



Regional Transportation Authority of Central
Oklahoma

Travel Policy

This manual addresses the policies
for travel expenditures and
reimbursements for travel
related expenses.

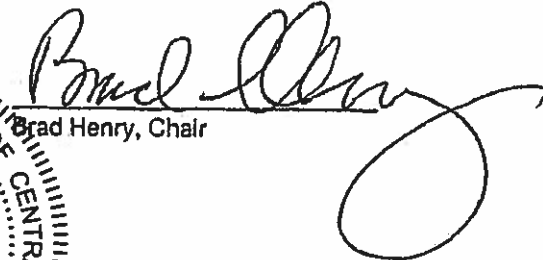


The Travel Policy is hereby APPROVED by the Regional Transportation Authority of Central Oklahoma, and SIGNED by the Chairperson, this 17th day of March 2021.

ATTEST:

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION
AUTHORITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA


Mary Melon, Secretary


Brad Henry, Chair

Reviewed for form and legality.




Hailey Rawson, Assistant Municipal Counselor

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INTRODUCTION

The Regional Transportation Authority of Central Oklahoma (“RTA”) is a public trust funded in part by the taxpaying residents of Del City, Edmond, Midwest City, Moore, Norman, and the City of Oklahoma City. As such, all expense records, regardless of fund source, are open to the public under the Federal and State Freedom of Information Act. Business travel is first and foremost intended to achieve the RTA’s goal. All trips must support the mission of the RTA, receive the appropriate approvals, and be carefully planned to ensure that expenditures are necessary, prudent, and as economical as possible. Directors and staff travelling on behalf of RTA business have the responsibility to act prudently and to only incur travel expenses which are necessary, reasonable, appropriate, and in compliance with the RTA’s policies related to travel and business expenses.

This policy pertains to the reimbursement of business-related travel expenses incurred while traveling away from home for a period substantially longer than an ordinary workday and is reasonable to sleep or rest. It is designed to govern reimbursements and/or prepayment of conferences, seminars, training sessions, business meetings, and other beneficial situations where common expenses are incurred for transportation, registration, lodging, and meals. Incidental travel expenses are subject to approval. Traveling members of the RTA, through administrative support personnel, must obtain all quotes, complete related forms, and submit travel paperwork with all required approvals.

All modes of travel, lodging, and meals should be selected with consideration given to minimizing the loss of time to the traveling claimant and cost to the RTA. Traveling claimants should neither gain nor lose personal funds while conducting business for the RTA. It is the responsibility of each claimant, as well as the Executive Director, or designee, approving the expenses, to comply with the provisions of this travel policy. Any claimant making commitments for travel will be personally responsible for expenses if the commitments are not made in accordance with this policy.

Nothing contained herein shall prohibit the Board of Directors, or designee, from modifying or approving exceptions to this policy to meet the needs of a unique situation.

CONSULTANT TRAVEL

Consultants’ travel expenses shall be negotiated and authorized as part of the terms of their Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with the RTA. Expenses not included in the terms of the PSA, must receive pre-approval in a written format from the Executive Director, prior to travel.

Consultants shall submit a claim for reimbursement of travel expenses on a form listing: (1) the date and place of expenses, (2) purpose of the trip, and (3) name of the person on the trip. Additionally, the RTA requires the Consultant to maintain detailed source documentation that can be verified through the audit process. Summary credit card receipts, which contain only the cost and tip are not considered to be detailed receipts. Only food purchased according to the federal per diem requirements shall be allowed. Actual costs for alcohol and tobacco must be clearly segregated and removed from meal costs. The use of estimates for any travel expenses is unacceptable. Supporting documentation for all expenses contained in the invoice must be submitted with each invoice. Any additional instructions for reimbursements shall be included in the terms of the PSA.

No other portion of this travel policy shall be interpreted to apply to Consultants unless specified

in the terms of their PSA.

AUTHORIZATION

The RTA member must receive authorization from the Board of Directors to travel, and provide the RTA business purpose for the travel, the estimated cost of the travel, the travel destination(s), and dates of the trip. Any expenses related to a traveling companion of a claimant are not reimbursable by the RTA. A Director may not authorize or otherwise approve their own claims for reimbursement. Such authorizations must be made at the level of the Board of Directors.

REGISTRATION

The RTA may pre-pay or reimburse claimants for registration for RTA-related workshops, conferences and seminars. Special events and tours that are not job-related and are leisure activity are not reimbursable. The Executive Director shall be responsible for prepayment of registration costs. If the Executive Director is unable to complete timely event registration, the traveling claimant may elect to register by using a personal credit card.

TRANSPORTATION

Travel time is defined as 24 hours before and after the times in the official conference/training registration information.

Commercial Airline

The standard mode for out-of-state travel is by commercial airline. When purchasing airfare, price should be the primary consideration; however, other factors to be considered may include reasonable departure and arrival times, as well as the duration of the flight. The goal is to book flights with consideration given to travel time, convenience to the traveling claimant, and cost effectiveness without interfering with the business purpose of the travel. Traveling claimants can use the airline of their choice.

If the cost of a flight is \$1,000 or more, the claimant is responsible for obtaining three quotes and the reimbursement amount will be the lowest fare from three (3) flight quotes with similar travel times, transfers, baggage fee, etc. The RTA will not reimburse claimants for added fees beyond economy coach fare to the extent a good faith effort is taken to fly coach on a primary airline, and the cost of checking one piece of luggage, if applicable. Examples of non-reimbursable fees include early boarding, better seating, obtain more leg room, etc.

Oklahoma City Ground Transportation and Parking

Transportation expenses, including private vehicle mileage to and from Will Rogers World Airport are reimbursable. Airport parking is reimbursable. A receipt is required for reimbursement of airport parking for short, or long-term parking expenses.

Private Vehicle – In State Travel

In the event an RTA owned vehicle is not available for travel within the State of Oklahoma, or circumstances dictate otherwise, a private vehicle can be used. The use of a private vehicle for traveling inside the state of Oklahoma must be approved by the Board, or designee, prior to travel. The claimant will need to track mileage and may utilize online tools to obtain mileage. Mileage reimbursement for use of a private vehicle will be paid at the current IRS rate. Mileage reimbursement claims pertaining to business related travel are to be filed in accordance with established RTA policies for vehicle mileage reimbursement (refer to the *Mileage Reimbursement* section of this policy).

Private Vehicle – Out of State Travel

Private vehicle mileage reimbursement will be paid at the current IRS rate, but only to the extent of the most economical cost for airline coach fare or mileage, whichever is less. The IRS mileage rate includes the expense of fuel. A comparison rate shall be established by obtaining an airfare quote. Taxi fare, rental cars and shuttle expenses will not be considered for the purpose of establishing the reimbursement amount. The claimant will need to track mileage and may utilize online tools to obtain mileage from their home or work to the destination.

Rental Car

The expense of a rental car for a claimant when out of town on behalf of the RTA, may be reimbursed only if written justification is provided by the claimant and approved by Executive Director, or designee, prior to travel. Automobile rental is not at the discretion of the traveling claimant and must be a necessary and cost-effective mode of transportation for the benefit of the RTA. Claimants must submit the rental agreement, receipt and the written justification, approved by the Board as part of the claim for reimbursement.

Rail Service

The claimant may choose the option of using rail service based upon the most economical mode of travel in comparison to air travel. The justification must be documented by including a quote for the lowest and best economy coach airfare. Visit the rail service website to obtain quote(s) for commercial rail service.

LODGING

If a hotel requires a credit card number to be on file to cover incidental expenses such as telephone calls, room service, Internet, mini bar etc., the credit card should belong to the traveling claimant. The hotel receipt must indicate the payment method and show the balance was paid. Only room fees and taxes are paid by the RTA.

Most hotels provide free internet. Claimants may be reimbursed for work-related internet usage charges. These charges should be separately identified on the original itemized hotel receipt.

Many conferences offer a list of hotels with special pricing. Traveling claimants are encouraged

to choose the most economically priced hotel possible. Three (3) separate hotel quotes are required unless the conference is at a hotel or conference center and hotel facility, then only that quote is required.

MEALS

Complimentary free continental breakfasts provided by the hotel cannot be claimed as an expense. Meal(s) will not be reimbursed unless overnight stay is required or long enough that a claimant needs to stop for sleep or rest to properly perform their job duties. Meal(s) included in the cost of registration will not be reimbursed to claimant, except for continental breakfasts or special dietary needs. Meal expenses should include reasonable tips (no more than 20% tip). Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable. Reimbursement will be made for the actual amount claimed up to the federal per diem rate as published by the General Services Administration (GSA) recommended by the IRS. The maximum allowable will be the Meals and Incidental Expenses (ME&I) rate of the GSA. The GSA per diem rates can be located by going to www.gsa.gov.

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE INFORMATION

The RTA will not reimburse for personal items, services, or entertainment, including but not limited to, toiletries, medicine, clothing, grooming, laundry, dry cleaning, movies, snacks or alcoholic beverages. Receipts are not required for reasonable tips, shuttle/bus/taxicab fare, or business telephone calls.

FOREIGN TRAVEL

In the event of foreign travel, the claimant is responsible for providing documentation from a bank, financial institution, or Internet of the currency exchange rate in effect at the time of exchange. The exchange rate information must be obtained during the dates of the travel.

The RTA will not reimburse the Goods and Services Tax (GST) or any other foreign tax that may be refunded to the claimant. The claimant is responsible for submitting a claim to the appropriate country for any tax refund.

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

A “mileage reimbursement only” claim for a one-time event or a special circumstance may be submitted by providing written notification to the Executive Director, or designee, explaining the public purpose of the reimbursement. The written notification should include the RTA related event, the purpose, and the total amount of mileage claimed. The claimant will be reimbursed for mileage at current IRS rates as found at www.gsa.gov.

CANCELLATIONS

If registration, lodging and/or transportation has been prepaid by the RTA and the claimant is unable to complete the intended travel, the claimant is required to follow-up on the cancellation policy of the sponsoring organization and lodging site. All possible means are to be explored to obtain refunds, partial refunds, or options for substituting another RTA member.

The claimant must provide written justification, which is approved by the Executive Director, or

designee, to explain the reason for the inability to travel as previously arranged.

REFUNDS

The claimant has the responsibility for the oversight and administration of seeking refunds to the RTA. Any RTA refunds obtained due to cancellations or overpayments must be deposited with the RTA.