

Northwest Regional Education Service District

Code: **DLC-AR**

Revised/Reviewed: 9/16/10; 2/21/17; 8/22/22

Orig. Code(s): DLC-AR(2)

Staff Travel Reimbursement

The Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRES D) travel procedures are applicable Agency-wide, regardless of which program is paying the costs. Travel expenses include travel fares, meals, lodging and expenses incident to travel. Only travel expenses as are ordinary and necessary in the conduct of approved travel for NWRES D business purposes and directly attributable to it will be reimbursed. As used in this administrative regulation, an “ordinary” expense means one that is common and accepted in the profession; a “necessary” expense means one that is essential and appropriate in order to conduct NWRES D business. Expense reimbursement for staff traveling on approved NWRES D business will be governed by the following procedures. Reimbursement procedures established by the NWRES D will also apply to Board members traveling on Board-approved NWRES D business, as applicable.

In-Region and Out-of-Region Travel

1. All out-of-region travel within Oregon and Washington must be approved by the immediate supervisor.
2. All travel outside of Oregon and Washington must be approved by the immediate supervisor and the department's Chief Officer (CFO, CIO, CHRO, CAO, COS).
3. Use of private vehicles for in-region and out-of-region business travel will be reimbursed, after approval by the immediate supervisor, per the reimbursement standards set by the NWRES D.

Travel by Personal Car - Local Use

1. Travelers may find it necessary to use their private automobiles while on NWRES D business. Such use should occur only with the knowledge and consent of the NWRES D management.
2. Each employee is responsible for transportation once each duty day from home to regular place of work and home. Mileage reimbursement will be provided for other approved travel to cover activities which are a part of the employee’s designated responsibilities. Employees are entitled to reimbursement for miles traveled from their regular work site to an off-site, work-related activity. Employees are also entitled to reimbursement for miles traveled to return to their place of work from the off-site, work-related activity.
3. When a private vehicle is used, reimbursement shall be at the rate per mile authorized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Reimbursement rate per mile covers all costs of operating a car.

Additional operating expenses cannot be claimed.

Travel by Personal Car - Out-of-State

1. Travel in a personal car will be reimbursed at the rate per mile authorized by the IRS.
2. If a route other than the shortest one is taken, an explanation must be made. (Refer to Personal Travel Section, page 4).
3. Justification for use of personal car for out-of-state travel shall be based on the following:
 - a. When the destination is not conveniently accessible by plane;
 - b. When various points must be visited and plane schedules are inconvenient;
 - c. When articles must be carried, and to take them by air would not be feasible;
 - d. Traveler's inconvenience.
4. There is often a misunderstanding about allowable travel charges when employees drive their cars for their own convenience. Transportation will be reimbursed at current rate per mile or plane at coach fare, plus usual cab fare, whichever is less.
5. In case a private car is used from home, to or from airport or railroad station, mileage for one round trip and parking will be reimbursed. Parking reimbursement is limited to economy lot rates.

Vehicle Rentals

1. Rental vehicles may be used only when use will result in a savings or otherwise be more advantageous to the NWRES D or when the use of other transportation is not feasible.
2. Rental of a compact vehicle is recommended when suitable for approved NWRES D business because of the lower initial rate and the guaranteed rate. Certain rental agencies guarantee the compact rate in all owned stations and in most licensee stations, which means that if a reservation for a compact vehicle is accepted and one is not available, a standard-sized vehicle will be substituted at the compact rate.
3. Rental vehicles will be used only for official travel or in lieu of taxi for necessary travel. Any additional costs incurred for other usage will be the personal responsibility of the traveler.
4. Employees will be informed if the NWRES D carries the rental car endorsement as part of its insurance coverage. In the event the NWRES D does not carry the rental car endorsement the employee will be authorized to purchase insurance coverage from the rental agency.

Insurance Coverage

1. Insurance costs are included as part of the mileage reimbursement for employees authorized to use a private vehicle to conduct NWRES D business. It is the responsibility of the owner or driver of the vehicle to be certain that the vehicle is adequately covered by insurance.

2. The responsibility of the NWRES D for damages resulting from vehicle accidents is not the same as set forth in the NWRES D's general liability insurance policy. The employee's insurance coverage provides primary coverage when the employee is driving his/her own vehicle on approved NWRES D business.

Vehicular Accidents

1. Should an employee become involved in an accident while driving a NWRES D vehicle, they must report this accident to the NWRES D Fiscal Services Department as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours after the accident. Local or state police should be notified as required by law.
2. If an employee is involved in an accident while on approved NWRES D business and using their own personal vehicle, they should notify the NWRES D Fiscal Services Department as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours after the accident. Local or state police should be notified as required by law. The employee's personal auto insurance carrier should be notified by the employee as required under the conditions of their individual policies.

Reservations, Commercial Carrier and Lodging

1. Travel must be conducted in the most expeditious and cost-effective manner, as determined by the NWRES D.
2. Each employee is responsible for making his/her own reservations by obtaining a purchase order number from the business office and furnishing that number to the local travel agency or commercial carrier.
3. Individuals traveling on approved NWRES D business by a carrier offering travel credits (i.e., frequent flyer mileage, etc.) are required to account for credits received and may use the credits for future approved NWRES D travel purposes only.

Canceled Trips

1. If an employee cannot leave at the scheduled time, it is his/her responsibility to call the travel agency or carrier and arrange to have the tickets cancelled or exchanged.
2. Commercial carrier reservation cancellations must be made at least 24 hours before departure time, whenever possible.
3. Lodging reservations must be canceled by the employee as soon as possible to avoid a cancellation charge.

If a trip is canceled after an advance and/or tickets have been issued, the advance and tickets must be returned to Fiscal Services immediately.

Personal Travel Combined with NWRES D Business Travel

1. If an individual traveling on approved NWRES D business engages in both business and personal activities, travel expenses incurred will be reimbursed only for expenses that are ordinary and necessary in the conduct of NWRES D business. Expenses incurred as a part of personal business are the sole responsibility of the traveler.
2. When personal travel is combined with approved NWRES D business travel and the individual is traveling by less than the most expeditious and cost-effective manner, any additional costs must be paid by the traveler.
3. Time away from work caused by traveling by less than the most expeditious means available for personal purposes must be charged to vacation or other appropriate leave.
4. Vacation or other personal leave may be taken in conjunction with approved NWRES D travel subject to the following:
 - a. Time delays related to approved NWRES D business are charged as working time even if no work is performed;
 - b. If the employee travels by less than the most cost-effective manner, as determined by the NWRES D, for approved NWRES D business or for personal travel combined with travel for NWRES D business purposes, he/she must pay the additional cost (e.g., increased fare, meals, lodging expenses, etc.) incurred as a result of the personal travel;
 - c. All subsistence and local transportation (i.e., taxi, vehicle fare, etc.) while on vacation status or other appropriate leave must be paid by the employee;
 - d. The traveler will not be required to pay any of the basic transportation costs incurred as a part of the approved NWRES D business, even though he/she spends a substantial part of the total time away from home on vacation or other personal leave, provided the employee was traveling on approved NWRES D business;
 - e. A traveler, who decides on his/her own to conduct NWRES D business without prior approval, while on vacation or other personal leave, cannot then use this as a justification to have the NWRES D pay his/her basic transportation cost from the NWRES D to the location visited or submit a request for other expense reimbursement.

Meals and Lodging for Business-Related Travel

1. Lodging (e.g., hotel) will be reimbursed at the single occupancy rate, unless NWRES D employees are sharing a room when attending the same conference/meeting. In the event all single occupancy rooms are taken, a double occupancy room may be substituted. If a satisfactory conference hotel room is not available, another hotel may be used for lodging at a rate not to exceed the conference hotel room rate.
2. Reimbursement will be made for ordinary and necessary meal expenses incurred in the course of approved travel for NWRES D business. Meals include amounts spent for food, beverage, taxes and related gratuities. Gratuities in excess of 20 percent are the responsibility of the employee and will not be reimbursed by the NWRES D. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed by the NWRES D.

3. Expenses in excess of the NWRES D's established limit are ordinarily the responsibility of the employee and may be reimbursed only with superintendent or designee approval. Receipts for all meal expenses must be secured and attached to the claim.

Per Diem Allowance for Meals

1. Meal expenses for approved NWRES D business travel purposes may be reportable as income to the employee in accordance with IRS regulations. Generally, meal expenses incurred for approved NWRES D business purposes in which NWRES D business is conducted with at least one or more other persons or that is incurred on approved NWRES D business for a trip that is overnight, or long enough that the individual needs to stop for sleep or rest to properly perform his/her duties, as defined by the IRS, will not be reportable as income to the employee.
2. Per diem allowance for meals and incidental expenses incurred while on approved business will be available at the applicable IRS rate for travel that begins before 5:00 a.m. and extends beyond 9:00 p.m. Per diem will be prorated for partial travel days based on the following general guidelines:
 - a. Breakfast for travel beginning before 5:00 a.m. and extends beyond 11:00 a.m.;
 - b. Lunch for travel beginning before 11:00 a.m. and extends beyond 2:00 p.m.;
 - c. Dinner for travel beginning before 3:00 p.m. and extends beyond 9:00 p.m.
3. If a meal is included in the conference registration fees, provided at the meeting place, or is paid for separately, the corresponding meal allowance shall be deducted from the daily per diem allowance.
4. If staff member is traveling throughout the NWRES D region to conduct regular business, per diem is not allowed.
5. Current per diem rates are available at: www.gsa.gov/perdiem.

Business Entertainment Expense

1. Justifiable and reasonable expenses incurred for entertaining individuals or groups on behalf of the NWRES D will be reimbursed. Such expenditures, which require the approval of the superintendent or designee, include cost of entertaining official visitors, luncheon and dinner conferences, employee meetings, etc. These expenditures are to be identified on the "Staff Reimbursement" or "Conference/Workshop" form giving reasons for the expenditures.
2. Reimbursement of expenses for activities related to associations of collective bargaining units are not authorized except as provided by negotiated agreements.
3. In no instances shall a staff member be reimbursed for the purchase of alcoholic beverages.