

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Virgin Islands Department of Education Out-of-Territory Travel

September 1, 2022

Fiscal & Administrative Services
Policy and Procedures




THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

POLICY NAME	Out-of-Territory Travel			POLICY NO.	1.1
EFFECTIVE DATE	September 1, 2022	DATE OF LAST REVISION		VERSION NO.	1
ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBLE	Apyrl Henry		CONTACT INFORMATION	340-774-0100 / 8009	
APPLIES TO:					
GROUP 1	All VIDE Personnel	GROUP 2		GROUP 3	
GROUP 4		GROUP 5		GROUP 6	

VERSION HISTORY				
VERSION	APPROVED BY	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	AUTHOR


APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Division Head



Date: 8/29/2022

Legal Counsel



Date: 9/1/22

Commissioner



Date: 09/02/2022

SCOPE

Commissioner of Education, Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal and Administrative Affairs, Business Office, Office of Federal Grants, State/District Directors and Managers, and VIDE Travelers.

POLICY STATEMENT

This document establishes how travel should be arranged, approved, and the parameters that must be adhered to while conducting business connected with or pertaining to the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE). All travel must be done in accordance with this Policy to qualify for reimbursement. It is VIDE's policy to reimburse employees for ordinary, necessary, and reasonable expenses directly related to VIDE travel.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
VIDE	Virgin Islands Department of Education
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning System
TV	Travel Voucher
CGB	Consolidated Grant Budget
GTR	Government Transportation Request

EXCEPTIONS

No exceptions.

RELATED POLICIES, LOCAL/FEDERAL STATUTES, AND OTHER REFERENCES

This procedure is guided by the provisions outlined in the Government of the Virgin Islands Travel Regulations - Executive Order No. 439-2008, dated May 19, 2008

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Director of Financial Reporting & Program Quality Assurance	Creation of the policy
Business Office Directors	Input
Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal & Administrative Services	Pre-Approval of the policy
VIDE Commissioner	Approval of the policy

CONTACTS

SUBJECT	CONTACT	PHONE	EMAIL
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Out-of-Territory Travel Policy

PURPOSE

This document establishes how travel should be arranged and approved, and the parameters that must be adhered to while conducting business connected with or pertaining to the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE). All travel must be done in accordance with this Policy to qualify for reimbursement. It is VIDE's policy to reimburse employees for ordinary, necessary, and reasonable expenses directly related to VIDE travel.

ABBREVIATIONS

VIDE - Virgin Islands Department of Education
ERP - Enterprise Resource Planning System
TV - Travel Voucher
CGB - Consolidated Grant Budget
GTR - Government Transportation Request

POLICY

This procedure is guided by the provisions outlined in the Government of the Virgin Islands Travel Regulations - Executive Order No. 439-2008 dated May 19, 2008. A straightforward GTR and travel voucher submission process is crucial to ensure that all expenses are paid and reimbursed timely. VIDE employees and/or designees are responsible for complying with this policy. Anyone not in compliance with this policy will experience delayed, partial, or forfeited reimbursement and will be placed on the VIDE "NO FLY" listing. It is the responsibility of the employee and/or designee that all reservations be made at least sixty (60) days in advance of the travel dates.

PROCEDURES

Responsibilities

Commissioner of Education

The Commissioner of Education has the responsibility for administering the travel policies of the Department, to approve the business purpose of official travel, and to certify that the travel is necessary and serves the best interests of the Department.

Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal and Administrative Affairs

The Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal and Administrative Affairs is responsible for overseeing the administration of the Department's travel and business-related expense policy, for issuing appropriate guidelines and procedures for its implementation, to ensure that the travel-related costs are reasonable, and to review and monitor all travel expenses and claims for reimbursement.

Business Office

The Business Office has the responsibility to ensure that official travel is properly approved by persons authorized to do so, to ensure that documentation submitted in support of travel

related expenses and claims for reimbursement are valid and complete, and that such expenses are made in full compliance with the applicable provisions of this policy. The Business office is also responsible for entry and approval of all travel documents into the local and federal ERP MUNIS system.

Office of Federal Grants

The Office of Federal Grants has the responsibility to ensure that all travel adheres to the applicable federal regulations governing the use of grant funds, the funds are available within the grants budget, and to ensure the travel costs charged to the federal grant are allowable, reasonable, and allocable.

State/District Directors and Managers

The State/District Directors and Managers are responsible for approving the travel and travel-related expenses of persons reporting to them, for ensuring that funds are available for the approved travel, that travel related expenditures comply with the Department's policy and fund source restrictions, that a Travel Voucher is filed upon the completion of authorized travel, and that appropriate documentation is provided to substantiate all expenses and requests for reimbursement.

Travelers

Travelers have the responsibility to perform their travel duties in conformity with the provisions of this policy, to ensure that prior approval is obtained for the business purpose as well as business-related expenses associated with the planned travel, and to present appropriate documentation that is valid and complete to support their travel reimbursement claims.

Travel

It is VIDE's intent to allow for adequate accommodation for employees and student groups/organizations who are required to travel on VIDE business. It is also expected that these employees will use discretion and good judgment in spending VIDE funds.

Out of territory travel is defined as travel outside of St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix. Each employee or student groups/organizations traveling is expected to complete a Government Travel Request form or "GTR" and submit it to the following travel emails for approval at least sixty (60) days prior to travel:

St. Thomas/St. John District only - sttjtravel@vide.vi

St. Croix District only - stxtravel@vide.vi

Once the travel is completed, the travel voucher and all required supporting documentation must be submitted to the Fiscal Office travel email below in order to process a reimbursement based on the following timeline:

- Out of Territory overnight travel: Submitted within five (5) business days of travel

Please submit the travel voucher to the below email:

travelvoucher@vide.vi

Off Island GTR Procedures:

1. All requests for out-of-territory travel begins at the division level and must, subsequently, be submitted to the Business Office for processing at least sixty (60) days in advance.
2. For all federally funded travel, within three (3) business days the Business Office must review and submit the travel packet (GTR and supporting documents) to the Federal Grants Office for review.
3. For all locally funded travel, within three (3) business days the Business Office must review and submit the travel packet (GTR and supporting documents) to the Fiscal and Administrative Services for certification.
4. Within two (2) business days, approved documents from the Federal Grants Office are transmitted to the Fiscal and Administrative Services Office for approval.
5. Within two (2) business days, certified documents from the Fiscal and Administrative Services Office are transmitted to the Commissioner's Office for approval.
6. Within two (2) business days, the Commissioner's Office transmits the approved travel packet to the Office of the Governor.
7. The travel packet will be returned to the Business Office once the Commissioner's Office receives the approved travel packet back from the Office of the Governor.

NOTE:

Any travel requests received without proper documentation (missing signatures, booking confirmation, account code, incorrect travel dates, liquidation sheets, etc.) will be returned to the division within twelve (12) business days. Any rejected travel request should be revised and resubmitted to the Business Office within one (1) business day of receipt.

8. All following supporting documentation must be included in the travel packet for employee and student travel: *(Please ensure that it is one consolidated PDF file in this specific order)*
 - a) Approved travel letter for the Governor's signature
 - b) Approved travel letter addressed to the Commissioner

- c) Approved GTR
- d) Agenda
- e) Cash Advance request form (to include the employee vendor number-local and federal)
- f) Authorization for Travel
- g) Airline quote
- h) Hotel confirmation/quote (if applicable)
- i) Training/Conference registration (if applicable)
- j) Federal Consolidated Grant Budget - CGB (if applicable)

NOTE:

An approved GTR is required for all VIDE-related travel, including travel paid through fundraising. All required documents must be submitted for approval prior to travel. If travel has taken place without prior approval, please note that future travel for the employee may be restricted.

Air Booking Procedures

Programs are responsible for making their own airline reservations through a travel agent. All air travel shall be economy class; and excursion fares, round-trip fares, advanced purchases and other reduced fares shall be employed whenever possible. The travel agent purchase order will be submitted to the Program/Activity Center from the Business Office and the Program/Activity center will then contact the travel agent and book the flights for their respective employees.

Lodging

Prudent judgment should be used when selecting a hotel. A standard non-smoking room should be reserved. The cost of the hotel should include the room rate, taxes, fees, and service charges and cannot exceed \$250.00 (room rate only) per night unless approved by the Governor of the Virgin Islands. The hotel reservation should be secured, and the funds encumbered for the hotel payment before travel. The hotel may ask employees to present a credit card upon check-in for incidental charges. This may vary based on the selected hotel's policy. Employees may accept room upgrades if the upgrade is at no additional cost to VIDE.

Per Diem

For travel that requires an overnight stay, per diem will be \$75.00 per night. Students will receive a per diem of \$50.00 per night.

Car Rental

Rental of an automobile is permitted when it is approved prior to travel, and it is considered the most reasonable and economical mode of travel under the circumstances. Such rental of an automobile will be allowed and reimbursed on the following basis:

1. The comparison of the car rental fees and taxi fees and availability is completed and approved prior to the travel by the Business Office and Fiscal and Administrative Services.
2. Unless three or more employees are traveling together, VIDE will only reimburse the cost of a midsize or smaller car.
3. The cost of upgrades, other accessories, or the purchase of supplemental car insurance premiums, is not reimbursable.
4. VIDE will not reimburse the cost of damages to a rental car or the cost of personal items stolen from a rental car.
5. The cost of reasonable parking fees, bridge and turnpike tolls, and gasoline charges will be reimbursed with submission of original cash or credit card receipt and the rental agreement.

Travel Expense (T&E) Reimbursement

In general, travelers will be reimbursed for travel expenses that are ordinary, necessary, reasonable, and actual. Requests for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted to travelvoucher@vide.vi on the travel voucher form to include the account code for reimbursement, travel dates, name of the traveler, and must be signed by the employee within five (5) business days of travel. Documentation should be in the form of original bills or itemized receipts that provide a description of goods or services received.

1. For all federally funded travel where the traveler is required to reimburse the GVI, within three (3) business days, the Fiscal Office will review and submit the travel packet to the Federal Grants Office for approval. Within three (3) business days, the Federal Grants Office will review and submit the travel packet to the Fiscal and Administrative Services for certification.
2. For all locally funded travel and all other federally funded travel vouchers, within three (3) business days, the Fiscal Office will review and submit the travel packet to Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal and Administrative Services for certification.
3. Within three (3) business days, documents are certified and approved by the Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal and Administrative services and are returned to the Business Office for payment processing.

4. Within three (3) business days of receipt, the Business Office is required to enter the travel reimbursements in the Federal or Local ERP system for payment.

The following must be submitted to travelvoucher@vide.vi along with the travel voucher for approval:

- Approved GTR signed by VIDE Certifying Officer, traveler and the Governor of the Virgin Islands
- Approved travel letter signed by the Governor of the Virgin Islands.
- Boarding passes
 - If a boarding pass is missing, the employee is required to submit a written and signed letter which should state where and when the employee travelled and why the employee is missing the boarding pass. The signed letter must be notarized if two or more boarding passes are missing. Please note that notary expense will not be reimbursed to the traveler.
- Copy of traveler's cash advance check
- Paid registration fee (if applicable)
- Paid itemized hotel folio (if applicable). Receipt is required to have a \$0.00 balance.
 - Only base fare, taxes and required fees will be reimbursed. Any upgrade fees, room service, or any other personal charges will not be allowed.
- Baggage receipts (if applicable)
 - VIDE will reimburse the traveler for the 1st checked bag departing the territory and returning to the territory according to the airline's current baggage policy charges
- Taxi receipts
 - Only economy base fare, taxes, and required fees will be reimbursed. Any upgrade fees, wait/late fees or additional personnel charges will not be allowed
 - If travelers choose to share a taxi and split the fare, it must be reflected on the receipt
 - Approved travel routes are to and from meal establishments, airport, conference/meeting site, and pandemic testing sites and should be indicated on the receipt
- Federal Consolidated Grant Budget - CGB (if applicable)
- Signed and approved deviation form (if applicable)

Non-GVI Employee Travel Reimbursement

No cash advances will be provided to non-public and non-gvi employee school travel; instead, the school or traveler will be reimbursed for actual costs only. Non-public schools and non-gvi employees are required to adhere to all portions of this travel policy. The following must be submitted to the Fiscal Office along with the school's travel voucher for approval:

- Approved travel letter signed by the school's Principal or Headmaster, Program Manager, and Federal Grants Manager. The letter must state the travel details, traveler's name, and the purpose of the travel.
- Approved travel letter signed by the Governor of the VI.
- Airline itinerary, invoice, and receipt
- Boarding passes
 - If a boarding pass is missing, the traveler is required to submit a written, and signed letter which should state where and when the traveler travelled and why the traveler is missing the boarding pass. The signed letter must be notarized if both boarding passes are missing. Please note that notary expense will not be reimbursed to the traveler.
- Paid itemized hotel folio (if applicable). Receipt is required to have a \$0.00 balance.
 - Only base fare, taxes and required fees will be reimbursed. Any upgrade fees, room service, or any other personal charges will not be allowed.
- Paid registration fees
- Baggage receipts (if applicable)
 - VIDE will reimburse the traveler for the 1st checked bag departing the territory and returning to the territory according to the airline's current baggage policy charges
- Taxi receipts
 - Only base fare, taxes and required fees will be reimbursed. Any upgrade fees, wait/late fees or additional personnel charges will not be allowed.
 - If travelers choose to share a taxi and split the fare, it must be reflected on the receipt.
 - Approved travel routes are to and from meal establishments, airport, conference/meeting site and COVID-19 testing site and should be indicated on the receipt
- Itemized receipts for meals, meals will be reimbursed up to \$75.00 per night
- Federal Consolidated Grant Budget - CGB (if applicable)

NOTE

Any requests for reimbursements or encumbrances that lack sufficient information will be rejected and returned to the requesting employee and/or designee within fifteen (15) business days. Any rejected travel voucher should be revised and resubmitted in its entirety in one pdf file back to the travelvoucher@vide.vi email within one (1) business day of receipt.

VIDE will not reimburse an employee and/or designee for separate travel costs associated with family, friends, and non-VIDE employees.

Tips

Tips paid on meals and transportation services will be reimbursed to the traveler up to 15% of the bill. Tips paid up to \$20.00 for maid service will be reimbursed to the traveler. No other tips will be reimbursable.

Cancellations

Airline

Reservations should be canceled as soon as possible if there has been a change in travel plans. The traveler/designee and/or Activity Center is responsible for canceling the airfare and hotel reservations. Any fees associated with the failure to cancel will be the full responsibility of the traveler.

Hotel

The traveler and/or the designee must notify the hotel directly of any cancellation or delay and contact the Business Office to cancel any open purchase orders related to the travel. Any fees associated with the failure to cancel will be the full responsibility of the traveler.

Deviations

No policy can anticipate every situation that might arise. Should there be any deviation from travel, written correspondence (template attached) must be addressed to and submitted to the Business Office with the travel voucher packet. The written correspondence should include the reason for the deviation and a breakdown of the additional expenses. Each traveler must use his/her best professional judgment in determining if the deviation is reimbursable under this Policy.

If an employee fails to return to the territory on the approved travel return date due to personal reasons, the employee will be responsible for all additional expenses. If the employee is unable to return due to a pandemic or natural disaster, VIDE will pay for the return flight and/or change fees, and the first night of the quarantine period, which should be equal to or comparable to the

previously approved hotel rate. The employee will be responsible for any additional expenses occurred after to include but not limited to additional hotel charges, food, and transportation.

Accountability

All persons traveling on behalf of the Virgin Islands Department of Education and those who approve expense reimbursement are accountable for their actions relative to the approval of travel, travel expenses incurred, and claims for reimbursements received, made, and approved. Travelers and approvers of travel are deemed to be knowledgeable of the Department's travel policies and procedures and the compliance requirements applicable to federal grants regulations governing travel expenditures.