

TRAVEL POLICY

I. Policy Section

11.0 Business Functions

II. Policy Subsection

11.4 Employee Travel

III. Policy Statement

Traveling to conduct Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) business and perform other College-related activities is essential to normal operations. In the case of travel covered by agreements and bargaining units, the travel shall be in accord with the conditions of said agreement.

IV. Reason for Policy

This policy is intended to provide guidance to employees, assure compliance with College policies and IRS guidelines, and promote the prudent and accurate expenditure of College resources.

V. Entities Affected by this Policy

All Employees
Student Workers, Athletes, & Organizations
Board of Trustees

VI. Who Should Read This Policy

Executive Budget Control Officers (EBCOs)
Budget Control Officers (BCOs)
Employees who make arrangements for traveling off campus
Employees who will be seeking reimbursement for travel expenditures

VII. Related Documents

All Bargaining Unit Agreements
Meet and Confer Handbook
11.1 Employee Reimbursement Policy
11.15 Purchasing Policy
8.3 College Sponsored Student Travel Policy & Guiding Risk & Liability Practices & Procedures
Procurement Card Agreement
Travel Card Agreement
IRS Publication 15
GSA Meal and Incidental Expense Rates (www.gsa.gov/perdiem)

VIII. Contacts

Policy Owner: Director of Budget & Business Services
Vice President for Finance & Administration
Administrative Assistant to the VP for Finance & Administration
Director of Purchasing
EBCOs
BCOs

IX. Definitions

1. Reasonable and Customary Expenditures: Costs incurred, normally based on local rates, pertaining to lodging, transportation and other major expenses (other than meals and incidentals) where travel occurs.
2. Per Diem Rates: A daily allowance for meals and incidentals (including tips).

X. Procedures

1. Estimate total costs associated with travel plans (e.g. transportation, hotel, meals, fees).
2. Prior to making travel reservations, secure the approval of the BCO and/or EBCO by completing an electronic Leave of Absence form. A Leave of Absence form must be completed and approved prior to leaving campus. Leave forms are required when an employee will be off campus for a half day or more and/or is traveling more than twenty-five (25) miles from campus. This includes faculty, adjunct faculty, all athletic travel, and staff. This form can be found at cms.grcc.edu/human-resources/forms
 1. All staff, faculty, and adjunct-faculty travel must be pre-approved by the appropriate BCO or Dean.
 2. All student travel must be arranged with a College-approved travel agent.
3. Following approval, finalize plans for registration, transportation and lodging.
 1. Following approval, employees may make airfare reservations for approved travel through the College approved travel agent to minimize out-of-pocket costs to the employee.
 2. Individual airfare that exceeds six hundred (\$600) per ticket or groups of three (3) or more must be arranged with a College-approved travel agent.
 3. Economy class airfare may be purchased by the traveler for up to six hundred (\$600). Travelers must submit for reimbursement following procedures in the Employee Reimbursement Policy.
 4. Conference/professional development registration fees, or hotel deposits of two or more nights, should be purchased through the Purchasing process when possible to avoid advanced charges by employees.
 5. Hotel, meal, and ground transportation expenses will be reimbursed when travel is complete.
4. Travel advances are not permitted.
5. Retain all receipts needed for reimbursement (except for meals, as noted below). Employees are required to submit claims for reimbursement within sixty (60) days from the end of the month in which claimed expenses were incurred. This requirement is in accordance with IRS Publication 15 (Circular E) – Accountable Plans. Failure to submit claims within sixty (60) days will result in reimbursement being treated as taxable income. If reimbursement requests are submitted later than

six months after the original expenditures were incurred, the request will not be processed.

XI. Forms

Leave of Absence Electronic Form
Employee Reimbursement Request
Employee Mileage Reimbursement Request
Adjunct Faculty Mileage Reimbursement Request Form
IIPD & SSPD Grant and Reimbursement Forms
[Disability Accommodation Request Form](#)

Guidelines: Careful planning and fiscally-conscious decisions can help limit expenditures associated with traveling and are considered essential to efficient operations. The following guidelines must be adhered to when planning and while engaged in travel activities associated with College business:

1. Common reasons for travel are: attending conferences and conventions relevant to the employee's work responsibility, workshops and classes which provide work related training, regulatory informational updates, representing the College at public functions and day-to-day job responsibilities.
2. For decisions regarding the selection of expenditures associated with traveling (e.g., the training site or conference, mode of transportation, hotel accommodations, etc.) consideration must be given to having a balance between convenience for the employee and lowering costs for the College.
3. Teams or Groups of employees who are assigned major College responsibilities must exercise caution and care regarding frequency and total costs associated with traveling as a team; decisions for teams to travel together must be made considering the benefit of team interaction versus sending a representative.
4. Alternatives to traveling off campus should be considered if the same quality training and/or learning can be achieved at a lower cost.
5. When appropriate, after returning from the trip, an employee must find the most effective way to share what they learned with their colleagues.
6. Depending on the nature of the employee's work, the number of trips per year will vary, especially for travel associated with learning skills and competencies. Travel for growth and development should be reasonable.

Expenditure Limits:

1. Meals will be reimbursed on a per diem basis, based on the current annual GSA meal and incidental expense (M&IE) rates found at www.gsa.gov/perdiem. It is not necessary to submit receipts for per diem meals. The per diem rates include tips and taxes. The first and last day of travel is reimbursed at seventy-five (75) % of the per diem. Where meals are covered by a conference registration fee, provided via a group meal, etc., they should be deducted from the daily per diem rate at the indicated per meal (e.g., for breakfast, lunch, dinner) amounts. It is necessary to submit receipts for meals purchased for a group and/or meals purchased within twenty-five (25) miles of main campus. Refer to the Employee Reimbursement Policy for further information.

2. Mileage for business related travel by automobile may be made at a level up to, but not exceeding, the most current IRS published rate for mileage reimbursement. In addition, reimbursement will be allowed for reasonable and/or actual costs incurred by tolls and parking. Reimbursement of mileage and related expenses may not exceed economy class or coach airfare for the same trip. Actual distance for mileage will be determined using mapquest.com address to address. When multiple routes are available, an average is taken.
3. Transportation will be limited to that which is related to the event. The use of ridesharing services (e.g., Uber or Lyft), or taxi services should be used for transportation to/from the airport. Under certain circumstances, the use of a rental car may be necessary. Supervisory approval must be obtained prior to travel and included with reimbursement request. The lowest available rates must be utilized. Options for collision, loss, damage, liability, or personal injury waivers are not reimbursable by the College.
4. Actual costs for lodging will be reimbursed at no more than the single room rate or the approved conference negotiated rate. In no instance shall the reimbursement exceed the employee's actual costs, as could be in the case if two employees shared a room. If an employee shares a room with a person other than another employee, the employee will be reimbursed for the room at the single room rate. Personal items such as in-room movies/entertainment, laundry services, or gym use are not reimbursable.
5. Reasonable and customary tips up to twenty (20) % for ground transportation and cab service will be allowed. Tips for bellhops, valet, and maid services are included in the per diem incidentals and are not separately reimbursable.
6. Reimbursement for the cost of conference, convention, travel or other official function expenses for a spouse/guest is not allowed unless the official function requires the attendance of the spouse/guest and then only with the prior written approval of the President or EBCO.
7. Actual costs for purchase of supplies, rental of audio-visual materials, or other similar items will be reimbursed upon presentation of proper approvals and documentation.
8. Expenses that are not business related or are deemed inappropriate by the Vice President for Finance & Administration or designee will be disallowed.

XII. Effective Date

August 8, 2012

XIII. Policy History

Adopted February 20, 1995

Revised August 4, 2003

Revised December 1, 2008

Revised August, 2012 - Created Employee Reimbursement Policy

Revised July 2016 - Updated to include per diem language, consistent with the Employee Reimbursement Policy

Revised July 2019

Revised June 2023

Revised October 2023 - 11.1 Employee Reimbursement Policy was updated which resulted in changes to this policy

XIV. Next Review/Revision Date

July, 2027