

TRAVEL POLICES AND PROCEDURES

TRAVEL PROCEDURES TO IMPLEMENT PURCHASING POLICY 7 D

TRAVEL AND TRAINING REGULATIONS

MetroPlan Orlando's travel policy applies to all board members, appointed officials, advisory board members, employees, interns, and other authorized officials traveling on official business paid for by MetroPlan Orlando.

Appointed officials, advisory board members, employees, and other authorized officials traveling on official business for MetroPlan Orlando are expected to use reasonably priced lodging accommodations and are required to use economy or tourist class air travel fares. Under no circumstances are travelers on MetroPlan Orlando business permitted to accept *gratuitous* upgrades to first class if the situation would conflict with the Code of Conduct Policy in Section 7.0 of the employee handbook. Meals, tips and lodging must be reasonable in relation to the area visited, and reimbursement will be limited to a reasonable allowance.

Preplanning by management to obtain advanced registration discount rates and minimizing the number of staff who will attend the same training session will contribute toward cost control.

Travel, whether by public transportation, privately-owned automobile, or a for-hire conveyance, shall be over the most direct, practicable route. Any deviations from a direct route must be explained on the travel form.

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

The Board Chairperson, or Vice Chair in his/her absence, must authorize travel of the Executive Director. The Board must authorize all travel by any board members, all committee members, and all community representatives, including but not limited to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC), Transportation System Management & Operations Advisory Committee (TSMO), Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) members. The authorizing official for each employee traveling for the benefit of MetroPlan Orlando shall be the Executive Director. All travel will be authorized in advance by the appropriate authority. The number of individuals traveling to any one event shall be monitored and limited to provide for sufficient coverage of the event while maintaining continuing educational opportunities for staff and for benefit of the Organization. All such travel must comply with all policies stated herein.

Out of state conferences – Attendance at an out of state conference will be limited to one (1) staff member. Preferences will be given to a staff member on a panel, committee, or providing a presentation. An exception can be made for a second (2) staff member to attend if they are part of a committee, panel, or presentation. Out of state conferences will not be used for certification maintenance only. Department directors may also consider seniority and request dates in their decision.

In state conferences - Attendance at an in state conference may or may not be limited to one (1) staff member. Preferences will be given to a staff member on a panel, committee, or

providing a presentation; who has not attended a conference in the fiscal year; and/or needs continuing professional education to maintain certification. Department directors may also consider seniority and request dates in their decision.

It is strongly encouraged that continuing professional education for certification maintenance be satisfied with local events and trainings.

Travel during work hours and/or at the Organization's expense outside of our service area (Orange, Seminole, and Osceola Counties) will be authorized in advance of travel. Specific expenses and/or conditions of travel must be authorized by the designated official as described below:

- a. Car rental.
- b. Use of privately-owned vehicle in-state.
- c. Training to maintain professional certification or license, i.e., Continuing Professional Education (CPE).
- d. To hold a position in a professional organization for which travel to meetings is required.
- e. Technical training necessary to complete the job assignment.
- f. General training for job performance enhancement.
- g. Waiver of reimbursement agreement.
- h. Entertainment expenses.

In the event of an emergency situation when the employee cannot obtain prior written authorization, verbal approval will be obtained, and travel documents shall be completed immediately upon the employee's return to work.

TRAVEL/TRAINING GUIDELINES

All travel covered by this policy must be for the direct benefit of MetroPlan Orlando. A direct benefit to the Organization will promote the purposes of the Organization or will provide for training opportunities through continuing professional education; new technological and management training; or represent the interest of the Organization at Board and committee meetings of an organization in which the employee was authorized to hold an office. Accordingly, all employees and Board members are required to attend applicable training sessions offered during normal business hours and adhere to all travel and rules of conduct policies. Travelers whose travel expense is to be reimbursed by an outside agency must so indicate on the Travel Reimbursement Form and initiate a billing through the Department of Finance and Administration to the agency immediately upon return to work. A copy of the billing must accompany the final reconciliation submitted to the Department of Finance and Administration, and collection is the responsibility of the traveler.

PRIOR/POST-TRAVEL ACCOUNTABILITY

Although travel costs have been included in MetroPlan Orlando's budget, officials and employees shall obtain written approval to perform the travel, attend meetings, etc., through the process of completion and approval of the Travel Request Form, before making any commitment to pay registration fees, to purchase a transportation ticket, or to incur any other cost. Each official or employee shall first prepare a Travel Request Form for individual expenses and submit it to the appropriate authorizing official. A meeting program or brochure shall be attached to the travel authorization request. In no event shall a travel form be submitted for approval unless funds for payment of the proposed travel are available in the proper line item budget charge code.

When the travel form has been approved and funds certified as available, the official or employee is then authorized to be absent from work for the period specified to travel, to incur expense and to be reimbursed, to draw a travel advance and to initiate invoices for payment in advance for room deposits, registration or tuition fees, and tickets on common carriers. The traveler shall use the Travel Request and Travel Reimbursement Forms to account for all expenses. At the completion of travel, the traveler will sum each category of expense and transfer the total to the appropriate item of the Travel Reimbursement Form.

Receipts for hotels, public transportation, convention registration fees, car rental, tolls, and similar items must be attached to the completed Travel Reimbursement Form. All items for which a receipt cannot or was not obtained must be explained in writing. Any item without a receipt, other than straight per diem, is subject to denial. All items of a miscellaneous nature must be itemized.

Upon return to the office, the complete Travel Reimbursement Form must be prepared by the traveler, signed, and submitted to the authorizing official within seven working days of completing travel. The official should review the forms before approving and should obtain explanation on any questionable item, keeping in mind they are certifying that the expenses were incurred on MetroPlan Orlando's business and are a legal obligation of the Organization. If costs incurred exceed the amount of expense authorized by the appropriate official, and the traveler requests reimbursement for the additional amount, the authorizing official should provide a complete explanation and a recommendation to the Director of Finance and Administration. All forms must be submitted to the Department of Finance and Administration within ten working days of completing travel.

The Department of Finance and Administration shall review the expenses to make certain that all items of expense are properly charged and are not otherwise questionable. If additional information is needed for approval, the form shall be returned to the traveler for revision. If the charges are found to be correct and allowable, the voucher will be forwarded to the Department of Finance and Administration for final audit and payment.

All unused portions of money paid to the traveler or advanced by use of MetroPlan Orlando's credit cards for non-MetroPlan Orlando charges shall be repaid within ten (10) working days from time of return to work. The employee may request that a deduction be made from his/her next salary payment. If the traveler has not settled the cash advance(s) within 30 calendar days of return to work, the employee traveler shall be requested to authorize a deduction of the unused amount advanced, in full, from the employee traveler's next salary payment.

GOVERNING REGULATIONS

The following regulations are established and will be the basis upon which reimbursement of expenses will be approved. All reimbursements shall require proper receipts or other documentation. Without sufficient documentation, reimbursement may be denied.

- (1) Transportation
 - a. Travelers are expected to use the mode of travel that is most advantageous to MetroPlan Orlando. This would include consideration of bus or airport van service to and from terminals or extended parking at terminals versus use of a common carrier. The traveler is permitted mileage from point of departure (home or work location), whichever is the shorter distance.

The use of a privately-owned vehicle for official travel in lieu of publicly-owned vehicles or common carriers may be authorized by the Executive Director. Whenever travel is by privately-owned vehicle, the traveler shall be entitled to a mileage allowance at a fixed rate per mile, not to exceed the amount set by the Internal Revenue Service at the time of travel, or the air carrier rate for such travel, whichever is lower. Where two or more authorized persons travel in one private vehicle, only the person supplying the vehicle shall receive transportation reimbursement.

Employees deviating from the most direct route will have to bear the extra cost.

b. Taxicabs/Ride Share

Reimbursement for taxicabs or ride share services to and from airports, train stations, etc., will be made only when receipts are provided.

c. Car Rentals

Prior approval must be received from the Executive Director if the traveler must rent a car. Car rentals must be mid-size or smaller. Upgrades must be paid by the traveler.

All staff renting vehicles while on MetroPlan Orlando business shall purchase rental insurance unless the contracted rate with the rental car provider includes rental insurance.

d. Airline

Airline reservations may be acquired if approved by the appropriate official. Tickets may be purchased by the Organization or the traveler may purchase the tickets and request reimbursement.

Air travel will be reimbursed for economy or similar level fares from an Orlando area airport. Cost comparisons should be made for similar fares to determine the most economical option in that class. If the traveler decides to fly on a fare type above economy or from a more convenient airport, the traveler shall reimburse MetroPlan Orlando for the additional costs. A comparison of flights on the same day and same time shall be conducted to compare prices and determine the additional costs due from the traveler.

Air travelers shall attach their boarding passes and ticket stub or printout to the Travel Reimbursement Form for final accountability. If a digital ticket/boarding pass is used, the air traveler shall take a screen shot of the digital ticket/boarding pass and include a printout of the screen shot as proof of travel.

e. Reimbursable Local Travel

Travelers within the local service area (Orange, Seminole, Osceola Counties) shall not be reimbursed for lodging unless extenuating circumstances exist and then only when justifiable cause is documented in writing and pre-approved by the Executive Director.

Staff members may be reimbursed for mileage traveled in the local service area, for MetroPlan Orlando business, to the extent it exceeds the mileage the traveler would have traveled to commute to the office and home via automobile and only for the excess amount. Employees will not receive a reimbursement for the amount of miles that it takes to travel to the office and home via automobile. Exception: when traveling on a non-work day, all mileage from home and back will count for reimbursement.

For employees who live outside the three-county area, if the local travel is within the county in which the employee resides, the employee shall use the standard travel policy (e.) above as if the county were part of the service area.

Employees must complete the MetroPlan Orlando "Local Travel Reimbursement Form" to be reimbursed for local travel mileage. Facsimiles showing date, travel from point of origin and destination, purpose or reason, hour of departure and hour of return, per diem, map or actual mileage claimed, vicinity mileage claimed, and documented other charges such as tolls, parking, etc. may be accepted. Such reimbursement shall be at the rate specified by the Internal Revenue Service.

The use of taxis or ride share providers is an allowable, reimbursable expense for bona fide MetroPlan Orlando business for local (non-commute) travel based on one of the following:

1. An employee may receive local travel reimbursement up to the lesser of the cost of the taxi/ride share fare or the amount of mileage reimbursement that would be due to the employee if a personal vehicle was used instead.
2. Employees who do not have a MetroPlan Orlando paid parking benefit may receive full reimbursements for the cost of ride share services up to a monthly amount equivalent to the cost of a MetroPlan Orlando paid parking benefit.

(2) Lodging

- a. Expenses may vary in different areas traveled to, but all expenditures must be reasonable; primary responsibility for the reasonableness of amounts charged rests with the official who authorized the voucher. Excessive charges will be questioned by the Department of Finance and Administration, and justification must be explained fully in a written memorandum by the Department Director. Excess is subject to denial for reimbursement at the discretion of the Executive Director for costs not pre-approved on the travel voucher.

Reimbursement for tips for transportation & lodging (i.e., bellman and taxi/ride share) shall be limited to \$5.00 per day.

When additional nights of lodging and subsistence or per diems are charged to the Organization based on more economical air fares for weekend stays, a cost comparison prepared by an independent party with third-party verification (i.e., travel agent, airline rate schedule) must be approved and attached to the completed Travel Request and Reimbursement Form.

- b. When traveling in the State of Florida, the advance check should be made payable to the hotel, motel, lodge, etc., to ensure exemption of sales tax. The Department of Finance & Administration will include the tax-exempt number on the check stub and submit a copy of the tax-exempt certificate to the vendor with the payment check. When lodging is not paid in advance, the traveler must seek exemption from payment of tax on rental of hotel rooms. All travelers will be provided a tax-exempt certificate. If the hotel does not honor the tax exemption, please indicate in your travel form that the certificate was presented to the hotel but was denied. Sales tax reimbursement may be denied to the employee if exemption was available.
- c. Employees or any official travelling on MetroPlan business who live outside the three county area shall not be reimbursed for lodging for events that takes place within the county in which their home resides unless under extenuating circumstances and only with prior approval in writing by the Executive Director.

(3) Meals and Tips

- a. Reimbursement for meals and tips is based on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) per diem rate schedule at the time of the trip and at the destination location.

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>
- b. Same day travel out of the area (that is beyond Orange, Seminole and Osceola Counties) by employees or elected officials, for MetroPlan Orlando business, is reimbursable for reasonable meal expenses, provided that the employee or official does not reside in the county where the business occurred. In cases where the traveler did not find it necessary to spend the night out of town, but was unable to return home by 8:00 p.m. in time for dinner, reimbursement will be allowed for the evening meal. Similarly, when the traveler finds it necessary to leave home before 6:00 a.m., reimbursement for breakfast is permitted. Employees engaged in constant, daily, routine travel are not reimbursed for meals. Meals are not reimbursed in the tri-county area unless part of a formal program registration fee. Same day out of area travel may be reimbursed using the local travel reimbursement form in place of the out of area travel form.
- c. Reimbursement of \$100.00 per day, in lieu of the meals, tips, and lodging costs, may be authorized by the Executive Director, provided that the

\$100.00 per day does not exceed the amount permitted in paragraph (3) for meals and tips, plus the estimated average daily cost of lodging for the individual reimbursed.

- d. Meals provided as part of registration or by an airline should be reported on the Travel Reimbursement Form as meals furnished. Similarly, meals provided by a vendor should be reported as meals furnished, however, meals provided by a vendor must not exceed the limit stipulated in Employee Handbook Section 7.5(A). Snacks, hors d'oeuvres, or other items provided for consumption that do not constitute a meal will not be considered a furnished meal and per diem will still be available for that time period.

(4) Other

- a. Registration fees for functions related to MetroPlan Orlando business may be reimbursed when an employee is expected to attend due to the nature of the position.
- b. Telephone calls related to official business and paid for by the traveler may be claimed on the reimbursement voucher. The traveler must explain toll calls shown on the hotel bill or personal phone bill including the location, parties, and purpose. One three-minute personal call home per day is allowable for reimbursement. No other personal calls are reimbursable.
- c. While entertainment on behalf of MetroPlan Orlando, under certain circumstances and conditions, clearly meets a public purpose, these instances are subject to planning and preparation and, thus, it is a specific policy of MetroPlan Orlando to require approval by the Board Chairperson or the Executive Director of the nature, purpose, and anticipated cost of entertainment to be undertaken with public funds. For purposes of this policy, "entertainment" means meals or social activities. When approval is granted, it is specifically required that the nature of the entertainment, those present and a brief summary of the business discussed be provided for inclusion in the Organization's records. These expenses shall be reasonable and shall not include alcoholic beverages. The following exceptions/classification to this policy are stated and made a part hereof:
 - (1) When MetroPlan Orlando agrees to reimburse a job applicant for expenses to come to an interview (airfare, lodging, and meals), the meal allowances applied will be consistent with the existing travel policy.
 - (2) While MetroPlan Orlando acknowledges that attendance and participation in professional association meetings constitutes a public purpose in relation to the training and education of its professionals, MetroPlan Orlando will reimburse the cost of meals and attendance to such meetings only if it is established that the meeting has a *professional* and not social purpose, and the fee for the meal is at a standard rate per attendee.

- d. Out-of-state travel by personal or rental vehicle, in excess of 1,000 miles for the round trip, requires prior written approval by the Executive Director. Approval to use a personal or rented vehicle provides the traveler(s) a substitute for an airline ticket; therefore, “en-route” expenses other than gasoline/vehicle expense will not be reimbursed, and mileage cost beyond the cost of economy or coach air fare will not be reimbursed. Travel time in excess of the most advantageous mode of travel to MetroPlan Orlando will be chargeable as personal leave to the employee(s).