General Personnel

Expenses

The NKEC Board regulates the reimbursement of all travel, meal, and lodging expenses by resolution. Money shall not be advanced or reimbursed, or purchase orders issued for (1) the expenses of any person except the employee or NKEC Board members, (2) anyone's personal expenses, or (3) entertainment expenses. Entertainment includes but is not limited to, shows, amusements, theaters, circuses, sporting events, or any other place of public or private entertainment or amusement unless the entertainment is ancillary to the purpose of the program or event. NKEC is not responsible for losses due to an employee's own negligence, losses due to normal wear, or losses due to theft unless the theft was a result of NKEC's negligence. Employees must submit the appropriate itemized, signed, standardized form(s) to support any requests for expense advancements, reimbursements, or purchase orders that show the following:

1. The amount of the estimated or actual expense, with attached receipts for actual incurred expenses.

2. The name and title of the employee who is requesting the expense advancement or reimbursement. Receipts from group functions must include the names, offices, and job titles of all participants.

3. The date(s) of the official business on which the expense advancement, reimbursement, or purchase order will be or was expended.

4. The nature of the official business conducted when the expense advancement, reimbursement, or purchase order will be or was expended.

<u>Advancements</u>

The CEO or designee may advance up to $100 to employees with the expectations of providing support documentation. Anticipated actual and necessary expenses to be incurred while attending meetings that are related to their duties and will contribute to their professional development, provided they fall below the maximum allowed in the Board's expense regulations.

Expense advancement requests must be submitted to the CEO or designee on the NKEC's standardized estimated expense approval form for employees. After spending expense advancements, employees must use the NKEC's standardized expense reimbursement form

and submit to the CEO or designee: (a) the itemized, signed advancement voucher that was issued, and (b) the amount of actual expenses by attaching receipts. Any portion of an expense advancement not used must be returned to NKEC. Expense advancements and vouchers shall be presented to the Board in its regular bill process.

Reimbursements and Purchase Orders

Expense reimbursements and purchase orders may be issued by the CEO or designee to employees, along with other expenses necessary for the performance of their duties, provided the expenses fall below the maximum allowed in the Board's expense regulations.

Expense reimbursements and purchase order approvals are not guaranteed and, when possible, employees should seek pre-approval of expenses by providing an estimation of expenses on the NKEC's standardized estimated expense approval form for employees, except in situations when the expense is very small. When pre-approval is not sought, employees must seek reimbursement on the NKEC's standardized expense reimbursement form for employees. Expense reimbursements and purchase orders shall be presented to the Board in its regular bill process.

Exceeding the Maximum Allowable Expense Amount(s)

All requests for expense advancements, reimbursements, and purchase orders exceeding the maximum allowed in the Board's expense regulations may only be approved when:

1. The Board's resolution to regulate expenses allows for such approval;

2. An emergency or other extraordinary circumstance exists; and

3. The request is approved by a roll call vote at an open Board meeting.

Registration

When possible, registration fees will be paid by NKEC in advance.

Travel

The least expensive method of travel will be used, provided that no hardship will be caused to the employee. Employees will be reimbursed for:

1. Air travel at the coach or economy class commercial airline rate. First-class or business-class air travel will be reimbursed only if emergency circumstances warrant. The emergency circumstances must be explained on the expense form and Board approval of the additional expense is required. Fees for the first checked bag will be reimbursed. Copies of airline tickets and baggage receipts must be attached to the expense form.

2. Rail or bus travel at actual cost. Rail or bus travel costs may not exceed the cost of coach airfare. Copies of tickets must be attached to the expense form to substantiate amounts.

3. Use of personal automobiles at the standard mileage rate approved by the Internal Revenue Service for income tax purposes. The reimbursement may not exceed the cost of coach airfare.

Mileage for use of personal automobiles in trips to and from transportation terminals will also be reimbursed. Toll charges and parking costs will be reimbursed.

4. Automobile rental costs when the vehicle's use is warranted. The circumstances for such use must be explained on the expense form.

5. Taxis, airport limousines, ride-sharing services, or other local transportation costs.

Meals

Meals charged to NKEC should represent mid-fare selections for the hotel/meeting facility or general area. Tips are included with meal charges. Expense forms must explain the meal charges incurred. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed. The amount to be reimbursed for food shall not exceed $75 per day nor will employees or NKEC Board members be reimbursed for alcoholic beverages.

Lodging

Employees should request conference rates or mid-fare room accommodations. A single room rate will be reimbursed. Employees should pay personal expenses at checkout. If that is impossible, deductions for the charges should be made on the expense form.

Miscellaneous Expenses

Employees may seek reimbursement for other expenses incurred while attending a meeting sponsored by organizations described herein by fully describing the expenses on the expense form, and attaching receipts.

Additional Requirements for Travel Expenses Charged to Federal and State Grants

All grant-related travel expenses must be pre-approved by the CEO or designee.

Expenses for travel, including expenses for transportation, lodging, meals, and related items incurred by employees and charged to a federal grant or State grant governed by the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (30 ILCS 708/) must also meet the following requirements:

1. The participation of the employee is necessary for the award and the costs

   are specifically related to the award.

2. Expenses must be permissible under the terms and conditions of the award.

3. Expenses must be reasonable and consistent with this policy.

4. Expenses may be charged based on an actual cost basis or on a per diem basis in lieu of actual costs incurred; however, only one method may be applied per trip.

5. Commercial airfare costs in excess of the least expensive coach or economy class are prohibited except when such accommodations would: (1) require circuitous routing; (2) require travel during unreasonable hours; (3) excessively prolonged travel; (4) result in additional costs that would offset transportation savings, or (5) offer accommodations not reasonably adequate for the traveler's medical needs. Qualifying circumstances must be explained on the expense form, and Board approval of the additional expense is required.

6. Per diem rates and actual reimbursement amounts for mileage, meals, and lodging may not exceed the rates established by the Governor's Travel Control Board or federal travel regulations, whichever is less. These limits do not apply when: (1) an employee stays in the lowest-priced room available at or near a hotel where a conference or seminar is located or in accommodations arranged by the conference/seminar organization, or (2) lodging at or below the established rate is unavailable. In those cases, the employee will be reimbursed for actual lodging expenses with prior approval, but in no case will the reimbursement exceed 300% of the applicable maximum per diem rate. If a conference fee includes a meal, the meal or per diem allowance will be reduced by the actual value of the meal or the applicable meal allowance, whichever is less.

7. Employees must use the second least expensive car available or pre-approval from the CEO or designee when using a rental car for travel unless an exception is approved. The NKEC Board does not reimburse employees for collision damage waiver or theft insurance.

8. The NKEC Board will reimburse travel expenses not chargeable to an award from other District funds consistent with this policy.

Legal Reference: 2 C.F.R. §200.474.

30 ILCS 708/130, Grant Accountability and Transparency Act.

50 ILCS 150/, Local Government Travel Expense Control Act.

105 ILCS 5/10-22.32.

820 ILCS 115/9.5, Ill. Wage Payment and Collection Act.

Revised: March 8, 2023, and April 5, 2023.

Board Adoption Date: May 8, 2023.