
TRAVEL

OVERVIEW

Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code Annotated (1972), authorizes the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration to set guidelines for travel reimbursement of state officials and employees. MDHS has adopted some of those guidelines as applicable to its subgrantees. As these laws and regulations are amended, this policy shall be amended accordingly.

A complete list of all current rules and regulations established by the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration are available on the Internet at the following address:

www.dfa.state.ms.us

POLICY

The following policy concerning in-state and out-of-state travel has been established for subgrantees of MDHS.

TERMS

DEFINITIONS

Commuting

Commuting is defined as travel by an officer/employee between the official residence, and the official duty station or regular place of work.

Official Duty Station

An officer/employee's official duty station is the city, town, or other location where the primary office is located, or the city, town or location where the primary work is performed on a permanent basis. If the employee regularly works in two or more areas, the official duty station shall be where the primary place of work is located. The primary place of work shall be determined by the agency head or authorized designee based on total time ordinarily spent working in each area and the degree of business activity in each area. Employees shall be advised in writing of their official duty station. Actual points of travel/odometer reading must be shown on reimbursement vouchers. (State law prohibits claiming reimbursement for miles not actually traveled.)

Official Residence

An officer/employee's official residence is the city, town, or other location where an officer/employee maintains a residence which is used as a primary domicile by the officer/employee. Determination by the agency head or authorized designee regarding his/her residence is to be based on items such as voter registration, ownership, or long-term rental of a personal residence, and the permanent address carried in the officer/employee's personnel file.

TRAVEL

- Travel Status** Travel status employees are those employees who perform duties at locations other than their official duty stations. Travel status employees are expected to report to work at their normal time when the work assignment is within 30 miles one-way. (This will also apply to the return trip.) The employee who works in two or more offices, or regular places of work, may claim mileage reimbursement to travel from one office or regular place of work to another place of work, but not between either regular work site and home, regardless of the distance of the commute. NOTE: An officer/employee is not in travel status and shall not receive lodging nor meal reimbursement while at the Official Duty Station. Reimbursement shall continue to be allowed for approved and documented expenses incurred during any authorized meeting, workshop or conference.
- Regular Place of Work** An officer/employee's regular place of work is any location at which he/she works or provides services on a regular basis.
- Temporary Place of Work** An employee's temporary place of work is any location at which the officer/employee performs services on short-term basis.
- Overnight Travel** When the one-way mileage from an employee's official duty station to the location of their work assignment exceeds 75 miles and the work assignment exceeds one day, the employee will normally be required to stay overnight. Exceptions may be approved on an individual basis by the Executive Director of the Subgrantee/or Authorized Official.

TRAVEL

ALLOWABLE REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL, MEALS, LODGING AND OTHER NECESSARY EXPENSES

Out-of-state travel must be approved by the appropriate MDHS Division Director through the budget narrative.

All reimbursements claimed for travel, meals, lodging and other necessary expenses shall be within the limitations of the established travel regulations, guidelines, and policies, as follows:

1. Travel in Privately-Owned Motor Vehicle

- a. An employee required to travel in connection with the performance of official duties shall be reimbursed for such travel at the state approved rate, not to exceed the current allowable rate per mile authorized in the subgrant budget, for travel when the employee's privately-owned vehicle is used.
- b. When two or more employees travel in one privately-owned vehicle, only one travel expense at the authorized reimbursement rate per mile shall be allowed. A notation on the travel voucher shall be made of the employee's name who is a guest passenger.
- c. If subsistence is claimed while traveling with another person in a privately-owned automobile, entries shall be made on the voucher indicating the name of the person in whose car the trip was made.
- d. Reimbursement shall not exceed the commercial airline tourist rate when an employee chooses to travel via personal automobile in interstate travel instead of traveling by airplane. Subsistence claimed must begin and end at the time the traveler would have departed and returned, had the trip been made by airplane. Only the owner of the automobile shall be allowed to claim travel. If employees are required to travel as passengers, only subsistence will be allowed.
- e. Mileage shall be allowed for the distance actually and necessarily traveled in order to promptly discharge the duties required of an employee. The mileage between points as shown on the latest road map as issued by the Mississippi State Highway Department (Official Highway Map) shall be considered as the official mileage guide between said points. For interstate travel, applicable official highway maps shall be used. Beginning and ending odometer readings must be indicated on the travel voucher.
- f. An employee shall be paid the standard rate per mile, plus automobile parking fees, for the round trip in a privately-owned automobile from the official station or place of business to an air terminal or from an air terminal to the official station. For parking fee's in excess of \$10, a receipt shall be attached with the travel expense voucher.

TRAVEL

2. Travel by Public Carrier

- a. When official travel is by means of a public carrier or other means not involving a privately-owned motor vehicle, an employee shall receive reimbursement of the actual fare costs and other necessary itemized expenses incurred in connection with such travel. The passenger coupon/ticket stub which notates the fare must accompany the expense voucher.
- b. Out-of-State travel by airlines must be at the tourist rate, unless such space is unavailable. If travel is in first class airline accommodations, an employee shall certify on the itemized expense voucher that tourist accommodations were not available.
- c. When the traveling employee makes changes in airline reservations during the trip which increases or decreases the airfare, a copy of the original ticket and credit or debit adjustments must all be attached to the voucher, along with an explanation for the changes made on the voucher.
- d. In-state air travel must be kept to a minimum.

3. Meals, Lodging and Other Necessary Expenses

a. Meals

An employee shall be reimbursed for the cost of meals and lodging for overnight travel only, and for other necessary expenses, as supported by receipts, incurred in the course of official travel, subject to the approval of the subgrantee authorized official. Meal reimbursement cost is for actual expenses not to exceed the daily meal maximums for the specific location of assignment which are currently set as follows:

All Areas Except High Cost Areas.....\$30.00
*High Cost Areas.....\$35.00 or \$40.00

*In-state and out-of-state high cost areas are those cities designated in the Federal Register as having a prescribed maximum per diem daily rate of \$100.00 or higher. Where the maximum federal per diem is \$100.00 - \$124.00, a maximum of \$35.00 per day in actual meal expenses may be reimbursed, and where the federal per diem is \$125.00 or over, a maximum rate of \$40.00 in actual meal expenses may be reimbursed.

The federal register containing the current federal per diem rates may be obtained from the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration website or from the applicable MDHS funding division.

TRAVEL

b. Lodging

1. Reimbursement for lodging shall be made when the circumstances prevent departure and return travel to the official duty station in one day. In no case shall an employee be reimbursed for lodging at their official duty station. Reimbursement for lodging expenses shall be made for the amount actually paid when supported by a receipt not to exceed Department of Finance & Administration State Travel Guide. When an employee has a choice, extreme care and discreet judgment shall be exercised in selection of lodging to ensure that the cost for lodging is within reason for the area. Reimbursement for lodging shall not exceed the single room rate. All expenses for lodging shall be billed to the employee or the subgrantee agency. The lodging receipt shall be marked paid.
2. If a member of the employee's family or other non-subgrantee employee travels with the employee, the employee must claim motel/hotel room rate at the single rate. The single rate must be written across the face of the receipt.
3. If more than one employee shares a motel/hotel room, each employee must report his/her pro-rata share of the costs on the travel reimbursement request. Separate invoices must be obtained and are available if the employee so requests when registering at the motel/hotel.

c. Other

1. Charges for transportation, such as buses, limousines, taxi, etc., shall be allowed while traveling on official business. Taxi cab charges shall be allowed at the point of origin or from the subgrantee agency/office, whichever is closer to the air terminal.
2. Charges for rental cars shall be allowed only when there is a demonstrated cost savings over other modes of transportation, such as buses, subway, taxi, etc., and not strictly for the convenience of the employee.
3. Reasonable expenses incurred for tips to porters, baggage carriers, housekeeping personnel, waitresses or waiters, etc. are allowable. Necessary travel expenses do not include personal expense items such as alcoholic beverages, entertainment and trip insurance. Meal tips should be included in the actual meal expense unless the inclusion of tips would cause the meals to exceed the maximum daily limitations placed on meals. Meal tips shown separately shall not exceed 15% of meal costs. Charges for registration fees are allowable as other authorized expenses if accompanied by a receipt. Meals shall not be claimed as separate items of expense on the travel voucher when included in the registration fee.
4. Phone calls, postage, and other expenses directly related to a trip must be certified and initialed at the bottom of the travel voucher by the employee that they are for valid business expenses.

TRAVEL

TRAVEL VOUCHER

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE TRAVEL VOUCHER

- A. Social Security # - enter your social security number.
- B. Name - print your name.
- C. Title - print title.
- D. Address - enter your address of residence.
- E. Enter the beginning date and ending date covered by the travel voucher.

BACK SIDE

- F. Employee Name - Enter the employee's name.
- G. SSN - Enter the employee's social security number.
- H. Date - enter each date of travel.
- I. Purpose of travel - reason for travel.
- J. Points of Travel - Enter the beginning, intermediate (area travel) and ending point of travel for each date.
- K. Total Miles - Enter the total miles traveled from the beginning point to the ending point. (Explain the reason for any excessive miles.)
- L. Actual Breakfast - enter the actual amount paid for breakfast each date. (Receipt required)
- M. Actual Lunch - enter the actual amount paid for lunch each date. (Receipt required)
- N. Actual Dinner -enter the actual amount paid for dinner each date. (Receipt required)
- O. Total Amount Allowed - Enter the sum of the amount allowed for breakfast, lunch, and dinner (Items L, M and N).
- P. Hotel/Motel - enter the amount paid for hotel/motel for allowable expenses each date (Receipt required). If direct billed to the subgrantee, enter "DB".
- Q. Other Authorized Expenses - Item - In this column, enter the beginning and ending odometer readings. Amount - enter any other allowable expenses.
- R. Total - Enter the total of each column (K, L, M, N, O, P and Q).

TRAVEL

FRONT SIDE

- S. Transfer the totals from the back side of this form to the appropriate line(s).
- T. Subtotal - Enter the total of all amounts under S.
- U. Travel Advance - Enter the amount advanced to employee.
- V. Net Reimbursement (Refund) - Enter the difference in Lines T and U.
- W. Signature of Payee - Employee must sign in this space.
- X. Date - Enter the date signed in this space.
- Y. Verified by - The verifier must sign in this space.
- Z. Title - Enter the title of the Verifier in this space.
- AA. Approved for payment - The subgrantee staff authorized to approve travel payments must approve by signing in this space.
- BB. Title - Enter the title of the subgrantee staff authorized to approve travel payments in this space.

TRAVEL

(Space Provided for the front side of the Travel Voucher Form)

TRAVEL

(Space Provided for the Reverse Side of the Travel Voucher Form)