

DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO: GUIDELINES FOR TRAVEL AND EXPENSE

Policy:

It is the policy of the Diocese of Sacramento to reimburse employees for business-related travel and meal expenses that are incurred by employees in connection with authorized diocesan business within the course and scope of their job duties, provided the traveling employee does not intentionally or unreasonably fail to comply with the travel policies and guidelines set forth herein.

Reimbursement Procedures:

1. Only actual expenses for an individual employee will be reimbursed (expenses of any non-employee guests will not be covered). If the employee is traveling with other diocesan employees, each employee must request reimbursement for his or her own expenses.
2. All employees whose travel expenses are expected to exceed \$500 must receive prior authorization from a supervisor.
3. Each request for reimbursement must be made via a Travel Expense Voucher form, and must include itemization of all expenses, supported by receipts or other original documentation. Requests for business-related transportation reimbursement should be submitted monthly and must show the dates and places driven.
4. In case of financial hardship, an employee may obtain a cash advance for expected diocesan travel expenses. Cash advances will be made by the Accounting Department upon receipt of a properly completed and approved request for payment. Upon conclusion of the travel, the employee must promptly submit a completed Travel Expense Voucher form, and must return to the Diocese any unused funds from the cash advance amount. In the event unused cash amounts are not promptly returned, the employee will be held personally responsible for the amount, and will also be subject to discipline for misconduct.
5. Any employee who submits fraudulent receipts or falsifies expense reports will be subject to immediate discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

General Travel/Expense Guidelines:

1. As a general rule, employees should travel by the most economical means available. Employees should seek out the lowest reasonable cost in selecting class of travel, car rental, etc., while taking into consideration the economical use of the traveler's time, necessities of the particular trip, and the corresponding time commitments/restrictions associated with each mode of travel.
2. Where business-related travel will necessitate an overnight stay, hotel reservations should be made as far in advance as possible, so the most economical lodging rates can be obtained.
3. Tips paid in connection with transportation, lodging, and meals pursuant to this policy are reimbursable, provided they are properly itemized and documented on the Travel Expense Voucher form.
4. Employees are expected to comply with all applicable traffic and parking regulations when traveling by personal automobile or rental car. Accordingly, employees will not be reimbursed for parking tickets and traffic fines received while driving on diocesan business.

Procedures for Specific Travel Issues:

Air Travel: Employees traveling by air are required to use the services of designated travel agents who are familiar with Diocesan travel policy. The employee should make travel arrangements at the earliest possible date in order to take advantage of any available discount fares. The employee is responsible for complying with airlines' regulations concerning cancellations and avoiding penalties associated with them whenever possible.

[Train / Bus Travel: Use of regularly-scheduled commercial passenger rail or bus service is permitted and is reimbursable if either of those modes of transportation would reasonably be the most efficient and cost-effective, taking into consideration such factors as fare pricing and travel time for train or bus travel in comparison to air or automobile travel.] ?? do you want this as an alternative?

Rental Car Travel: Use of rental cars requires the advanced approval of the employee's Department Director, and will depend upon the nature of the trip or location of the place of business. Rental cars are generally a preferred option if the cost of using a rental car would be less than the reimbursement for using a privately-owned vehicle. [cdw coverage?] Compact/economy models must be rented unless more than two employees are traveling together. Travelers should generally return cars with a full tank of gas to avoid excessive re-fueling charges by the car rental companies.

Personal Automobile Travel: Travel by privately-owned vehicle may be used when it is the most convenient means of transportation. Mileage reimbursement for using a privately-owned vehicle will be at the rate per mile established annually by the Diocesan Finance Office and set forth in the Accounting Department's Operations Guidelines. The traveler will be reimbursed for parking and toll fees incurred in the course of the trip. The mileage reimbursement is intended to cover all other costs of vehicle operation. When traveling directly from home, employees must deduct equivalent of normal round trip to office from the total mileage for that trip. Routine commute mileage between home and Diocesan offices is not reimbursable.

Employees operating automobiles on business must comply with all statutory requirements for the operation of motor vehicles and have at least the minimum insurance coverage required by the State of California. Every staff member who uses a personal automobile for Diocesan Pastoral Center business is required to have on file with the Human Resources/Insurance Department a copy of their valid California Driver's License and proof of insurance.

Taxis: Employees may utilize the services of taxis or other transportation (the least expensive suitable service) to and from places of business, hotels, airports, and train stations/bus terminals. Actual cost including customary gratuity will be reimbursed.

Lodging: Where business-related travel necessitates an overnight stay, the employee will be reimbursed for lodging in a standard business hotel (Marriott, Sheraton, Hilton, Radisson, etc.) at the best published single occupancy rates. All lodging expenses must be supported by hotel receipts, regardless of the amount. Employees will not be reimbursed for room service, health clubs, in-room movies, in-room mini-bar services, or any other personal expenses.

Meals: Meals are normally reimbursed only where an overnight stay or a business meeting is involved. Individuals will be reimbursed for the out-of-pocket cost of meals on an actual cost basis up to a maximum of \$35 per day (\$7 for breakfast, \$10 for lunch, and \$18 for dinner).