

TRAVEL AND MEAL POLICY

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the reimbursement of expenses to employees or trustees incurred during work related training and/or travel.

POLICY:

SECTION I: OVERVIEW

It is the policy of Albany Public Library to reimburse staff and trustees for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in connection with approved travel on behalf of the Library. The Library strongly encourages use of travel discounts when making travel arrangements.

Reimbursement is allowed only when reimbursement has not been, and will not be, received from other sources. If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in the travel policies, the most conservative course of action should be adopted.

Authorization and Responsibility

Travel for staff and trustees must be authorized. Travelers should verify that planned travel is eligible for reimbursement before making travel arrangements. Upon completion of the trip, and within 10 days, the traveler must submit a reimbursement form and supporting documentation to obtain reimbursement of expenses.

The Board President (in the case of Trustees), Executive Director, Assistant Director or Chief Fiscal Officer is required to review expenditures and withhold reimbursement if there is reason to believe that the expenditures are inappropriate or extravagant.

Personal Funds

Travelers should review reimbursement guidelines before spending personal funds for business travel to determine if such expenses are reimbursable. See Section II – Travel Expenses / Processes for details.

The Library reserves the right to deny reimbursement of travel related expenses for failure to comply with policies and procedures.

Vacation in Conjunction with Business Travel

In cases where vacation time is added to a business trip, any cost variance in airfare, car rental, and/or lodging must be clearly identified on the reimbursement form. The Library will not prepay any personal expenses with the intention of being “repaid” at a later time, nor will any personal expenses be reimbursed.

Exceptions

Occasionally it may be necessary for travelers to request exceptions to these Travel Policies. Requests for exceptions to these policies must be made in writing and approved by the Executive Director, Assistant Director or Chief Fiscal Officer.

SECTION II: EXPENSES THAT MAY BE PREPAID OR REIMBURSED

1. **Airfare** – Travelers are expected to obtain the lowest available airfare that reasonably meets business travel needs. Airfare may be prepaid by the Business Office.

Travelers are encouraged to book flights at least 30 days in advance to avoid premium airfare pricing. First class tickets are not reimbursable.

Coach class or economy tickets must be purchased for domestic or international flights. A higher-priced coach ticket cannot be purchased for a subsequent upgrade in seating.

2. **Rail Transportation** – The Library will prepay rail transportation providing the cost does not exceed the cost of the least expensive available airfare.

3. **Automobile** – Reimbursement for usage of a personal automobile is based on IRS Mileage Rate.

Reimbursement for a commercial rental vehicle as a primary mode of transportation is authorized only if the rental vehicle is more economical than any other type of public transportation, or if the destination is not otherwise accessible. Vehicle rental at a destination city is reimbursable. Original receipts are required.

The Library authorizes reimbursement for entry-level or the most economic vehicle available. In certain circumstances larger vehicles may be rented, with supervisory approval.

When vehicle rentals are necessary, The Library encourages travelers to purchase CDW and LDW coverage. The Library will reimburse the cost of CDW and LDW coverage. Travelers are strongly encouraged to fill the gas tank before returning the vehicle to the rental agency to avoid service fees and more expensive fuel rates.

4. **Conference Registration Fees** – Conference registration fees can be prepaid with a credit card or check through the Business Office. Business related banquets or meals that are considered part of the conference can be paid with the registration fees; however, such meals must be deducted from the traveler's per diem allowance. Entertainment activities such as golf outings and sightseeing tours will not be reimbursed.

5. **Lodging (Commercial)** – The cost of overnight lodging (room rate and tax only) will be reimbursed to the traveler.

The Library will reimburse lodging expenses at the New York State Office of State Comptroller per diem rate. When the hotel or motel is the conference or convention site, reimbursement will be at the conference rate.

Only single room rates are authorized for payment or reimbursement unless the second party is representing the agency in an authorized capacity. If the lodging receipt shows more than a single occupancy, the single room rate must be noted. If reimbursement for more than the single room rate is requested, the name of the second person must be included.

6. **Meals (Per Diem)** – For all day, local workshops/conferences, lunch will be reimbursed up to \$20.

For multi-day travel, per diem reimbursements will follow the New York State Office of State Comptroller per diem rate.. If a meal is included in a conference registration fee, or replaced by

a legitimate business meal, the cost of the event shall be deducted from the per diem amount. Original itemized receipts are required for all meal purchases.

7. **Business Expenses** – Business expenses including faxes, photocopies, postage, Internet charges, data ports, and business telephone calls incurred while on travel status can be reimbursed. Original itemized receipts are required.
8. **Tolls** – EZ Pass statement or website rate set by EZ Pass are required for tolls.
9. **Miscellaneous Transportation (Including Parking)** – Original receipts are required for taxi, bus, subway, metro, ferry, other modes of transportation or parking (including airport parking). The lodging bill can be used as a receipt when charges are included as part of the overnight stay.

SECTION III: EXPENSES NOT REIMBURSABLE

The following items that may be associated with business travel that will not be reimbursed by the Library:

- Airline club memberships
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Any airfare class greater than coach
- Child-care, babysitting, house-sitting, pet-sitting/kennel charges
- Costs incurred by traveler's failure to cancel travel or hotel reservations in a timely fashion
- Evening or formal wear expenses
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Laundry and dry cleaning
- Passports, vaccinations, and visas when not required as a specific and necessary condition of the travel assignment
- Personal entertainment expenses including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theatre movies, social activities and related incidental costs
- Telephone Calls / WiFi fees
- Tips
- Travel accident insurance premiums and/or purchase of additional travel insurance
- Other expenses not directly related to the business travel

Travel for Non Employees – Incremental costs for travel, lodging, meal or other travel expenses for spouses or other family members will not be reimbursed unless the individual has a bona fide Library purpose for attending the event.

RESPONSIBILITY:

The employee, Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer are responsible for compliance with this policy.

PROCEDURE:

As outlined above

APPROVED/REVIEWED:

Approved: March 2014
Amended: May 2015
Amended: September 2017
Amended: October 2021