

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION
PERSONNEL POLICIES

SUBJECT: Non-Employee Travel Reimbursement

Policy Number: 508.0

Adopted: August 6, 2015; Updated July 10, 2019; Updated September 30, 2019

This policy outlines the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) travel reimbursement to help local school districts, campuses, and other non-state employees off-set some of the travel costs associated with attending OCHE program meetings/conferences. Clear justification of purpose for the number of attendees traveling to the event, meeting, conference, training, etc. must be included with a clear business purpose noted in preapproval paperwork. The reimbursement policy must be communicated by the program manager prior to participant(s) attending a designated event. Program managers should keep the number of non-employee personnel attending a program meeting/conference requiring travel to an absolute minimum. Travel reimbursements for local school districts and/or campus employees are made directly to the local school district and/or campus, not to the employee(s).

A. Mileage Reimbursements

1. Reimbursement for mileage will be based on the current State of Montana standard rate per mile with a maximum of .27/mile for any (local school district, campus, personal, or rental) vehicle.
2. Reimbursement for mileage will be based on one (1) vehicle per every three (3) participants traveling from the same local school district and/or campus. If additional vehicles are driven, OCHE may not reimburse the additional mileage to that local school district and/or campus.
3. Mileage reimbursement will be based on the distance from the local school district and/or campus employee's place of employment, not the employee's home.

B. Lodging Reimbursements

1. Lodging will be reimbursed based on the current state rate or the rate negotiated when OCHE blocks the rooms. If the participant(s) did not book the rooms during the time the room blocks are reserved and the room rates are higher, OCHE will only reimburse the originally negotiated rate. Lodging receipts must be included with the travel reimbursement form.
2. If a participant reserves a room but does not attend the conference/meeting, it is the participant's responsibility to cancel the room reservation. OCHE will not reimburse any 'no-show' rooms.
3. For non-OCHE meetings/conferences, lodging charges that exceed the current state rates will be evaluated for reasonableness. Participants should request prior approval from the designated program manager for all out of state travel.
 - a. When a federal program is putting on a conference/meeting/event, they must secure a block of motel rooms at the state rate, and share that hotel information along with the rest of the other travel information with the non-employee participants invited to the event as part of their invitation to attend before travel occurs. If a participant does not book a room at that rate, OCHE will only reimburse the traveler at the rate the rooms were booked at. If a participant reserves a room but does not attend the conference/meeting, it is the participant's responsibility to cancel the room reservation. OCHE will not reimburse any 'no-show' rooms.

C. Meal Reimbursements

History

1. Meal reimbursements will be based on the current state per diem rates and travel status requirements. The federal rates will be used for out of state meal reimbursements and OCHE will adjust the meal reimbursement accordingly on the travel reimbursement form.
2. If meals are included with the conference/meeting, OCHE will not reimburse for those provided meals.

D. Other Expenses Reimbursements

1. If the participant has other expenses incurred while traveling (shuttle, taxi, baggage etc.) a receipt must be included with the travel reimbursement form. It is OCHE's discretion to determine if other expenses are reimbursable.
2. If traveling by air, each person is allowed a maximum of one checked bag. Any additional checked bags will be at the expense of the participant, unless prior approval has been obtained from OCHE.
3. If a participant requests to drive instead of flying to a meeting/conference out of state, this must be preapproved by the program director. The mileage reimbursement will be based on the lesser of the airline ticket cost or the current State of Montana standard rate per mile calculation with a maximum of .27/mile. The participant will not be allowed additional lodging, parking, meals per diem, or any other costs associated with driving versus flying to the meeting/conference.
4. If additional personal time is taken to travel, OCHE will not reimburse the local school district or campus for the hiring of substitutes for that additional time.

E. Non-Employee Travel Reimbursement Form

1. Travel reimbursement forms must include the actual departure and arrival time of the participants. This information is necessary to determine the meal per diem reimbursement. If the departure and arrival times are not designated on the form, OCHE may not provide a meal reimbursement.
2. The [travel reimbursement form](#) must be filled out completely and signed by each participant. All required receipts must be attached. Final approval for payment will be made by OCHE personnel.
3. The completed travel reimbursement forms and receipts must be returned to OCHE within thirty (30) days of the conference/meeting date. Any form(s) outstanding after that time period may not be reimbursed.
4. For non-employee travel expenses incurred in the month of June; all reimbursement forms must be submitted to OCHE by July 15th in order to be processed.
5. If the participant is not a member of a local school district or campus, a W-9 form must be completed and submitted with the travel reimbursement form in order for a payment to be processed.