2025-2026

# Tarkington ISD Employee Travel Guidelines



Tarkington ISD Business Services

7/25/2025

# Tarkington ISD Employee Travel Guidelines

**Effective 2025-2026 School Year**

In general, "employee travel" is defined as travel outside the District boundaries where an employee is acting as a representative of Tarkington Independent School District. TISD will reimburse, or pay for qualified travel expenses dependent upon the type of travel and the compliance with District guidelines. Approval must be obtained prior to travel using the "Tarkington Travel Request 25-26" form linked on the District website under "Staff Resources."

## Employee Travel Request/ Reimbursement/ Form "Tarkington Travel Request 25-26"

The Tarkington Travel Request 25-26 is the official District form for approval of employee travel and settlement of travel expenses, including reimbursement requests, mileage requests, etc. The District form should be completed with as much information as possible and include all attachments in order for the reimbursement, etc. to be processed by the Business Office. See specific directions in the following sections of these guidelines that indicate required information and attachments.

The following information should assist you with correct completion of the Tarkington Travel Request form. If the professional development activity/travel is being paid for through a federal grant (funds 2XX), there are specific requirements for funding and reimbursements. Travel requests/reimbursements funded through federal grant monies (2XX) should be submitted to the campus principal, then to the respective grant director at the District level for approval.

Travel costs must have proper documentation, as described below, in order to be charged to TEA/federal grants.

Important Items to Remember:

- The Tarkington Travel Request form **must be completed for all travel** in order for any reimbursements or payments to be made.
- Verify all fields are complete.
    - Mark blank fields not applicable for a specific trip as N/A or zero.
- Provide a description of the event, training, or conference.
    - Attach required backup documentation including:

  - Registration
    - If the professional development activity is being paid for with federal funds (2XX) documentation must also include **how it was necessary** to accomplish the objectives of the grant project in the notes section of the request or on a separate sheet.

- State date & **time** of departure, as well as return date & **time**.
- Verify budget code(s) to be charged.
- Reimbursements requested are payable only to the employee listed on the request.
- TISD is exempt from Texas State Sales Tax charged for lodging and hotel parking.
  - The department and/or employee are responsible for verifying the receipts do not include State Tax at the time of check out.
  - ****Important*** Be sure to check out at the hotel front desk. Most hotel receipts that are put under the door are not correct and include State Tax when charged to the credit card.
  - The department and/or employee are responsible for following up on any discrepancies, including taxes charged, and/or pending credits.
- Changes to travelers, budget codes, etc. require a "corrected copy" with proper approvals to be submitted to the Business Office.
- The department and/or employee are responsible for making any hotel reservations and cancellations.
- Send the **original** **Tarkington Travel Request** form along with attachments to the Business Office for reimbursements and payments.

**Funding**

The director/principal approving the Employee Travel Request/Reimbursement should assign the appropriate budget code and ensure adequate funds prior to approval.

- In cases where shared expenses will be charged to several budget codes involving multiple departments or campuses, a director or principal should be designated to be responsible for preparing a listing of the appropriate amounts to be charged to each budget code and obtaining proper approval signatures.

Travel paid from **federal funds (2XX)** should adhere to the limits required by travel guidelines specific to the grant. Travel expenses exceeding these grant limitations must be paid from District local funds.

# Tarkington ISD Employee Travel Guidelines

## Registration

Conference/Event Registration will be paid with a district credit (Citibank) card only. The Tarkington Travel Request form should state the event name and location of the event and note on the form if the registration is to be paid with district credit card. Attachments should include:

- One copy of the registration form
- Documentation to support the purpose of the trip, such as a **brochure**, registration or entry form. Documentation should show the location, dates and times of the event.
    - If the professional development activity is being paid for with federal funds (2XX), documentation must also include **how the travel was necessary** to accomplish the objectives of the grant project. Please place this in the notes section of the request.

## Lodging

The cost of a hotel room for District employees must be paid with a district credit card.

*(One room for every two persons travelling will be allowable. If an employee determines that they are unable to share the room, they will be allowed to pay for the other half of the room. Campus and District Administrators may obtain a single room.) Rooms will only be provided by TISD for travel further than 90 miles from Tarkington ISD.*

- Submit a Tarkington Travel Request form and obtain authorization for district credit card use. Within 7 business days after the trip, complete the Tarkington Travel Request form to include all travel expenses such as Lodging, Mileage, Meals and any other expenses to be reimbursed.

- The original hotel receipt is required and must be attached to the Tarkington Travel Request form within 2 days upon returning from travel, along with returning the credit card to the Business Office. A copy of the receipt should be given to the campus or department secretary for them to keep for their records. The hotel bill should clearly indicate the name and address of the hotel, the name of the employee, and daily itemization of lodging charges. The District is **exempt from Texas State Sales Tax** on lodging and hotel parking. An exemption form is provided for each trip in your travel packet and is also available on the TISD website. The "Hotel Tax Exempt" form should be provided to the hotel at the time of check in. The traveling employee is responsible for requesting and obtaining credit for any Texas State Sales Tax charges or any other errors. Room rate, city taxes, and other taxes should be the only charges showing. If the room was shared, indicate with whom the room was shared on the receipt. Incidentals should be paid with personal funds and be reimbursed upon return from the travel (receipts required).

- Even if a $0 balance is showing when a bill is slipped under the room door the morning of

departure, the traveler should check out at the hotel desk and get a finalized bill reflecting a $0 balance. Verify the bill does not include state tax or charges the employee did not make.

- Maximum lodging rates may be accessed through the U.S. General Services Administration at www.gsa.gov Follow these steps:
  1. Click the "Per Diem Rates" to the left of the screen under "most requested links"
  2. Locate the traveler's destination by clicking the appropriate state on the US map

  OR
  3. Find reimbursement rates as follows:
     a. Type in the city and state to which you are traveling, and use the rate given for that city.
     b. If the city to which you are traveling is not listed, check the county list. If the county to which you are traveling is listed, use the rate given for that county.
     c. If neither the city nor county to which you are traveling is listed, use the current standard rate of $110 for lodging.
- Employees traveling on official TISD business may participate in the Texas State Comptroller's contract for travel services. A directory of contracted hotels and rates are available@: https://fmx.cpa.state.tx.us/fmx/travel/textravel/meallodg/lodging/contract.php

**A copy of the current Lodging Rates is linked above. If neither the city nor county are listed, note so on the Travel Request form and use the standard rate.**

**Transportation**

Transportation is the cost of traveling to and from a destination while on TISD business. See below for specific guidelines related to modes of travel:

**By vehicle:**

***School District Vehicle***

The use of school district vehicles are handled by the district Transportation Coordinator in accordance with their guidelines.

***Personal Vehicle***

Travelers should make an effort to have multiple people per car when more than one person is attending the same event. The driver will complete the mileage information on the Tarkington Travel Request form and include the names of the other riders. This must be done in order to receive mileage reimbursement after the trip.

***Mileage***

Mileage incurred in an employee's personal vehicle may be reimbursed by completing the "miles to be traveled" section under Transportation portion of the Tarkington Travel Request form. Mileage will be reimbursed after the travel has been taken, and all documentation has occurred, approved, and submitted to the Business Office. Mileage will be reimbursed at the rate adopted by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. This rate is subject to change by the State. (*Mileage will be reimbursed from TISD to the event location, or from the employee's home to the event location, whichever is shorter.)*

- To calculate mileage use any free online mapping services such as
  https://www.google.com/maps
  www.mapquest.com
  - Check "round trip"
  - Attach a printout from the free online mapping services to the Tarkington Travel Request form.

***Rental Car***

*(The use of a rental car may be authorized for District travel on a case by case basis due to extenuating circumstances. Before renting a vehicle, you will need to get written authorization from the Business Office.)*

The District has a state contract with Enterprise and Hertz, which includes a set rate. Insurance is included in the rate given. Under the state contract, the District is covered for liability and a damage waiver is included.

Rental cars are paid with a purchase order.

- When preparing the requisition for a rental car, include in the Notes or description:
  - The **date of the event**
  - The **place of event**
  - **Number of attendees and** t**heir names**
  - **Name** of event **or Reason** for rental (in the notes or description)
- Each line should represent each vehicle being rented.
  - **If renting 2 vehicles with one purchase order (PO), there should be 2 line items.**
  - The quantity should equal the number of days being rented.
  - The unit price should equal the daily rental rate.

If the professional development activity is being paid for with federal funds (2XX), documentation must also *include written justification for why a rental car was necessary and how it was more cost effective than alternate transportation*. This should be noted in the notes section of the PO and the Tarkington Travel Request form.

Rental cars may also be reimbursed to the employee if paid by the employee by

completing the Transportation portion of the Tarkington Travel Request form. The original rental car receipt must be attached to the request. The receipt should clearly indicate the name and address of the rental car company, the name of the employee, and a detailed itemization of charges.

.

**Airfare:**

*(The use of air travel may be authorized for District travel on a case by case basis. Before booking air travel you will need to get written authorization from the Business Office.)*

Airfare may be paid using a district credit card prior to travel by completing the Tarkington Travel Request form. Airfare may also be reimbursed to the employee if paid by the employee and included on the Transportation portion of the form. If you are going to be reimbursed for airfare, **BE SURE** to have the travel request approved **BEFORE** making arrangements. Reimbursement will not be made without an approved travel form.

Attach:

- Airfare invoice/receipt
  - The original airline ticket receipt, an "e-ticket" passenger itinerary or receipt.
  - The ticket/receipt must include the name of the employee, name of airline, ticket number, class of travel, travel dates, amount of airfare, and origin/destination of each flight.

**Public Transportation/Ride Share:**

Employees may use a district credit card to pay for public transportation, taxi, or rideshare services (Uber, Lyft) in the performance of district duties. Any charges made to the District credit card must be accompanied by a receipt and turned into the Business Office within 2 days of returning from the trip. A tip to the driver is allowable up to a maximum of 20% of the fare. If a district card is used for a rideshare company, be sure to delete any credit card information from the app after use. Actual amounts expended, paid by the employee, will be reimbursed with an original receipt. All original receipts for expenses paid by the employee must be attached to the Tarkington Travel Request form.

## Meals

The meals and incidentals breakdown can be found on the Tarkington Travel Request form. The meal rates listed are per person, per day. The Pre-Travel Allowable/Estimate should be filled out and provided to the traveler before the trip to ensure awareness of the allowable meal expenses. A Per Diem advance for meals and incidentals will be issued to the employee traveler, in lieu of meal reimbursement for overnight travel using local funds. If the travel is a "Day Trip", or funded by federal or state grant funds, meals will be reimbursed following the trip according to an "accountable plan", provided that itemized receipts are submitted. The entire trip allowance total is considered when reimbursing the employee. Business Services will reimburse all valid receipts, up to the total amount allowable for the trip without going over.

**TISD will provide Per Diem** for all meals and incidentals for overnight travel using local funds. The Per Diem advance will be provided to the traveler before the trip, providing that the Tarkington Travel Request has been properly filled out, approved, and submitted to the Business Office in sufficient time to provide the advance (Monday for checks to be picked up on Friday). If the traveler will be receiving a Per Diem advance for meals and incidentals, upon return from the travel, the employee will "attest" that all advanced funds were used on allowable meals and expenses by completing and submitting the final Tarkington Travel Request. Receipts will not be required for Per Diem advances. If the Per Diem request is not received by the Business Office in sufficient time to issue the advance, then the meals will be reimbursed to the employee according to an "accountable plan", whereas itemized receipts will be required for post-travel reimbursement.

**Meal expenses for "Day Trips" or using state or federal grant funds** are not a Per Diem, they will be reimbursed according to an "accountable plan". An employee must claim the actual expenses incurred for meals, not to exceed the maximum allowable rates for the trip, and must provide itemized receipts.

Employees will be reimbursed after travel, only for what was actually spent on meals, up to the maximum allowable rate according to the meals and incidentals breakdown on the Tarkington Travel Request form. It is required that all meal receipts be submitted to the Business Office with the travel reimbursement form. Employees will be reimbursed for meals by completing the meal portion of the Tarkington Travel Request form. Itemized original receipts are required. **NOTE: Do not tape or highlight over information on cash register receipts because it may cause the ink to fade away.**

- Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.
- Tips may be paid using general funds or activity funds up to a maximum of 20%.
- No tips/gratuities can be paid using federal funds. While traveling using federal funds, there

will need to be a "Local" account code provided on the Tarkington Travel Request form for any tips/gratuities paid to be coded to.

**Day Trip**

A "Day Trip" is defined as any trip where an overnight stay is not required. Meals for day trips will only be reimbursed for the actual amount of the meal(s), up to the limit, after the travel and must be accompanied by itemized receipts. Meal reimbursement for day trips will be issued to the employee through payroll. *(The IRS requires that meal reimbursement for non-overnight trips be reported as taxable income and reported on the employee's W-2 accordingly.*

**Traveling with Students (Travel Request Not Required)**

When traveling with students on day trips, the sponsor/coach will have a requisition submitted for approval before traveling. At the time of travel, the sponsor/coach will check out a District travel credit card from the Business Office to pay for the meals. Itemized receipts must be submitted along with a list of students and employees that received meals charged to the credit card. If meals will be required for a large number of students eating at different times/vendors, the sponsor should request a check to be processed in advance of the travel. The check would then be turned into cash to be distributed to the students for their meals. A list of all cash disbursements to students and sponsors must be kept and turned into the Business Office, along with any unused funds, upon return from the travel.

*Following is an example of such an instance where a check/cash would be requested:*
*Marching band is travelling for a competition and will be eating a meal at a food court where the students will all have an opportunity to select a different vendor for their meal.*

Meal amounts while traveling with students are as follows:

Student Meal – ALL meals $12

Employee Meal – Breakfast $13, Lunch $15, Dinner $26

# Travel Request Instructions

The Travel Request form is located on the TISD website under Staff Resources.

*The person traveling will initiate a Travel Request form at least two weeks prior to travel. Employees should not use personal funds for travel to be reimbursed except as outlined in the Travel manual.*

**Step 1.** The employee will enter required information pertaining to the trip. *This information is to give the supervisor an estimated cost of the trip and travel dates in order to grant approval for travel.* ***No charges should be made until Step 5.***

**Step 2.** The secretary will enter the meal expenses and a budget code.

**Step 3**. The supervisor will review the budget and travel dates and approve or deny the trip.

**Step 4.** If approval is granted, the secretary will create a requisition and enter the PO numbers on the Tarkington Travel Request form. *A requisition will be needed for any meal advances and a separate requisition for any Citibank (district credit card). (Meal advances are only granted for overnight travel)*

**Step 5.** With the campus Citibank card, the employee books the hotel and/or pays conference fees, airfare or any other necessary expenses in order to travel. If mileage reimbursement is going to be requested, a Google map from Tarkington ISD to the location will need to be attached.

**Step 6.** Accounts Payable will cut per diem checks and will now release the travel card to the employee for travel.

***Employee Completes Travel - All expenses must be charged on the Travel Citibank card and receipts must be turned in. For overnight travel, per diem is advanced and receipts are not required.***

**Step 7.** The employee will attach the final hotel receipt and any other receipts for Citibank charges to the form. The employee will certify and sign the form.

**Step 8.** The secretary will reconcile the expenses on the form and on the requisitions and close out the PO.

**Step 9.** The CFO approves.

**Step 10**. Accounts Payable will reimburse mileage and reconcile the Citibank statement to the PO. If day trip meals need to be reimbursed, Accounts Payable will print out the form and turn into payroll for reimbursement.

**Helpful Links**

| | |
|---|---|
| Meal Breakdown | http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/101518 |
| Per Diem Rates for Texas | http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120 |
| National Association of Counties | http://explorer.naco.org/index.html?zipSearch# |

**Policies**

| | |
|---|---|
| Code of Federal Regulations | The following federal and TEA guidance relates to allowable costs: http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ca1ebff314cf6facd3b03d31c3440607&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5#sp2.1.200.e |
| TEA Policy | If the above link does not work go to http://www.tea.state.tx.us/grants/gmresources/ and scroll down to New EDGAR 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E—Cost Principles. |
| Board Policy DEE (Local) | https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=819&code=DEE#legalTabContent |
| TX Comptroller Policy | https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/textravel/rates/current.php |