

TEA Correspondence

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January 20, 2010

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Changes to Mileage Reimbursement Rates, Effective January 1, 2010, Applicable to State and Federal Grants from the Texas Education Agency

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts has changed the automobile mileage reimbursement rates effective January 1, 2010. The reimbursement rates for travel reimbursement (lodging and meals) have not changed; those rates are listed below for ease of reference. The following mileage, lodging, and meal reimbursement rates apply to all grants funded by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for individuals on travel status.

Mileage

Effective January 1, 2010, the automobile mileage reimbursement rate (in-state and out-of-state) for personal automobiles is 50 cents per mile **or local policy**, whichever is **less**. For travel taken between September 1, 2009, and December 31, 2009, the mileage reimbursement rate is 55 cents per mile.

No change has been made to the following guidelines:

As of September 1, 2009, the Texas Mileage Guide is no longer used to calculate mileage. Travelers are required to calculate mileage by one of the following two methods:

- Odometer reading (point-to-point method)
- Electronic mapping source (such as that on www.Mapquest.com or any other online mapping service). If this method is chosen, the traveler must print out the driving directions provided by the site and attach them to the travel voucher.

Travelers are required to select the shortest and most economical route but may justify the selection of another route if it was chosen for safety reasons and specific justification of the selection is given.

Travel

The following maximum meal and lodging reimbursement rates apply to in-state and out-of-state travel. If local district policy has a lesser rate, the lesser rate must be used.

In-State Travel

Effective September 1, 2009, the Federal Rate Schedule is used for reimbursement of in-state meal and lodging expenditures. Because the reimbursement rates can change, it is

recommended that travelers print the page at the time reservations are made and submit the printout with the travel reimbursement voucher as a supporting document.

Follow these steps to access meal and lodging reimbursement information and rates through the Texas State Comptroller's web site, at <http://window.state.tx.us>:

1. Click the "Finances and Economy" tab at the top of the page.
2. Select "Get State of Texas Travel Information" from the menu on the left of the page.
3. Click the "Travel Reimbursement Rates."
4. Click "Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates."
5. On the U.S. map, click Texas.
6. ***Important: Disregard the note at the top of the Web page describing a minimum rate of \$70 for lodging and \$39 for meals; that is a federal standard that does not apply.*** Find your destination on the list, and apply the maximum meal and lodging rates for the city or area to which you are traveling.
 - o If the Texas city to which you are traveling is not listed, check the county list. If the county to which you are traveling is listed, use the rate given for that county.
 - o If the Texas county to which you are traveling is not listed, use the standard maximum rate of \$85 for lodging and \$36 for meals.

In-State Day Trips

In accordance with local policy, an employee whose duties require the employee to travel outside the employee's designated headquarters, **without an overnight stay** away from the employee's headquarters, may be reimbursed for the **actual cost** of the employee's meals, **not to exceed \$36**. Travel must begin at one duty point and end at another; regardless of the time of day of the travel, mileage to and from the employee's home or location other than a duty point is not allowable to be charged to the grant. In the absence of a local policy, no reimbursement shall be made from the grant for this purpose.

"Designated headquarters" is defined as the area within the boundaries of the city or town in which a traveler's place of employment is located. **Travel must take the employee outside designated headquarters for more than six consecutive hours; the cost of meals for travel lasting less than six consecutive hours is not allowable to be charged to the grant.**

Out-of-State Travel

An employee who travels within or outside the continental United States shall be reimbursed for the **actual cost of lodging and meals**. However, the reimbursements out of grant funds **may not exceed** the maximum meals and lodging rates based on **the federal travel regulations** and issued by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. (See instructions for locating online federal meal and lodging rates given in the "In-State Travel" section, preceding.) If local policy reimburses at a **lesser** amount, you must comply with local policy. If local policy reimburses at a **greater** amount, you must pay the difference from local or state funds (i.e., not from grant funds).

If the **out-of-state city** to which you are traveling is not listed on the Federal Rate Schedule, find the city on the list that is nearest geographically to your travel destination and apply the

lodging and meal rates given for that city. When determining the nearest listed city, it is permissible to cross state lines. (For example, if travel takes you to northern New Mexico, the nearest listed city might be a city in Colorado rather than another location in New Mexico.) If the travel destination is equidistant from more than one other listed city, rates from the lowest listed city must be used.

For both in-state and out-of-state travel, the traveler may apply funds available for meal reimbursement (i.e., up to the rate specified in the Federal Rate Schedule or \$36, depending on whether the destination is specified in the Federal Rate Schedule) toward lodging. For instance, if the traveler chooses for the sake of convenience to stay in a hotel that costs \$10 more a night than the allowable maximum for lodging, the traveler can apply \$10 of the maximum available for meal reimbursement toward the lodging rate. If the traveler chooses to apply meal reimbursement to lodging, the maximum meal reimbursement rate is reduced by the same amount. (Applying \$10 of the meal reimbursement to lodging would reduce the meal reimbursement by \$10.) **NOTE:** The opposite case does not apply; i.e., a traveler may **not** reduce the amount spent on lodging and increase the amount spent on meals. Under no circumstances may a traveler be reimbursed for meals at a rate that exceeds the rate given on the Federal Rate Schedule (or \$36, depending on whether the destination is specified in the Federal Rate Schedule).

Summary of Rates

The following table summarizes reimbursement rates for in-state and out-of-state travel.

<p style="text-align: center;">In-State Meals and Lodging</p>	<p>Refer to the federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates. For cities not listed, apply the rate for the county in which the city is located. If the county is not listed, the rates are as follows: Lodging in-state: Up to \$85/night Meals in-state: Up to \$36/day</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Out-of-State Meals and Lodging</p>	<p>Refer to the federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates. For areas not listed, use the rate for the nearest city. When locating the nearest city, it is permissible to cross state lines.</p>

Hotel Taxes

School districts are usually exempt from Texas state sales tax on lodging but are not exempt from any city taxes or other taxes imposed for lodging. Employees may be reimbursed for applicable taxes.

Travel Allowances

Travel allowances for in-state and out-of-state travel, in which the traveler receives a flat per diem for lodging and/or meals, regardless of the actual amount expended, are **not allowable** in Texas. Grantees must adhere to the guidelines stated above in lieu of a travel allowance.

Travel Documentation

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/taa/opge012010.html>. Retrieved on March 1, 2010.

Travel costs must be properly documented to be reimbursable. The employee must document travel costs with a travel voucher or other comparable documentation. Documentation must include the following at a minimum:

- o Name of the individual claiming travel reimbursement
- o Destination and purpose of the trip, including how it was necessary to accomplish the objectives of the grant project
- o Dates of travel
- o Actual mileage (not to exceed reimbursement at the maximum allowable rate)
- o Actual amount expended on lodging per day, with a receipt attached (may not exceed the maximum allowable)
- o Actual amount expended on meals per day (may not exceed the maximum allowable; tips and gratuities are not reimbursable)
- o Actual amount expended on public transportation, such as taxis and shuttles
- o Actual amount expended on a rental car, with receipt attached and justification for why a rental car was necessary and how it was more cost effective than alternate transportation ; receipts for any gasoline purchased for the rental car must be attached (mileage is not reimbursed for a rental car - only the cost for gasoline is reimbursed)
- o Actual amount expended on incidentals, such as hotel taxes, copying of materials, and other costs associated with the travel
- o Total amount reimbursed to the employee

If you have any questions about these travel reimbursement rates that apply to all TEA grants, please contact the Division of Discretionary Grants at DiscretionaryGrants@tea.state.tx.us .

Sincerely,

Earin M. Martin, Ed.D.
Chief Grants Administrator

