

RIC

TRAVEL POLICY

(Revised July 1, 2018)

General

This Travel Policy governs travel by all RIC board members, employees and anyone authorized to be reimbursed for travel by or on behalf of RIC, and includes all in-state, out-of-state, and international travel.

Definitions

For purpose of this policy, the following terms are defined:

- (1) “GSA” means the U.S. General Service Administration.
- (2) “Policy” means this Travel Policy.
- (3) “Travel Expense Report” means the form/format approved by RIC that is to be used for settling all travel related expenses incurred pursuant to this Policy, whether in an electronic document or on paper.
- (4) “Traveler” means a RIC officer, board member, employee and anyone authorized to be reimbursed by or on the behalf of RIC.
- (5) “Travel Status” is defined as the authorized period away from the RIC office commencing with the time of departure and ending with the time of return.

General Information

- (1) RIC has an “accountable plan” for reimbursement of travel expenses and will only reimburse for actual expenses or in an amount deemed substantiated.
- (2) Authority to manage, approve, or disapprove travel and travel-related expense is delegated exclusively to the Executive Director or Chairman/Oversight Committee as is appropriate.
- (3) Travel may be authorized only for official business and only if the program being expensed has the financial resources to reimburse the Traveler for the travel expense.

Travel expenses will be reimbursed for legitimate and reasonable expenses considered necessary for the proper conduct of RIC business in accordance with this Policy.

- (4) A traveler is considered in "travel status" when he or she is traveling on behalf of RIC, which includes leaving the RIC office to perform duties at other locations.
- (5) Approval for travel must be secured in advance by the traveler.
- (6) The Executive Director is responsible for approving the staffs in-state travel, and the Chairman/Oversight Committee as designed by the Executive Committee is responsible for approving all employees' out-of- state travel and the Executive Director's overnight travel.
- (7) The responsibility to audit a Traveler's expense report lies with RIC's financial manager. Approval of a Traveler's expense report by the financial manager means the Travel Expense Report meets all criteria established by this Policy for reimbursement. The financial manager shall audit and approve an accurate Travel Expense Report for reimbursement within fifteen (15) days after completion of travel.
- (8) Travel arrangements must be made directly with the service vendor. Third party booking sites shall not be used.

Reimbursements

- (1) Travel expense for lodging should be paid directly through the RIC financial manager when possible.
- (2) Reimbursement of travel expenses paid from federal, state, and private grants shall be governed by the terms and conditions of the grant if they differ from those contained in this Policy; otherwise, this Policy shall govern the reimbursement.
- (3) Travel Expense Reports must be completed by the traveler and have all required receipts and forms attached before submitting to the financial manager.
- (4) The financial manager is responsible for auditing the Travel Expense Reports. Approval of Travel Expense Reports is required by the financial manager to certify the report meets all criteria established by this policy.
- (5) Itemized receipts are required for expenses claimed in excess of \$75.00 unless otherwise addressed in this policy.

- (6) When a receipt is required, the receipt must be a valid, itemized receipt issued the vendor or service provider documenting the transaction.
- (7) When acceptable receipt is not available, a Traveler shall create, in paper or electronic form, an itemized list reflecting the goods or services purchased, vendor name, date of purchase and price. The physical or electronic signatures of the Traveler and the Executive Director or Chairman, as appropriate, are required, along with whatever receipt or other documentation is available.

Meals

- (1) Meal expense reimbursement is based on the temporary duty location and is not to exceed the maximum per diem established by the federal government. Alcohol and entertainment expenses are specifically excluded. Meal reimbursement is allowed when lodging is listed as “gratis” or “no charge.”
- (2) Meal and incidental rates differ by travel location; incidentals are included in the meal per diem and are therefore not separately reimbursable. Examples of incidental expenses are fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships, and hotel servants; transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the temporary duty site.
- (3) Meal expenses are reimbursable for travel requiring overnight lodging.
- (4) A traveler may request a cash advance for meals and/or mileage using the federal government per diem rates.
 - (5) Current rates and an example of the per diem meal breakdown may be found at the GSA website at www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates.
- (6) Adjustments to Per Diem Rates
 - (a) Exceptions may be granted to per diem rates in situations when authorized by the Chairman or Oversight Committee as designated by the Executive Committee.
 - (b) When expenses are approved in excess of per diem rates, itemized receipts are required for the meal and incidental expenses for the entire day.
 - (c) On the first and last days of travel of an overnight trip when no

meals are provided, the allowable reimbursement is based on 75% of the federal governments per diem rate for the specific city. Departure and arrival times are not considered. If a meal is provided gratis or included within the registration fee of the business travel, the per diem rate must be reduced by the appropriate amount.

- (d) A meal provided by a common carrier or as a complimentary meal provided by a hotel/motel does not reduce the maximum per diem rate.

(7) Extraordinary Meal Expense Reimbursement

- (a) Meal expenses for a single day travel are not reimbursable unless the Traveler is in travel status for more than 12 hours in a 24-hour period and reimbursement has been approved by the appropriate officer. The maximum reimbursement is 75% of the GSA rate. Date and time of departure and return must be clearly noted on the Travel Expense Report.
- (b) Traveler in certain occasional overtime situation, at the direction and with the written approval of the Executive Director or Chairman/Oversight Committee as designated by the Executive Committee may be reimbursed for their meal expenses. Appropriate documentation must be kept on file.

Transportation

(1) Air Transportation

- (a) Allowable expenses for commercial airline travel shall include the actual cost for the least expensive logical fare via the most direct route, or a reasonable alternative route if it results in a lower fare.
- (b) The financial manager is responsible for booking all airline travel with RIC's credit card to secure the least expensive airfare possible.
- (c) Electronic tickets (E-tickets) are the industry standard and are issued automatically unless a paper ticket is specifically requested by the Traveler.

(2) Inappropriate Actions

- (a) Travelers may not deliberately cause increased costs or delays to

obtain personal gratuities, such as denied boarding compensation, frequent flier points or mileage or other benefits. Conversion of airline tickets for personal benefit, such as downgrading tickets, returning unused tickets for cash, credit or personal airline tickets or other similar action is prohibited.

- (b) Travelers may not specify a particular airline to accumulate mileage or promotional plans such as frequent flyer programs if it results in a higher fare, traveler may retain frequent flyer points properly accumulated.
- (c) If an increase in airfare is caused by the traveler without legitimate excuse, the increased costs of the airfare are a personal expense of the traveler and will not be reimbursed. If an increase in airfare is incurred through no fault of the traveler and the Executive Director or Chairman/Oversight Committee has approved the increase, the increased cost is reimbursable.

(3) Ground Transportation

- (a) A traveler may use a privately-owned, or a commercial rental vehicle for ground transportation.
- (b) A traveler must possess a valid operator's license to drive a vehicle while traveling on behalf of RIC.
- (c) The traveler is responsible for following all applicable laws and requirements while driving, and for any fines and/or penalties resulting from citations, charges or warrants attributed to the operator. Such fines and/or penalties are not reimbursable expenses.
- (d) When a traveler requests to drive his or her personal vehicle rather than fly for business, reimbursement shall be based on the actual in-transit expenses (mileage and other costs incurred while in-transit, such as lodging, meals, parking, etc.) not to exceed the least expensive logical commercial airline cost plus local transportation to and from the airport and parking (where required).
- (e) Travel between the place of residence and the RIC office is not reimbursable. The point of travel may start from the employee's place of residence rather than the RIC office when the mile from the place of residence to the destination would be less than the miles from the RIC office to the destination.

(4) Privately-Owned Vehicles

- (a) Privately-owned vehicles may be used for RIC travel.
- (b) Mileage allowance for privately-owned vehicles engaged in RIC business will be based on the GSA rate in effect at the time of the travel. The rate covers all operating costs such as fuel, maintenance, insurance, etc., and no additional reimbursement will be made for such expenses.
- (c) The mileage allowance will be based on the shortest practical route to and from the destination.
- (d) Travel for which mileage is claimed shall normally begin and end at the RIC office.
- (e) Travel commencing before or after the workday for which mileage is claimed shall begin from either the RIC office or the traveler's home, whichever is closer to the destination.
- (f) Receipts are not requested for mileage reimbursement when using privately-owned vehicles.

(5) Insurance

- (a) Owner's personal insurance will be primary for liability insurance coverage when using a commercial rental vehicle.
- (b) Owner should contact their automobile insurer to discuss coverage available/required when using their own vehicle on RIC business.

(6) Commercial Rental Vehicles

- (a) A commercial rental vehicle should only be used when a temporary need arises, and the cost will be less than the reimbursement associated with a privately-owned vehicle.
- (b) Only the traveler renting the commercial rental vehicle is permitted to operate the vehicle. If RIC employees are traveling together, it must be noted on the rental agreement if they will operate the vehicle.
- (c) Travelers must use the RIC contract for car rental services, unless the RIC contract for car rental services do not have:

1. A location in the specific area,
 2. The type of vehicle needed, or
 3. The vehicle for the duration needed.
- (d) For travel of more than a few days in duration, weekly rental rates may be allowed if they result in a lower total cost than the daily rate.
- (e) Allowable expenses for commercial rental vehicles will be made at actual cost for the daily rental charge for a mid size or smaller vehicle, plus mileage fees and fuel costs.
- (f) Rentals may be made for a full-size vehicle if more than three (3) people are traveling together on business and for larger vehicles if a group of five (5) or more is traveling together.
- (g) Larger vehicles may be rented when situations warrant (i.e. negotiating rough terrain, transporting large groups of people or equipment, or other extenuating circumstances) as approved by the Executive Director.
- (h) Reimbursement may be made for actual fuel costs, supported by valid, itemized receipts.
- (i) Vehicles should be returned to the rental agency with a full tank of fuel. Unless rental location provides gas at a lower rate, documentation required.

(7) Collision Damage Insurance (CDW)

- (a) The RIC contract for car rental services may provide CDW insurance for some vehicles .
- (b) No other insurance or insurance-like product is reimbursable for rental vehicles used in the United States, unless required by law Full coverage insurance is a reimbursable expense for any approved rental vehicle used outside the United States.

(8) Rail Service

- (a) Travelers shall make advance booking for rail service through the financial manager, using the least expensive logical fare via the most direct route or other reasonable route that results in a lower

fare.

(9) Other Ground Transportation

- (a) When courtesy transportation is provided by a hotel, motel, or other service facility, the traveler is encouraged to use such a service.
- (b) Travelers may be reimbursed for taxi, bus, and other forms of public transportation. Receipts are not required under \$75.

Lodging

- (1) Lodging for a traveler is allowed where the distance is more than fifty (50) miles from his or her official work location or home, whichever is the shorter distance, and an overnight stay is required.
- (2) The financial manager is responsible for securing the lowest rate available at a reasonably priced facility and booking the stay with RIC's credit card.
- (3) The lodging facility location should be as convenient as possible to the location where business is being conducted.
- (4) Allowable expenses for lodging shall include the actual expense for overnight accommodations and all applicable taxes and surcharges.
- (5) If more than one Traveler shares a room, one of the Travelers may claim the total charge at the rate charged for the number of persons in one room; each Traveler will need to be referenced on the other Travel Expense Report. They may also request the total charge be split between them accordingly and each issued their own separate folio or receipt.
- (6) Receipts are required for lodging expenses. A valid, itemized invoice or folio shall be the official document utilized for reimbursement to the Traveler.
- (7) If an increase in the lodging charge is incurred due to the traveler being directed by RIC to change travel plans or due to extenuating circumstances arising beyond the control of the traveler, then the increase is allowable. Increased charges incurred due to the traveler's failure to notify the lodging facility are the personal expense of the Traveler and are not allowable.

Registration Fees

- (1) Registration fees and event-related material for meetings, conferences,

seminars, and/or workshops are allowable.

- (2) The receipt or documentation provided by the event sponsor shall be sufficient for allowable expenses.
- (3) Travelers are to adjust meal expenses (per diem) request for meals included with the registration fee.
- (4) Traveler should verify acceptable payment methods with the event sponsor prior to attending. Registration fees should be directly paid by RIC when possible.
- (5) If a cancellation is incurred, the charge is allowable expense if the traveler is directed to change his/her travel plans, or if other extenuating circumstances beyond the traveler's control arise. Charges incurred due to the failure of the traveler to notify the event sponsor are considered the traveler's responsibility.

Other Expenses

- (1) Travelers may incur miscellaneous business-related expenses for which reimbursement may be made, if applicable. Receipts are required for any individual expenditure in excess of \$75.00. The financial manager may require any or all receipts at their option as a means of cost control.

Such expenses and reimbursements may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Baggage storage between appointments and between hotel and meeting places;
 - b. Tolls, garage, and parking fees – excluding valet parking for personal convenience.
 - c. Currency conversion;
 - d. Guides, interpreters, and visa fees; and
 - e. Laundry and dry cleaning when an employee is in travel status in excess of seven days without returning home.
- (2) Valet charges will only be reimbursed where self-parking is not available or where self-parking costs more than valet parking.
 - (3) Expenses for travel in foreign countries are to be reported in United States dollars. Expenditures in foreign currencies must be converted into United States dollars at the rate or rates at which the foreign currency was obtained. The rates of conversion and commissions must be shown on an attachment to the Travel Expense Report
 - (4) When a non-employee accompanies a Traveler on official business, the State shall in no way be responsible or liable for any expenses, actions or

inactions of the non-employee whatsoever.

Travel Forms

- (1) RIC approved format is to be used when seeking prior approval for reimbursement for travel expenses or submitting a request for reimbursement.
- (2) Any non-employee seeking approval or reimbursement for travel expenses must use a RIC approved form to submit the request according to this policy. The form must contain the Traveler's original signature preferably in blue ink.
- (3) Any invoice or receipt requiring original certification may be certified by the non-employee traveler and the financial manager or Executive Director.

Restriction, Exceptions, or Waivers

- (1) Appropriate officers have the right to establish procedures that are more restrictive than any provision of this policy.
- (2) Travel Expense Reports for which an exception, waiver or deviation from this Policy has been granted or made by an appropriate officer shall be processed separately from those reports without exceptions, waiver or deviations. The need for specialized audit review may result in longer processing times.