

Travel Principles and Policies

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on how state employees and public officers seek reimbursement for travel expenses incurred while on state business.

AUTHORITATIVE DOCUMENTS

- NMSA Chapter 10, Article 8 - Per Diem and Mileage Act
- NMAC 2.42.2 - Regulations Governing the Per Diem and Mileage Act

STATE AGENCY WITH OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITY

Department of Finance and Administration

Excludes State Legislature and State Higher Educational Institutions

Non-compliance with the policy or the improper claim for travel expenses may result in financial penalties and appropriate disciplinary action.

PRINCIPLES

To be reimbursable, travel expenses must be associated with conducting state business. Basic requirements include:

- Obtain approval to travel prior to the event.
- Traveler should not incur any more cost than necessary and should use the most economical manner possible while traveling for state business.
- Remember the four criteria for determining propriety of expenditure.
 - Supports Mission and is Mission Critical
 - Public benefit and purpose
 - Necessity, is there a more cost-effective alternative? Example Video Conference.
 - Available budgetary resources
- Travel expenses can only be reimbursed once and should be collected from one entity.

Travel Principles and Policies

- Reimbursement is intended to defray travel costs incurred in the performance of public business rather than serve as a salary for services performed or as a supplemental source of income.
- Travelers should not incur or use rewards or points when traveling on state business. Reimbursement requests using points as payment will be denied.

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT - HOME AND DESIGNATED POST OF DUTY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for travel reimbursement, the employee or public officer must be on official business at least 50 miles away from home and at least 50 miles from designated post of duty and the event must involve overnight lodging or be long enough to qualify for partial day per diem. Overnight travel reimbursement may be based on actual cost or per diem rates. Travel rates are updated annually and posted on the DFA website.

ACTUAL EXPENSES IN LIEU OF PER DIEM RATES

- Requires agency head's written approval.
- Only available when overnight travel is required.
- Meal expenses are capped per 24-hour. The maximum daily rate is updated annually and posted on the DFA website (24-hour period begins at the time of departure, not work schedule).
- Last day of travel when overnight lodging is no longer required:
 - Employee cannot be reimbursed for actual expenses.
 - Partial day/Return from travel per diem must be paid instead.
- Itemized receipts are required when requesting actual cost reimbursement.
- Lodging that exceeds \$215 per night must be approved by the agency head in writing (on the ISTE form).

CALCULATION OF PARTIAL DAY/RETURN FROM TRAVEL PER DIEM OVERNIGHT STAY

Travel Principles and Policies

- Determine number of hours on the final day when overnight lodging is no longer required. To do this, count the number of hours between original departure time and arrival time on the final day. Refer to the return from travel scale on the DFA website for reimbursement amount.

AIRFARE

Airfare should be the lowest fare available. Payment may exceed the lowest fare only if seats are unavailable at the lowest fare and travel is imperative. A copy of the detailed flight itinerary must be attached to all claims when air travel has occurred to verify departure/ arrival times and meals provided in-flight. DFA recommends the purchase of airfare on behalf of the employee using a Purchase Order through SHARE or state procurement card, if available.

BOARD, COMMISSION AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Non-salaried state public officers are allowed the following reimbursement per meeting attended:

- In-person meeting lasting 4 hours or more - \$95
- In-person meeting lasting less than 4 hours - \$45
- Virtual meeting of any length - \$45
 - Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google, Phone call, etc.

Or;

Can seek reimbursement using per diem rates if overnight travel is required. For official meetings other than board or committee meetings, public officer can be reimbursed using per diem rates noted above.

Travel Principles and Policies

MILEAGE

If official business is transacted while using a personal vehicle, mileage may be reimbursed at the rate set annually by DFA (commuter miles cannot be reimbursed).

Employees are expected to carpool or use state vehicles when available. Justification as to why carpooling or the use of a state vehicle did not occur should be included in the voucher supporting material. The use of a personal vehicle for business purposes must be approved in advance by the agency.

Reimbursement rate for employees of all branches of government pursuant to Section 10-8-5 (D) NMSA 1978, has been set at *100% of the internal revenue service standard mileage rate set January 1 of the previous year for each mile traveled in a privately owned vehicle.

****NOTE: As of January 16, 2024, Repeal and Rule Change to 100% of the IRS standard mileage rate set of the previous year. Refer to the DFA website for current rates.***

Distance determination or mileage should be estimated using one of the following approved and auditable methods.

- Google Maps <https://www.google.com> as the mileage calculator for mileage on travel taken place as of January 16, 2024.
- If Google Maps is not used, the traveler must use the DOT mileage chart or odometer readings.
- No other alternatives are available.

Reimbursement limit for out of state travel: Privately owned automobile mileage reimbursement for out of state travel shall not exceed the total equivalent coach class commercial airfare that would have been reimbursed those traveling had they traveled by common carrier.

Travel Principles and Policies

Additional mileage provision: Only mileage accrued while on official business during the travel event shall be reimbursed. An agency head or designee may authorize by memorandum reimbursement for mileage from a point of origin farther from the destination than the designated post of duty in appropriate circumstances and the memorandum must accompany the payment voucher.

Private Planes – For those of with private planes, reimbursement for use is at 88 cents per mile with distance determined by aeronautical charts published by NMDOT in state and other state's outside of New Mexico. Out of state travel shall not exceed the total equivalent coach class commercial airfare that would have been reimbursed to those traveling had they traveled by common carrier. There is a provision for certified mileage if not available in maps.

TRAVEL ADVANCES

To prevent undue hardship on the employee, travel advances may be requested if allowed as part of the agency travel policy. Amounts advanced should be limited to 80% of estimated per diem or estimated actual costs. Advances are not to be processed any earlier than two weeks prior to the travel event.

Advances should be processed using the SHARE prepaid voucher functionality. The standard use of SHARE should comply with the following requirements:

- Prepaid Voucher Invoice Convention - YYYYMMDD 80% Advance, where date is the first day of trip/event.
- Prepayment Reference should tie to first eight characters of invoice number (first day of travel).
- Payment Tab Message field should be used and contain, travel

Travel Principles and Policies

destination, purpose, and date.

- Invoice date will be ISTE employee signature date.

Agency monitoring requirements can be satisfied using standard SHARE query titled NMX_OPEN_PREPAID_VOUCHERS. Prepaid vouchers should be monitored monthly and closed out prior to year-end, if applicable.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR OTHER EXPENSES

Employees can be reimbursed for the following items: **receipts are always required.**

1. Taxi or other transportation fares.
2. Gratuities, (always capped at no more than 20%).
3. Parking Fees.
4. Actual cost by common carrier using the most economic fare available.
5. Rental cars provided it is less than public transportation.
6. Registration fees for educational programs and conferences. If meals or lodging are included in the fee, then travel must be reported using the actual cost method.

LOST RECEIPTS

In situations where the loss of receipts would deny reimbursement and create a hardship, an affidavit from the officer or employee attesting to the expenses may be substituted for actual receipts. The affidavit must accompany the travel voucher and include the signature of the agency head. The affidavit should be itemized by date and time at the lowest level. There is an expectation that exceptions will only be for the occasional misplacement of a receipt not as a waiver of inclusion of receipts.

TIPPING

Industry standard for tips are twenty percent (20%).

Travel Principles and Policies

Tips cannot exceed 20% per transaction, within reason. Tips for meals cannot exceed 20% of the allowed daily amount as set by DFA. Tips should be calculated on the total cost of the allowable expense.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Verify that employee or public officer is set-up in SHARE-FIN as supplier and all information is correct.

Prepare reimbursement request using approved forms which can be found on DFA, FCD website. Updated forms should be downloaded from the DFA website every July 1st.

All overnight travel vouchers should be limited to a single travel event and submitted in full on one reimbursement request:

- There should be no white out on document. Corrections to the ISTE must be limited and should be initialed by the traveler. If the ISTE contains numerous corrections, it should be fixed electronically and resubmitted, not crossed out.
- Document must be signed using an electronic or wet signature.
- Scanned submission must be legible and aligned so it may be read from left to right and top to bottom. Attachments should be in PDF format.

TIMELINESS

Travel Reimbursement Forms should be filled out and submitted within two weeks upon return of travel to ensure reimbursement, per MAPs FIN 5.8