

# Policy and Procedure: Seneca Regional Planning Commission (SRPC)

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## **Topic: Travel & Mileage Reimbursement/Advances**

### **Policy:**

Seneca Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) may reimburse its employees for the pre-approved use of their personal automobile on official agency business. Reimbursement must be properly authorized, reasonable and appropriately documented. All travel will be approved in advance. Verbal authorization for travel and mileage reimbursement is not acceptable unless provided for herein.

Seneca Regional Planning Commission may reimburse agency employees for expenses incurred for attending conferences, hotel stays, trainings, air fare, rental vehicle (if approved), in advance and in writing through a credit card in the name of Seneca Regional Planning Commission.

This policy and its related procedures are applicable to all Seneca Regional Planning Commission employees with respect to potential travel and mileage reimbursement for business related purposes.

### **Procedures:**

1. Employee travel during business hours for business related matters must be pre-authorized. Verbal consent or written consent for travel is permitted, but reimbursement for business related travel expenses must be pre-approved and in writing.
2. An individual may not approve his or her own travel or reimbursement for said travel. The Travel Report Form must be signed by the Executive Director for all staff and by the Board President for the Executive Director prior to employees being eligible to receive reimbursement for travel related expenses.
3. Seneca Regional Planning Commission reserves the right to deny reimbursement of travel-related expenses for failure to comply with policies and procedures or for any other business related reason, at its sole discretion.

### **Auto Insurance and Licensure:**

Employees who use their personal automobiles for business travel must obtain and maintain their own liability insurance coverage. The employee's coverage must be primary to any other available coverage. Seneca Regional Planning Commission will not reimburse individuals for the cost of said insurance.

Employees are required to obtain and maintain a valid Ohio Driver's License to be eligible for mileage reimbursement. SRPC will not reimburse employees for the cost of obtaining or maintaining their Ohio Driver's License fees.

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## **Reimbursable Expenses:**

1. Employees may be reimbursed for actual mileage, parking, and tolls as follows.
  - a. Employees may be reimbursed for actual mileage incurred while on official SRPC business at the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service, (Standard Mileage Rates for Business) when using their personal vehicle. Such payment is to be considered total reimbursement for all vehicle-related expenses (e.g., gas, oil, depreciation, etc.). Mileage reimbursement shall be payable to only the employee driver utilizing his/her vehicle. Other employees that may be passengers in the same vehicle, on the same trip will not be eligible for mileage reimbursement.
  - b. Employees must document business miles using a Travel Report Form to determine the total mileage for the trip; date of the trip; starting point and end point of the trip; and a brief description of the purpose of the trip.
  - c. Employees must complete a Travel Report Form and submit said forms on a monthly basis. Requests for mileage reimbursement more than 30 days from the date of travel may not be approved due to program and fiscal year end dates.
  - d. Charges incurred for parking and/or highway tolls may be reimbursed at the actual amount. Receipts are required for reimbursement.
  - e. Employees are required to utilize a SRPC or other approved county vehicle, if available and if feasible, when traveling on business related matters.
  - f. If an employee is mandated to travel to, for example, training, meeting, or conference, mileage reimbursement, if approved, will begin after the employee has reached their average commute to their office location from their home.
  - g. If an employee is required to attend external meetings outside of normal business hours and has worked their designated shift, the employee may be permitted mileage reimbursement from their home to the meeting if they have already been to the office from their home and back for the day. Otherwise, the travel reimbursement will begin after the employee has reached their average commute to and from their normal office location.

## **Travel Advances:**

SRPC may utilize standard IRS/GSA per diem rates to reimburse employees for pre-approved travel related expenses in lieu of reimbursing employees per meal, or per specific expense. Per Diem rates

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may be used exclusively for meals and incidentals, as defined in Federal Travel Regulations, Chapter 3, Part 003 (Per Diem Allowance) ie. Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff. When per diem rates are utilized, there is no requirement for employees to provide receipts to substantiate these components of business travel. Federal per diem rates are allowable expenditures for grant – funded agencies, and regulations allow 75% of the per diem on the first day of travel and the last day of travel.

Per Diem funds may be advanced for upcoming employee travel only upon receipt of a completed and properly pre-approved per diem request in writing. Travel advances are limited to the per diem amounts. Travel expense reimbursement requests must be made in accordance with SRPC's Travel & Mileage Reimbursement Policy.

Employees receiving per diem advances are required to submit a conference/training agenda, or other reasonable documentation, to confirm that the travel expense was incurred. If initial travel plans change, a revised request for per diem travel advances must be submitted and a revised, reconciled per diem request returning any undocumented funds must be submitted within 15 days of returning from travel.

If a meal is offered during the conference or training session, said meal shall be deducted from the per diem request.

## **Reasonableness of Travel Costs:**

Travel reimbursement policies may be modified on a case-by-case basis so that the organization receives the best value for anticipated costs. For example, if several staff members are traveling to the same event, employees may be asked to share rides or arrange for the best value of overnight stays.

## **Exceptions:**

Occasionally, it may be necessary for employees to request exceptions to this travel policy. Requests for exceptions to the policy must be made in writing and pre-approved by the Executive Director. Exceptions related to the Director's expenses must be submitted to the Board President for pre-approval.

Occasionally, it may be necessary to utilize the SRPC credit card for expenses such as bus fare, train fare, and such while traveling. These expenses may be reimbursed without prior consent as long as the bus fare, train fare, and so on is business related. Original receipts must be provided.

Occasionally, it may be necessary to utilize the SRPC credit card for the expense of meals and incidentals, as defined in Federal Travel Regulations, Chapter 3, Part 003 (Per Diem Allowance) ie. Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff, while traveling. In this

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instance, the credit card user will abide by the IRS/GSA Per Diem rates. Original receipts must be provided.

**Non-reimbursable Travel Expenses (include but are not limited to the following):**

- Airline club memberships
- Airline upgrades
- Business class for domestic flights
- Child care, babysitting, house-sitting, or pet-sitting/kennel charges
- Evening or Formal wear expenses
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- 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, and in-theater movie
- Travel accident insurance premiums or purchase of additional travel insurance
- Alcohol

**Spouse/Partner Travel:**

SRPC will not reimburse or advance any employee or board member expenses for separate travel costs (air fare, etc.) associated with his or her spouse or partner. The cost of a shared hotel room need not be allocated between employee/director and spouse/partner for purposes of this policy.