

Personnel and Policy Committee  
September 3, 2025

Agenda

A. Travel Expense Policy



## **Travel Expense Policy**

### **Overview**

Blackwater Regional Library recognizes the importance of staff travel for needed training, as well as semi-regular travel in our region for reasons necessary to the operation of the library. It is the policy of the library to reimburse staff for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred during approved work-related travel.

Employees seeking reimbursement should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Reimbursement is allowed only when reimbursement has not been, and will not be, received from other sources. If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this travel policy, then the most conservative course of action should be taken. The Library Director and/or Budget & Finance Manager will have the final say in how unique circumstances shall be handled.

### **Authorization and responsibility**

Paid staff trainings that require travel should be approved first by the employee's direct Supervisor and the Library Director. Travelers should verify that planned travel is approved and eligible for reimbursement before making travel arrangements. Within 30 days of completion of a trip, the traveler must submit a travel reimbursement form and supporting documentation to obtain reimbursement of expenses.

Wherever possible, use of library credit cards to pay for travel, hotel, etc. is optimal. If an employee does not have a library-issued credit card, they can coordinate with Central Office to make bookings. Any use of library credit cards must be accompanied by a receipt/invoice.

The travel reimbursement form must be signed by the Library Director or the Budget and Finance Manager. Designated approval authorities are required to review expenditures and withhold reimbursement if there is reason to believe that the expenditures are inappropriate or extravagant.

### **Mileage**

Personal vehicles should be used when no other means of transportation is feasible. Commuting Mileage is defined as round-trip mileage traveled routinely by the employee between their residence and base work location. Base work location is defined as the library location where the employee is required to report to work on that day. Commuting mileage must be deducted from total travel mileage to calculate reimbursable mileage. Commuting mileage and other commuting costs incurred on normal workdays are considered a personal expense and are not reimbursable.

*Alternative, adapted from suggestion by C. Herrala: When an employee is driving to a training or as needed travel location, mileage is only reimbursable only over the first 15 miles of your trip (the employee is responsible for the first 15 miles each way).*

To calculate reimbursable mileage:

If you leave from the workplace and return to the workplace, count only the mileage from the workplace to the destination, and back to the workplace. If you leave from home and return home without going to the workplace, use the mileage from home to the destination, and back to

home, then subtract from that total your normal round-trip mileage for your commute to work. . If you leave from the workplace and return home without going back to the workplace, use your mileage from the workplace to the destination, plus the mileage from the destination to your home and subtract your mileage for your normal one-way commute to work. If you leave from home and return to the workplace without going back to your home, use your mileage from your home to your destination plus the mileage from the destination to the workplace and subtract your mileage for your normal one-way commute to work.

### **Vacation in conjunction with business travel**

In cases in which vacation time is added to a business trip, any cost variance in airfare, car rental or lodging must be clearly identified on the travel request form. The library will not prepay any personal expenses with the intention of being “repaid” at a later time, nor will any personal expenses be reimbursed.

### **Exceptions**

Occasionally it may be necessary for travelers to request exceptions to this travel policy. Requests for exceptions to the policy must be made in writing and approved by the Library Director

### **Travel Expenses/Procedures**

For training purposes outside the region, staff should identify the travel method that best balances the efficiency of both cost and staff time.

#### ***Permissible prepaid travel expenses***

Before the travel, the library issue pay for airfare, rail transportation, rental vehicles, conference registration fees and cash advances. Wherever possible, arrangements should be made by the library’s Central Office. When not possible, the library will provide reimbursement for transportation paid for by employee, provided that the travel is pre-authorized and reasonable.

**Travel advances.** Cash advances are authorized for specific situations that might cause undue financial hardship for traveling library staff.

Expenses associated with the trip must be reconciled and substantiated within two weeks of the return date. The traveler must repay the library for any advances in excess of the approved reimbursable expenses. The employee the travel is responsible for notifying the Budget and Finance Manager of any excess advances

Travel advances are processed by submitting a completed request for payment form and travel request form to the business office. Reimbursement for any remaining expenses is processed on a travel reimbursement form approved by the Director or Budget and Finance Manager.

### ***Reimbursements***

Requests for reimbursements of travel-related expenses are submitted on a travel reimbursement form. This form must be accompanied by supporting documentation, such as itemized receipts

These forms must be submitted within two weeks after the trip is completed. Travel reimbursement forms not submitted within this time frame require exception approval from the Director.

Reimbursement of travel expenses is based on documentation of reasonable and actual expenses supported by the original, itemized receipts where required. Reimbursements that may be paid by the Library may include:

- Direct costs of airfare, rail, and other ticketed transportation
- Ferry Fares, tolls, etc.
- Taxi, rideshare services, etc. from airport to hotel and return trip to airport as appropriate. Reasonable effort should be made to obtain the most economical transportation to and from airports and hotels. If staying a substantial distance from the conference, transportation from hotel to conference is also included
- Fees for storing/parking motor vehicles
- Conference registration fees

The following will not be reimbursed:

- Cost of Travel Insurance
- Charges billed to hotel rooms not including parking or room (e.g. pay TV, mini-bar, room services)
- Damage to personal belongings
- Towing Charges
- Mileage to and from meals
- Dry cleaning services
- Valet tips and incidentals (see Per Diem)

**Conference registration fees.** If the conference fee was not prepaid, the Library will reimburse these fees, including business-related banquets or meals that are part of the conference registration. Original receipts to support the payment are required. If the conference does not provide a receipt, then a cancelled check, credit card slip/statement or documentation that the amount was paid is required for reimbursement.

A prorated amount for the meals provided must be deducted from the traveler's per diem. See Meals (per diem) for more detail. Entertainment activities such as recreational outings and sightseeing tours will not be reimbursed.

Registration fees paid directly by an individual will not be reimbursed until the conference is completed.

**Lodging.** The cost of overnight lodging (room rate and tax only) will be reimbursed to the traveler if the authorized travel is 50 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary worksite.

Exceptions to this restriction may be approved in writing by the Director or designee.

The library will reimburse lodging expenses at reasonable, single occupancy or standard business room rates. When a conference hotel rate is available, reimbursement will be limited to the conference rate, unless otherwise approved by the Director or designee.

**Meals (per diem).** Per diem allowances are reimbursable for in-state overnight travel that is 50 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary worksite. Per diem allowances are applicable for all out-of-state travel.

The library's per diem rates are based on the U.S. General Services Administration Guidelines, which vary by city location and state. If the city is not allotted a specific GSA estimate, the state rate will prevail. In addition to meals these rates include incidental expenses such as laundry, dry cleaning and service tips (e.g., housekeeping or porter tips). Incidental expenses, unless specifically cited in this policy, will not be reimbursed

Per diem reimbursements are based on full day and first/last day of travel rates.

Receipts are not required for per diem allowances. Per diem allowances are reimbursed after the trip is completed, unless a travel advance is requested.