

West Noble School Corporation

Guidelines for

Travel Approval and Reimbursement

Approved by Board of Education January 23, 2012

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General Information

It is in the best interest of the school corporation that certain employees travel to and from professional meetings, exhibits, seminars and other similar opportunities. The investment in time and dollars to send employees to designated locations is believed to pay dividends to the corporation in terms of increased expertise and perspective in specific employee work assignments.

It is important to remember that the responsibility for accuracy and validity of each request for reimbursement for approved travel lies with the requesting employee. Careful attention should be given to the following established policy and guidelines.

Conference allowances are included in the school corporation budget to pay for or reimburse employees for registration fees, lodging, transportation, and other expenses. It is generally expected that employees will attend conferences that pertain specifically to their area of responsibility. Expenses over and above the travel reimbursement guidelines must be borne by the employee.

It is a district responsibility to place reasonable limits on the total corporation travel expense and on the number of employees who attend a single conference. Employees are expected to indicate their meeting preferences early in the year so those requests may be reviewed through the appropriate channels and a timely decision made. Final disposition of individual requests will be based upon such criteria as (1) the appropriateness of the meeting as measured against the job responsibilities of the requester, (2) other responsibilities and/or meetings that cause the employee to be away from his/her prime assignment, (3) prior attendance at the same or similar meeting, (4) the total number of employees who have requested authority to attend the same meeting, (5) the projected cost of meeting attendance in terms of work days and reimbursable expenditures, and (6) the available budget.

In some cases the best interests of the WNSC are served when certain employees are directed and/or permitted to serve on committees or boards. When prior approval is received from the Superintendent, or his/her designee, the employee can accept membership on a job related committee or board, travel to and from meetings will be reimbursed.

School employees may be reimbursed for expenses incurred while accompanying students who qualify for national conferences or who attend state meetings for which expenses are reimbursed to the corporation.

Travel

An employee whose position requires the use of his/her personal vehicle for travel may file a claim for mileage reimbursement.

Prior Approval of Travel

A Professional Leave Request form must be completed and approved prior to all conference and school business travel. This form is for **all employees**. Careful attention should be given to the estimated travel expenses. If actual reimbursable expenses exceed the total estimate in the Professional Leave Request form by an unreasonable amount, the superintendent or his/her designee may approve or deny the excess reimbursement. Approval is designated by signature on the Travel Expense Voucher.

Allowable Travel Expenses

With the exception of registration fees and air travel, travel expenses should be paid by the employee and reimbursed by the corporation. Reimbursement will be made for amounts paid by the employee and reported on a Travel Expense Voucher. Each expense shall be accompanied by a detailed original

receipt from the vendor. Employees must request reimbursement within 30 days of the end of the travel period.

Registration Fees

If the registrar for the convention, conference or seminar accepts purchase orders to guarantee payment, a requisition should be submitted to purchasing along with the registration form and Professional Leave Request form (copy). Purchasing will not process the purchase order until the completed registration form and Professional Leave Request form are received. If the registrar requires prepayment, an Accounts Payable Voucher may be submitted to accounting with the registration form and approved Professional Leave Request form (copy). Registration will not be prepaid more than 90 days in advance unless an early registration discount applies.

Air Travel

If airline tickets need to be purchased for an approved professional leave, such arrangements will be coordinated with the proper personnel in the Central Office.

Overnight Accommodations

WNSC will compensate only for overnight lodging for the number of nights required to conduct corporation business. Additional nights will be allowed if it can be shown that the transportation savings are greater than the additional cost of lodging and meals or if the distance makes prior or post accommodation necessary. If multiple employees are attending the same conference, employees of the same gender shall share a room.

Employees are responsible for making their own reservations for overnight accommodations. When discount rates are available they should be utilized. Many hotels offer government employee discounts with proof of employment. When making reservations, employees should ask for a government employee discount. Hotels may require proof of government employment at check-in such as a WNSC identification badge or a pay stub.

Overnight accommodations can not be paid in advance by WNSC. If extraordinary circumstances prevent an employee from using personal funds for accommodations, special arrangements may be made so the employee can pay for the lodging with a WNSC procurement card.

The maximum reimbursement to an employee is the single rate charged by the hotel. Room, tax, and garage parking may also be reimbursed on the lodging receipt. Charges for entertainment (ie movies) or snacks available from the in-room guest amenities will not be reimbursed.

Mileage

Mileage reimbursement will be made at the current IRS rate.

Employees have two options to determine the number of miles for reimbursement: (1) record actual odometer readings to and from each destination, or (2) use the least number of road miles between WNSC and the destination using official state highway maps or acceptable websites such Mapquest or Google Maps .

If the employee chooses to return home each evening, while attending a consecutive day event, the total amount of additional mileage shall not exceed the cost of the accommodations available for the event.

Carpooling is encouraged. If two or more employees ride in the same vehicle, only one mileage reimbursement is allowed. Only the driver can be reimbursed. If transportation is provided by WNSC, than employees that choose to travel on their own will not be reimbursed.

The cost of air travel must be compared to the cost and practicality of travel by car. Reimbursement will be limited to the lower of the two alternatives, unless impractical.

If a corporation owned vehicle is used, receipts for gas purchases may be reimbursed.

Meals

Employees must submit itemized receipts for meal expenses. Employees may not submit receipts for reimbursement if they do not partake of the meal paid for with the registration fee or provided by hotel or conference at no cost.

Only meals for employees will be reimbursed. Employees may not be reimbursed for the meals of business associates or family members. While on one-day travel only lunch is reimbursable. Breakfast and dinner are reimbursable if an overnight stay is approved.

Amounts above the below stated level will be considered personal and non-reimbursable. If the reasonableness of a meal reimbursement is questioned, the Superintendent or his/her designee will decide what is reasonable under the circumstances.

Breakfast: \$10.00
Lunch: \$15.00
Dinner: \$20.00

Local Transportation (At Destination)

Taxicab, bus or shuttle service will be reimbursed when traveling between common carrier and hotel. Taxicab, bus or shuttle service expense will also be allowed when business activities occur away from the hotel. As with other expenses, employees must obtain receipts. Taxicab, bus or shuttle service expense for personal use will not be reimbursed.

Vehicle Rental

Vehicle rental must have prior approval via the Professional Leave Request form. Approval will only be granted if the vehicle rental is needed for business conducted outside of the hotel and rental is the most economical form of transportation. Gasoline purchases for the rental vehicle will be reimbursed. It is stressed that when discount or economy vehicles are available, they should be utilized.

Parking & Tolls

Expenses of parking a vehicle while at a business activity will be reimbursed if documented with a receipt. Parking charges included on a hotel bill is adequate documentation.

Tolls paid while traveling may be reimbursed. Receipts must be obtained from tolls that have attendants. If the tollbooth doesn't provide receipts, an itemized notation may be submitted with the voucher.

Internet

All internet charges itemized on a receipt should be marked either business or personal. Business use of the internet is reimbursable.

Tips

Tips should be itemized on the related receipt. Tips at restaurants will be reimbursed up to 15% of the meal receipt. No other tips will be reimbursed. Amounts above a reasonable level will be considered personal and non-reimbursable. If the reasonableness of a tip is questioned, the Superintendent or his/her designee will decide what is reasonable under the circumstances.

Non-reimbursable Travel Expenses

The following items are non-reimbursable:

1. Alcoholic beverages
2. Charges for personal phone calls
3. Movie rentals/Entertainment
4. Commuting mileage - Travel between home and work is considered commuting mileage.
5. Laundry and dry cleaning
6. Personal expense of entertainment or sightseeing before, during, or after official business.
7. Fines for traffic, parking or other violations
8. Doctor bills or medicine
9. Repair or towing of personal vehicle.

Non-refundable Expenses

Changes in travel plans will only be allowed if the change is required for the benefit of WNSC or in the case of an emergency. Approval for changes will be on a case-by-case basis. Unapproved changes will require that the employee pay for any non-refundable expenses incurred.

Standard Purchasing and Accounting Procedures

The process starts with a Professional Leave Request form and the proper approvals. After approval, employees may make the necessary reservations and travel arrangements according to these guidelines.

Purchasing

If the registrar for the conference accepts purchase orders, a requisition should be submitted. A purchase order must be processed prior to registering. Conference registration forms and approved Professional Leave Request forms must be submitted to purchasing. Purchasing will not process the purchase order until the completed registration form and approved Professional Leave Request form are received.

Accounting

1. If the conference registrar requires prepayment, an Accounts Payable Voucher may be submitted to accounting with the registration form and Professional Leave Request form (copy). Registration will not be prepaid more than 90 days in advance.
2. Employees requesting reimbursement must complete and sign a Travel Expense Voucher. A voucher is submitted to the accounting department with original receipts and the original Professional Leave Request form. A copy of the conference registration form and/or agenda is required if the employee is requesting registration.
3. If actual reimbursable expenses exceed the total estimate in the Professional Leave Request form by an unreasonable amount, the superintendent or his/her designee may approve or deny the excess reimbursement.