

SAN BENITO CISD

PROCEDURES: TRAVEL GUIDELINES, RATES & STMP

Travel Guidelines Overview:

School Board Policy DEE Local states: An employee shall be reimbursed for reasonable, allowable expenses incurred in carrying out District business only with the prior approval of the employee's immediate supervisor. Reimbursement for authorized travel shall be in accordance with legal requirements. Accounting records shall accurately reflect that no state or federal funds were used to reimburse travel expenses beyond those authorized for state employees. For any authorized expense incurred, the employee shall submit a statement, with receipts to the extent feasible, documenting actual expenses and in accordance with administrative procedures.

Note: Travel expenses incurred due to the fault of a traveler, except for extenuating circumstances, such as late registration, canceled flight, etc. are not considered to be reasonable or necessary; therefore, all such expenses shall be paid or reimbursed by the traveler.

All travel expenses shall comply with federal, state and local guidelines. The District shall apply the same travel guidelines and rates for all travel expenses regardless of funding sources.

Federal guidelines (IRS):

- All travel expenses shall be paid under an Accountable Plan: 1) travel must have a business connection; 2) the traveler shall account for all expenses; 3) advances in excess, if any, shall be reimbursed to the district; and 4) meal expenses shall be in conjunction with overnight travel only.
- The meal expenses for the day of departure and return shall be adjusted based on the time of departure and return as noted in the District travel guidelines.
- If any travel expenses fail to meet the accountable plan guidelines, the payment to (or on behalf of) the traveler shall be taxed through the normal payroll cycle.

Federal Guidelines (EDGAR):

- All travel expenses paid with federal grant funds (typically funds 2XX, 3XX, 4XX) shall meet the EDGAR requirements (200.474) such as: 1) all travel costs must be reasonable and necessary; 2) all travel costs must be consistent with the district's travel policy; 3) all travel costs must be directly related to the grant award; and 4) all travel costs must meet the obligation of expenses rules.
- In addition, all federally-funded travel expenses must meet the TEA's Current Travel & Mileage Reimbursement Rates (as published in the most recent TEA Correspondence).

State Guidelines (TEA):

- All mileage, lodging, and meal reimbursement rates published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts apply to all grants (federal and state, typically funds 2XX, 3XX and 4XX) funded by TEA for individuals on travel status. Refer to GSA rates for the current fiscal year at: <https://fm.x.cpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php>
- All travel expenses paid with federal and state grant funds shall meet the allowable travel expenses as specified in the TexTravel Guidelines, subject to limits imposed by District travel guidelines.

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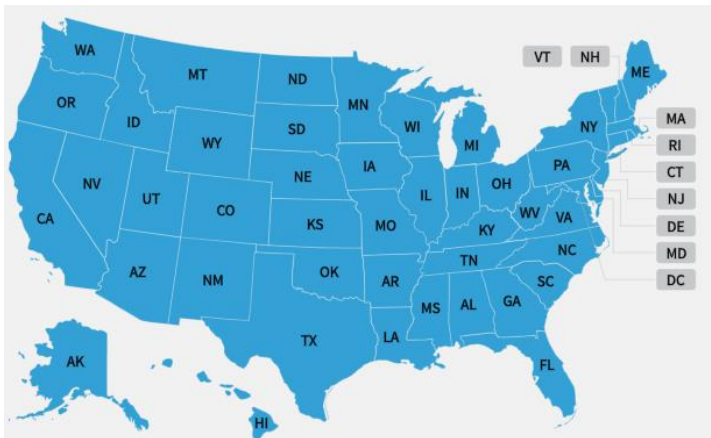
Local District Guidelines:

The local District guidelines shall apply to all travel expenses regardless of funding source for in-state and out-of-state travel. All anticipated travel costs shall be submitted on a Travel Request Form, approved by the immediate supervisor, Assistant Superintendent(s), and Superintendent. All anticipated travel costs shall be encumbered to the appropriate budget account code(s) before any travel-related costs are incurred by the district or traveler.

In accordance with the State Comptroller's TexTravel Guidelines, the district acknowledges that discount or reward programs, such as flights, hotel, etc., are not things of value belonging to the district. The administrative burden to track the individual reward programs of employees would be administratively impractical and thus the district has determined that the employee may retain the value, if any that they receive personally due to school business related travel.

Travel Rates:

The mileage, lodging, and meal reimbursement rates published by the comptroller apply to all travel reimbursement rates. The link below to the Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates should be used to determine the appropriate rates for in-state and out-of-state travel: <https://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/104711>



Note: General fund accounts shall be used to pay meal and lodging costs in excess of the Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates. San Benito CISD does not pay for any meals for day trips. A day trip is defined as a trip that does not require an overnight stay. Exception may apply if Assistant Superintendent(s) and Superintendent have authorized prior to travel.

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Fiscal 2024 Travel Reimbursement Rates

Employees

In-State or Out-of-State Meals and Lodging	Refer to the GSA's federal <u>Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates</u> , effective Oct. 1, 2024. If the city is not listed, but the county is listed, use the daily rate of the county. For locations not listed (city or county), you must use the standard rate listed
Automobile Mileage	Refer to the current GSA allowable rates (changes occur in October and January)
Aircraft Mileage	Refer to the current GSA allowable rates (changes occur in October and January)

Note: Excerpt from Texas Comptroller website: <https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/texttravel/rates/current.php>

District Allowable Travel Expenses:

Meals

- Student Meals: Attach a list of students to support the number of meals requested for co-curricular or extra-curricular events, if applicable. Refer to the district reimbursement rates for in-state and out-of-state travel for students. A detailed receipt for the student meals must be submitted with the Travel Settlement form. Current rates: \$8/\$10/\$12 for In-Valley travel; \$8/\$15/\$15 for Out-of-Valley travel.
- Full Meal Per Diems – All district employees are eligible to receive per diem prior to departing for any school business-related travel requiring an overnight stay (workshops, conferences, seminars, etc.). The total number of meals paid will be based on current GSA meal per diem for the destination location/month.
- Adjusted Meal Per Diems:
 - For the first and last day of travel, the employee will be paid 75% of the GSA rate for that city (\$5 incidental expenses listed on the GSA website is not paid by the district and will not be included in the calculation).
- A check will be issued to the traveler prior to the travel event for all staff and student meal per diems. All of the required documentation shall be submitted to the business office in accordance with the business office deadlines.
- Upon return from travel, the employee will be required to submit the TRAVEL SETTLEMENT FORM to Business Office NO LATER THAN 3 BUSINESS DAYS after the travel event. District employee who do not submit this document in a timely manner will no longer be eligible to receive per diem & mileage prior to travel.

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- Proper planning will be required in order for the employee to receive per diem & mileage prior to the travel event; please note that checks are cut weekly on Thursdays. Checks WILL NOT be cut on as 'as needed' basis. In the event that a check is not cut prior to the travel event, the employee will be reimbursed within 30 of returning from the travel event.
- Lodging • Lodging costs shall be allowable for travel events that require an overnight stay away from the travelers' home (typically, San Antonio). No lodging shall be allowable in the travelers' home city at a commercial lodging establishment.
- The maximum nights of lodging shall be based on the start and end times of the travel event and the distance of the travel location. Lodging costs that exceed the required minimum shall not be deemed necessary or allowable travel costs.
- The traveler shall estimate the lodging expense per night (including all taxes, surcharges, etc). A conference or event hotel shall be the first priority to minimize transportation costs at the event city.
- The federal per diem rates for lodging shall be used to determine the maximum amount that may be charged to a state or federal grant. The maximum lodging rate, for state and federal grants, shall be for the city of travel and the month of travel based on the GSA website. A copy of the lodging rates for the date(s) of travel shall be attached to the Travel Request Form for audit purposes.
- The traveler (or campus secretary on behalf of the traveler) shall make the hotel reservation and secure with their personal credit card, a district travel card or American Express card, as appropriate. If the hotel requires a one (1) night's deposit, the deposit shall be paid with a district travel card or American Express card, as appropriate.
- Third-party hotel and travel websites such as Hotels.com, Expedia, Travelocity, etc. shall not be used to make hotel reservations if the website requires pre-payment of the hotel stay.
- A travel card shall be issued to the traveler for the approved, estimated lodging expense as reflected on the Travel Authorization form.
- Lodging costs shall be paid with a district-issued check on site at the time of arrival and/or departure based on the hotel's charging policy. Travelers shall not pay the hotel expense with personal funds and seek reimbursement after-the-fact unless some of the travel costs are for personal travel days.
- The traveler may, at his/her request, stay with a family member or friend instead of at a hotel. If the traveler selects this option, the traveler shall not receive any payment in lieu of lodging costs.
- The traveler shall present a Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate to a Texas hotel. If the traveler fails to present the certificate, the traveler shall reimburse the district for the unallowable tax expense. The Hotel Occupancy Certificate can be found on the district's Business Webpage and the State Comptroller's Website. The hotel occupancy tax exemption does not apply to out-of-state travel.
- The traveler shall present a Sales Tax Exemption Certificate to a Texas hotel for parking costs. If the traveler fails to present the certificate, the traveler shall reimburse the district for the unallowable tax expense.
- When at least two (2) travelers (district employees) are traveling to the same event, they may share the lodging and each receive the maximum lodging rate on the GSA schedule. Each traveler shall submit a travel voucher for their portion of the lodging costs. District employees shall not be required to share a room with another employee, unless the rate per lodging exceeds the GSA website.
- When a traveler shares lodging with a non-district employee or district employee not in travel status, the maximum lodging costs shall be the appropriate GSA schedule rate for single occupancy.
- Lodging costs such as movies, gym facility, spa or other non-essential costs are not allowable for reimbursement or payment with any district funds.
- Lodging tips may be paid at the traveler's discretion, but will not be allowable travel costs for reimbursement or payment with any district funds.
- A detailed lodging receipt must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Settlement Form within 5 days after the travel event.

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Transportation – Flights

- Flight costs shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the travelers' home.
- The departure and return dates of the flight shall be based on the start and end times of the travel event and the distance of the travel location.
- The actual cost of commercial air transportation (lowest coach fare) to accommodate the required travel dates of the travel event shall be allowable costs.
- Travelers should travel to their destination location by the most economical means, i.e. either flight or mileage; however, travelers may opt to travel to their event destination via district/personal vehicle in lieu of flying to the event for medical or personal comfort reasons. If the traveler opts to travel to an out-of-state destination, the costs/reimbursement for transportation shall be limited to the lesser of the mileage or estimated flight cost.
- All flights shall be purchased by the Business Office for the most economical route and schedule to meet the travel plans. Travelers shall submit their travel preferences to their respective supervisor for approval – the campus or department shall forward the preferences to the Business Office.
- Travelers are allowed to check up to two (2) bags, limited to no more than 50 pounds each at no additional charge. Luggage charges for a third (3rd) bag shall not be allowable with district funds.
- For all flights, luggage charges, if any, shall be limited the fees for two (2) bags, up to 50 pounds per bag.
- A rental car at the event location shall be allowable if it is the most economical method to access the event location and if the estimated cost is less than a taxi or shuttle.
- All flight costs associated with deviations from the required travel plans, such as pre or post personal days or canceled travel plans due to personal reasons shall be paid and/or reimbursed by the traveler. For example, if the required travel dates are Sunday through Wednesday, but the traveler opts to depart on Friday to spend personal days at the travel destination, the additional cost, if any, to fly on Friday shall be paid by the traveler.

Transportation – Mileage

- Mileage payment shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the traveler's home. All district employees are eligible to receive mileage payment prior to departing for any school business-related travel requiring an overnight stay (workshops, conferences, seminars, etc.).
- Travelers should use a district-owned vehicle as the preferred method of transportation for feasibility. A request for a vehicle shall be submitted on the Travel Request Form. The driver shall be listed on the Authorized Drivers of District-Owned Vehicles. If a district-owned vehicle is not available for the travel event, the traveler shall be authorized to use their personal vehicle or request a flight, as appropriate.
- Travelers who opt to drive their personal vehicle instead of a district-owned vehicle, shall be paid at the current mileage rate established by GSA.gov.
- Travelers shall be required to submit fuel receipts, if any, for travel in a district-owned vehicle. Travelers shall not be required to submit any fuel receipts for travel in a personal vehicle.
- The District has chosen the Mapquest/Google Maps mapping system to document mileage reimbursements. A Mapquest/Google Maps printout with the mileage from the point of origin [home or district address] to the point of destination shall be printed and attached to the Travel Request form.
- Mileage costs related to personal destinations before, during or after the travel event shall not be allowable costs. In addition, mileage costs due to the traveler's error in reaching the destination, such as getting lost shall not be allowable costs.
- When four or fewer employees travel on the same itinerary, only one may be reimbursed for mileage. When more than four employees travel on the same itinerary, only one out of every four may be

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reimbursed for mileage. The district shall allow for an equal distribution of the mileage allotment among the travelers if they opt to drive separately to the event. An exception may be made during the summer months due to the inconvenience/cost of driving to a common location.

- Immediately upon return from travel, the employee will be required to submit the TRAVEL SETTLEMENT FORM to Business Office. District employee who do not submit this document in a timely manner will no longer be eligible to receive per diem & mileage prior to travel.

Transportation – Rental Car

- Rental car costs shall be allowable for travel events that require travel away from the traveler's home) via a flight if use of the rental car is the most economical mode of transportation.
- Rental car costs shall not be allowable if the traveler can reach the travel destination via taxi or shuttle at a lower cost.
- Rental car costs shall include all applicable taxes and mandatory charges. Costs may also include a charge for a collision damage waiver or a loss damage waiver if not already included in the contracted rate for the rental. [Note: The district auto insurance policy includes liability coverage for hired autos such as rental cars up to the policy limits.]
- Charges for liability insurance supplement, personal accident insurance, safe trip insurance or personal effects insurance are not allowable costs.
- A travel card shall be issued to the traveler for the approved, estimated rental car expense as reflected on the Travel Authorization form.
- Rental car costs shall be paid with a district-issued check on site at the time of arrival and/or departure based on the rental car company's charging policy. Travelers shall not pay the rental car expense with personal funds and seek reimbursement after-the-fact unless some of the travel costs are for personal travel days.
- Travelers shall be required to submit fuel receipts, if any, for travel in a rental car.
- Rental car costs associated with deviations from the required travel plans, such as pre or post personal days shall be paid by the traveler. For example, if the required travel dates are Sunday through Wednesday, but the traveler opts to depart on Friday to spend personal days at the travel destination, the additional cost, if any, for the additional days (Friday & Saturday) shall be paid by the traveler.
- Charges for additional drivers may only be reimbursed if incurred for a business reason such as both drivers are district employees on travel status.
- Detailed rental car and fuel receipts must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Request Form within five days after the travel event.

Transportation – Parking Charges

- Parking charges shall be allowable for all travel events, in-state and out-of-state, as appropriate, if the traveler is traveling in a rental car, district-owned vehicle, or personal car while on travel status.
- Parking at the airport at the traveler's home location shall be allowable, as appropriate, for all required travel dates. Additional parking days, at the traveler's option due to pre or post travel days shall not be allowable costs with district funds.
- Parking receipts must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Request Form within five days after the travel event.
- Valet parking reimbursements are allowed if self-parking is not an option under local and federal funds. If an option exists, the lesser of the two will be reimbursed.

Transportation – Toll Charges

- Toll charges shall be allowable for all in-state travel events, as applicable, if the traveler is traveling in a rental car, district-owned vehicle, or personal car while on travel status.

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- Toll receipts, as appropriate, must be submitted by the traveler with the Travel Request Form within five days after the travel event. Toll charges while in a district-owned vehicle are forwarded to the district by the toll authority.

Transportation – Taxi, Shuttle, etc.

- Taxi, shuttle, and transportation service (such as Lyft and Uber) costs shall be allowable for all in-state and out-of-state travel events, as applicable, if the traveler is on travel status.
- Tips may be paid at the traveler's discretion, but will not be allowable travel costs for reimbursement or payment with any district funds.

Registration Fees

- Registration fees for a conference, workshop, or other training event as supported by a registration form are allowable costs. Fee-based optional events such as a speaker or awards luncheon shall be approved on a case-by-case basis if the event fee is reasonable and the traveler would derive a work-related benefit from attending the event. Fee-based optional events such as socials, excursions, tours, or other purely entertainment events are not allowable costs.
- The authorized travel expenses shall be supported by the registration form and Schedule of Events. The documentation shall include the start and end dates of the event, event location and registration fee.
- A copy of the registration form and Schedule of Events shall be submitted with the Travel Request Form.

District Non-Allowable Travel Expenses:

- Alcoholic drinks or beverages
- Entertainment expenses, such as in-room movies, fee-based hotel amenities such as gyms, spas, etc.
- Expenses for spouses or other non-district employees
- Expenses due to the travelers' failure to cancel a registration or travel arrangements (except for extenuating circumstances)
- Hotel Internet charges (unless expense is work-related and pre-approved on travel authorization)
- Non-substantiated or fraudulent travel reimbursement requests shall be non-allowable travel expenses. Travelers who submit fraudulent travel reimbursement requests shall be required to reimburse the district for the fraudulent reimbursements and shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Accumulation of reward points:

- Employees that travel on school business (trainings, conferences, field trips, academic/athletic competitions, etc.) SHOULD NOT use personal hotel/airfare accounts to accumulate reward points/airline miles.
- This would constitute using public funds for personal benefit.

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The State Travel Management Program (STMP)

The State Travel Management Program (STMP) through the Comptroller's office ensures that state agencies use taxpayer dollars more efficiently by helping them manage their travel expenditures by providing discounted travel services through vendor contracts and monitoring state travel activity.

As a TPASS Co-Op member, the district shall utilize the STMP travel contracts, as appropriate.

Travel Contracts

Texas Procurement and Support Services (TPASS) Co-Op Purchasing Program has negotiated the following travel contracts. Use of each of these contracts will require the district's contract number (contact the Purchasing Department). Website: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/>

Insurance:

When renting a vehicle under the State of Texas contract, the daily rate includes both LDW and Liability coverage.

LDW (Loss/Damage Waiver or comprehensive), which covers all damage to the rental vehicle if it was rented under the state contract; and

Liability, which covers persons and property outside the rental vehicle. The amount of this extended liability insurance is \$250,000 bodily injury per person, \$500,000 bodily injury per occurrence; and \$100,000 property damage per occurrence.

Proof of insurance is located in the glove compartment or on the windshield of all contract rental cars. In the event you need to provide proof of insurance, inform the individual asking that you are renting under a corporate rate which includes the insurance and show the above "proof of insurance" document.

Note: If you rent a vehicle from a contract rental car vendor using a rate other than the State of Texas Contract Rate (e.g., a promotional rate), the insurance may not be included. You MUST request the State of Texas Contract Rate and provide the proper rate identifier code in order to receive the insurance coverage and the services provided in the state's contract.

Re-Fueling Provisions:

Enterprise: Vehicles are provided to travelers with a full tank of gas. Any amount less when vehicle is returned is subject to a per gallon fee not to exceed 50% above local market price.

Note to Traveler: If you are given a vehicle that does not have a full tank of gas, be sure the gas level is noted on the rental agreement. Return the vehicle with the same level of fuel in it.