B. Per Diem Meal Expenses

1. A traveler must be in authorized travel status to be eligible for meal reimbursement
2. An allowance for meals (which includes tips) will be reimbursed utilizing the Meal Rates established by applicable Federal guidelines then in effect and/or designated by the TWC Board.
3. For each day in travel status:
 - a. If the traveler leaves before 8:00 am and returns after 5:00 pm, an allowance equal to the full meal rate for that day will be used.
 - b. If the traveler leaves after 8:00 am or returns before 5:00 pm, their allowance will equal one half of the meal rate for that day.

C. Lodging

1. Lodging costs incurred within 50 miles of the traveler's designated office location or residence within Boone, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties cannot be claimed as a travel expense unless the lodging is in the best interest of TWC and has been pre-approved.
2. Lodging must be at a commercial establishment, and the traveler should always request the lowest available rate (i.e. government, corporate, conference). After authorization is received from the Executive Director and verification is received from the Fiscal Manager that there are sufficient funds in the bank account to use the debit card, the debit card will be used to reserve the room(s).
3. A receipt for lodging must be listed and attached to the ***Travel Reimbursement Form***.

D. Additional Incidental Expenses

1. Additional incidental expenses (i.e. internet, fax, copies) may be reimbursed if they are related to TWC business and are accompanied by a receipt.
2. Non-reimbursable expenses cannot be claimed. The following expenses are examples of non-reimbursable expenses: in-room movies; valet services; valet parking-if self-parking is an option; liquor; and entertainment.

Action Required: This information should be disseminated to TWC Board members, staff, and partners /stakeholders who travel on behalf of the organization.

Inquiries: Questions regarding any aspect of this policy should be directed to The Workforce Connection Executive Director.

Effective Date: November 1, 2012