


# Policy and procedure

Approved:  , Executive Director

Subject: Travel Policy

Effective date: October 2022

Questions: Program Manager, Accounting - Aisha Sayles Ext. 6730

## PURPOSE

This policy establishes the standards for DRCOG's business travel and training. The information herein supersedes all previous Travel and Training policies.

## GENERAL

Employees may be required to travel for conferences or travel to attend a job-related training course or seminar in conjunction with their normal duties or to fulfill DRCOG business needs. It is DRCOG's policy to reimburse employees for all reasonable and necessary approved expenses while traveling on authorized company business. Travel must adhere to state and federal regulations.

Business and personal trip combinations are allowed provided there are no additional costs incurred by DRCOG and that the employee has prior approval from their Division Director for the business portion of the trip. In addition, such combinations should be based on the best utilization of the individual's paid time and DRCOG's travel dollar. The same expense reimbursement policies will be applied to both business-only and business/pleasure trip combinations.

**DRCOG assumes no obligation to reimburse anyone for expenses that are not in compliance with this policy. For questions, please see the Program Manager of Accounting.**

## TRAVEL POLICY

All job-related travel must be pre-approved before any arrangements are booked. A purchase order request must be submitted in Acumatica that includes:


- a justification for the business travel/conference,
- registration information (if applicable),
- dates of travel,
- estimated airfare and lodging,
- per diem,
- transportation, and
- any other business-related expense that may be incurred.

The purchase order will then be routed through the normal approval process in Acumatica. For assistance with travel purchase orders, please see the Fiscal Specialist in Administration and Finance (A&F) division.

## AIRFARE

- **Airlines and hotels no longer accept DRCOG's corporate card as they require the name of the traveler and form of payment match.** As a result, Airfare must be booked using a personal credit card. If the employee desires reimbursement prior to the dates of travel, once the ticket is purchased an expense claim can be entered into Acumatica with proper documentation. Once the claim is reviewed and approved, the airline ticket will be refunded to the employee the next expense claim cycle, which occur on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.
  - To receive reimbursement for the airline ticket prior to travel, the employee must sign a **Travel Statement of Understanding form** (provided at the end of this document) acknowledging that the employee will be responsible for paying DRCOG back for the airline ticket via payroll deduction should the employee cancel the trip or leave DRCOG voluntarily.
- All air travel will be at the lowest, reasonably available coach fare. Fees for first class, business class, seating assignments or "early bird" travel is not authorized at DRCOG's expense.
- If a conference is held in the afternoon, airfare arrangements will be made for arrival at employee's destination city that morning (if times are available). If conference/seminar is held in the morning, airfare arrangements will be made for the afternoon/evening one day prior.
- Whenever a business-related trip is being coupled with personal travel, DRCOG will pay only the lowest, reasonably available coach fare to and from the DRCOG business location.
- DRCOG encourages employees to use carryon luggage privileges, when possible, to avoid luggage fees. For longer trips when checking bags is required, DRCOG will pay for one checked piece of luggage.

## LODGING

- Employees must use a personal credit card to book hotel reservations and must carry a personal credit card when traveling to pay for the hotel upon arrival. Hotels require a credit card to be on file for incidentals, and must be presented upon check-in. Employees may request a cash advance to cover this expense. Please see the "advance" section of this document for further details on travel advances.
  - The employee should compare conference preferred hotels against other nearby hotels for the best possible rate, and those not exceeding the federally approved General Services Administration (GSA) rate. If the conference hotel is more than the approved GSA rate, the employee should shop for another hotel nearby, so long as there are no additional costs incurred for transportation to get to and from the meeting/conference location. Costs exceeding the GSA rates require a justification from the employee.
  - Incidentals and fees for additional amenities (such as pool or exercise room access) at the hotel are not covered by DRCOG
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- GSA rate guidelines can be found at:  
[http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA\\_BASIC&contentId=17943&noc=T](http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_BASIC&contentId=17943&noc=T)
- **If lodging in the state of Colorado, the employee should notify the hotel in advance of DRCOG's tax exempt status. Please see the Fiscal Specialist for our tax exemption number. DRCOG's tax exempt status does not apply to reservations booked outside of Colorado.**

## GROUND TRANSPORTATION

- When submitting the travel purchase order request, estimate the cost of ride sharing (Uber, Lyft, etc.) taxi fare, shuttle service, or mass transit. A receipt must be submitted with the employee expense claim for any fare over \$15.
- When feasible, employees are encouraged to use public transportation when traveling. When public transportation to and from business related events is not feasible, the least expensive form of transportation available should be utilized. DRCOG will not pay transportation costs for personal excursions while traveling for DRCOG.
- In rare circumstances a rental car may be approved when local public transportation and/or ride sharing is not an option. If so, the employee should waive insurance offered by the rental car agency as coverage is already provided through DRCOG's automobile policy. Rental car expense must be pre-approved by the Director of Administration and Finance.
- For local conferences, mileage will be reimbursed at the current GSA rate.
- When using a personal vehicle to travel to local conferences, meetings, and other business-related activities and the employee is leaving from their residence, the number of miles in the traveler's average daily round-trip commute shall be deducted from the total mileage to derive the number of miles that may be claimed for reimbursement. If travel to and from the destination is less than the distance of the traveler's average daily roundtrip commute, then mileage reimbursement shall not be allowed.

## MEALS/ PER DIEM

- Employees will be reimbursed at federal specified per diem rates. Per Diem rates are located at  
[http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA\\_BASIC&contentId=17943&noc=T](http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_BASIC&contentId=17943&noc=T).
  - Per Diem rates should also be included in the purchase order request for the destination city. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner will not be reimbursed should the specified meal/meals be provided during the conference (generally 20% of per diem is allocated for breakfast, 25% for lunch, and 55% for dinner with gratuity included).
- For meals provided on the day of departure and the last day of travel, employees are eligible for 75 percent of the total per diem rate.
- Receipts are not required for reimbursement of meals.
- Meals and incidentals that exceed the per diem rate will not be reimbursed.
- Per diem may be paid to the employee the pay period prior to the date of travel. Please see the "Advance" section. Please see the end of this document for further information on calculating per diem.


## CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES

- When possible, conference registration fees should be paid in advance with the DRCOG credit card. The employee should submit a separate purchase order request using the current DRCOG credit card as the vendor. Once approved, the Fiscal Specialist will assist with the registration.
- Proper documentation for the conference expense along with a justification to attend the conference should be included with the purchase order request.

## MISCELLANEOUS AND INCIDENTALS

- Incidentals which include tips for porters, hotel housekeeping, transportation (not including travel to and from the airport) and meals are not allowable for reimbursement as they are included in the per diem.
- Fees to connect to the internet will be reimbursed as long as it is work related usage. Most hotels offer free wi-fi service on the premises, which should be utilized instead of incurring additional costs. It is encouraged when possible, to use your DRCOG cell phone as a hot spot for security purposes.
- Expenses incurred for laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothing are reimbursable as a miscellaneous travel expense. However, you must incur a minimum of 4 consecutive nights lodging on official business-related travel to qualify for this reimbursement.
- Fees for long term parking at DIA while traveling (at approved parking lots) will be reimbursed **only with a receipt provided**. Parking reimbursement will be made for the lowest available rate for economy, open-air lots. Employees choosing to use valet, covered or garage parking will pay the rate difference. Approved parking lots to be used include Pikes Peak, Mt. Elbert, RTD park-n-Rides, Economy lots, Canopy Airport Parking and USAirport uncovered parking. Fees over the rates of the approved parking lots will not be reimbursed. When feasible, employees are encouraged to take public transportation using their DRCOG issued RTD EcoPass to avoid parking charges.

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION

- An Employee Expense Claim (EEC) must be submitted in Acumatica within 30 days of completed travel. This includes those who requested a travel advance. Supporting documentation must be provided to obtain reimbursement, **and with the exception of food, receipts must be itemized**, including the lodging record.
  - The employee's supervisor is responsible for reviewing the EEC for compliance with this policy and for providing proper payment authorization. Supervisors are required to review expenditures. By approving the expense claim in Acumatica, the supervisor is acknowledging that receipts were reviewed and match supporting documentation.
  - Accounts Payable ("AP"), upon receipt of the completed expense claim in Acumatica, will verify charges and receipts. Expenses not accompanied with a receipt may be denied.
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## **ADVANCE**

- DRCOG offers employees the option to request funds ahead of their travel date in the form of an advance.
- Advances are provided for ground transportation to and from the airport, lodging and per diem. Please see the Airfare” section of this document for airfare reimbursement procedures.
- In order to request that a travel advance be issued employees must select the box “Requesting Travel Advance” when submitting their original travel purchase order in Acumatica.
- Once the purchase order is approved, employees will receive a travel advance comprised of any qualified estimated lodging & ground transportation costs, as well as the calculated per diem.
- Advances will be processed the pay period immediately prior to the travel date.

## **CANCELLATIONS**

- If employee’s conference or airline flight is cancelled, please contact the Fiscal Specialist immediately.
- If a trip is canceled voluntarily by the employee or if the employee leaves DRCOG voluntarily prior to the approved travel, the employee may be responsible for DRCOG expenses paid in advance that cannot be recovered via payroll deduction.

## **PROJECT NUMBER**

- An appropriate project should be designated. It is the responsibility of the Division Director and/or supervisor to approve the expense, also signifying there is sufficient money for travel in the budget and that the travel is necessary for the benefit of the program.

## **REIMBURSED TRAVEL FROM OUTSIDE AGENCIES**

- Employees must consult with the Director of Administration and Finance regarding travel or conference fees to be reimbursed by an outside agency (i.e. CDOT) prior to traveling/attending.
- When possible, DRCOG will pay expenses and invoice the outside agency. Employee will provide information regarding amounts to be reimbursed and the name and address of the agency to be invoiced.
- Employee should never personally invoice an outside agency nor have a check made out to them by a sponsoring agency. Normal procedures for requesting reimbursement of travel expenses should be followed even if there are no charges.



## **SOME EXAMPLES OF UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:**


- Airfares for business and first class
- Airfares for seat assignments
- More than one checked bag
- Overages for weight on baggage
- Airline clubs
- Airline upgrades
- Alcohol
- Books, magazines, newspapers for personal use
- Child-care, babysitting, house-sitting, pet-sitting/kennel charges
- Commuting between home and work
- 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
- Travel accident insurance premiums and/or purchase of additional travel insurance

## **TRAINING POLICY: PROCEDURES**

- A purchase order request must be submitted in Acumatica.
- Supporting documentation should include a justification memo stating how the training will benefit DRCOG, the course name, location, and dates; back up for the registration fee, and back up for any other expenses that may be incurred as a result of the training.
- The request will be routed to the Division Director and the Director of Administration and Finance for approval. In some cases, HR may be consulted.
- Once approved, the employee should work in conjunction with Fiscal Specialist for the payment of registration fees and travel expenses if necessary.

## **REIMBURSEMENT POLICY FOR NON-DRCOG PERSONNEL**

DRCOG occasionally reimburses travel costs for non-DRCOG personnel (i.e. speakers, candidates for employment, etc.) These procedures are to be strictly adhered to even for this type of travel request. Employees should consult the Director of Administration and Finance for approval and guidance, prior to planning an event which may incur travel expenses for non-DRCOG personnel.

- DRCOG will reimburse travel expenses for all employment candidates with the prior approval of the Division Director, the Director of Administration and Finance and Director of Human Resources.
  - Candidates will purchase their own airfare and secure their own lodging in conjunction with HR to ensure reasonableness of cost. HR will then submit a purchase order request in Acumatica with all estimated costs to include transportation and parking.
  - After the travel has been completed, receipts should be mailed or scanned to HR who will then fill out an expense report on behalf of the individual. If the candidate is traveling for one business day, they are eligible for 75 percent of the per diem rate reimbursement.
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# TRAVEL TIPS AND AIDS

The below image reflects a proper travel request purchase order in Acumatica:

Purchase Orders  
Employee 002682 - Ashley Ostdiek

NOTES ACTIVITIES FILES (5)

EMAIL PURCHASE ORDER ACTIONS REPORTS

Type: Employee Vendor: You Are The Vendor Line Total: 1,392.05  
 Order Nbr.: 002682 Location: MAIN - Primary Location Discount Total: 0.00  
 Status: Open Owner: You Are The Owner Tax Total: 0.00  
 Date: 9/22/2022 Vendor Ref.: Order Total: 1,392.05  
 Promised On: 9/22/2022 Comment:  Included in Budget  
 Original Docu... 1,392.05  Requesting Travel Advance Check this box when requesting an advance.  
 Description: Conference Name Agreement: N/A

DETAILS TAXES SHIPPING VENDOR INFO APPROVALS PO HISTORY CHANGE ORDERS OTHER

D	Project	Project Task	Inventory ID	Line Description	Account	Order Qty.	Unit Cost	UOM	Ext. Cost	Description	Requested	Original Document Total	
>	D	626023	DEFAULT	CONF	Airfare	5731	1.00	600.000	EACH	600.00	Conferences	9/22/2022	600.00
	D	626023	DEFAULT	CONF	Hotel	5731	1.00	396.560	EACH	396.56	Conferences	9/22/2022	396.56
	D	626023	DEFAULT	CONF	Transportation	5731	1.00	136.740	EACH	136.74	Conferences	9/22/2022	136.74
	D	626023	DEFAULT	CONF	Per Diem	5731	1.00	258.750	EACH	258.75	Conferences	9/22/2022	258.75

The notes section should include a justification for attending as well as the dates of travel.

Upload files to support charges.

Each expense should be listed separately using the CONFERENCE inventory ID. If registration is being paid by DRCOG credit card, create a separate PO with the DRCOG credit card as the vendor.

## Calculating per diem:

Go to <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> to retrieve your correct GSA per diem rate for the city you are traveling to.

The easiest way to do this once you are at the site is to provide the zip code of where you are traveling. If you use the zip code you do not have to include the city and state, if you can't find the zip code type in the state and city. Click find rates.

## FY 2023 Per Diem Rates for District of Columbia, District of Columbia

I'm interested in: [Lodging Rates](#) [Meals & Incidentals \(M&IE\) Rates](#) [New Search](#)



The Federal Regulation allows DRCOG to pay ¾ rate per day for your first and last day of travel. To see what that rate will be click either link located further down on the per diem screen.



There are some instances that the ¾ day rule does not apply. The regulation below is our guide. It is rare when the ¾ dollar amount is not adhered to but there may be an instance where time at the airport may constitute a full day of travel. Seek the help of the Fiscal Specialist if you are unsure.

**6.3.2** A Traveler may claim meals based on departure and arrival time. Breakfast cannot be claimed unless departure is prior to 5:00 a.m. at the departing city. Lunch cannot be claimed unless departure is before 11 a.m. at the departing city or return is after 1:00 p.m. at the destination city. Dinner cannot be claimed, unless return is after 8:00 p.m. at the destination city. Under this method, the applicable per diem rate is based on where the meal is eaten.

The figure below is the screen that you will see when you click on the “Meals and Incidental Expenses [M&IE] Rate. The amount under M&IE Total will be your daily rate of per diem allowed. The First & Last Day of Travel” will be the ¾ rate of per diem allowed for first and last day of travel.

### Meals & Incidentals (M&IE) Breakdown ⓘ

Use this table to find the following information for federal employee travel:

**M&IE Total** - the full daily amount received for a single calendar day of travel when that day is neither the first nor last day of travel.

**Breakfast, lunch, dinner, incidentals** - Separate amounts for meals and incidentals. M&IE Total = Breakfast + Lunch + Dinner + Incidentals. Sometimes meal amounts must be deducted from trip voucher. [See More Information](#)

**First & last day of travel** - amount received on the first and last day of travel and equals 75% of total M&IE.

Filter Results...

Primary Destination ⓘ	County ⓘ	M&IE Total	Continental Breakfast/Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses	First & Last Day of Travel ⓘ
District of Columbia	Washington DC (also the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax, and the counties of Arlington and Fairfax, in Virginia; and the counties of Montgomery and Prince George's in Maryland)	\$79	\$18	\$20	\$36	\$5	\$59.25

Using the M&IE established from the previous page, in this example \$59.25, find that number on the right, that will be the ¾ day rate. Print this page by clicking the printer icon top right of the screen print “Microsoft Print to PDF” to add to your purchase request.

Add the first and last day rate to the number of days in between and that is the dollar amount to use for your per diem amount for the purchase request. For example, if you are traveling from January 1<sup>st</sup> to January 4<sup>th</sup> the breakdown would be:

October 1 <sup>st</sup> =	\$59.25
October 2 <sup>nd</sup> =	\$79.00
October 3 <sup>rd</sup> =	\$79.00
October 4 <sup>th</sup> =	<u>\$59.25</u>
<b>Total Per Diem</b>	<b>\$276.50</b>

**Note:** Your per diem includes tips and tax on food, as well as incidentals such as tips to porters, baggage carriers and hotel staff.





**DRCOG  
Statement of Understanding**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (employee), recognize that DRCOG will pay for  
airfare and/or conference related fees to and from \_\_\_\_\_  
on the dates of \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that I am responsible for reimbursement of the full cost of the flight and  
conference registration, including any fees, should I decide to voluntarily terminate my  
employment with DRCOG. I also understand that my decision to voluntarily cancel this  
trip for any other reason is also cause for full reimbursement to DRCOG. I agree that  
these amounts are due and payable immediately and may be recouped by DRCOG  
through payroll deduction. I hereby waive presentment for payment, notice of dishonor,  
and protest, as it pertains to airfare and conference reimbursement. No extension of  
payment or any partial payment shall release me from the obligation to pay.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Employee Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

