

BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

TRAVEL POLICY

SECTION 1. General

1.1. Scope:

1.1.1. This rule implements the rules and regulations concerning management of in-state, out-of-state and international travel, hereinafter referred to as "travel," and for reimbursement of expenses to employees, members of the Blue Ridge Community & Technical College Board of Governors, hereinafter called the "Board", and other non-employees traveling on behalf of the Board or the College.

1.1.2. Reimbursement of travel expenses paid from federal, state and private grants shall be governed by the terms and conditions of the grant if they differ from those contained in this rule; otherwise, this rule shall govern such reimbursement.

1.2. Authority: West Virginia Code §12-3-11

1.3. According to the West Virginia Code, it shall be unlawful for the Auditor to issue a warrant in payment of any claim for travel expenses incurred by an employee, Board member, or other non-employee unless such claim meets all the requirements of this rule.

1.4 Effective Date:

SECTION 2. Delegation of Authority and Responsibilities

2.1. Authority to manage, approve or disapprove travel and travel related expenses is delegated exclusively to the president of the College, hereinafter called the "Chief Executive Officer." Such delegated authority may also be revoked by the Governing Board.

- 2.2 The Chief Executive Officer or designee may also develop administrative policies and procedures for the College, consistent with this rule, to provide additional guidance to employees and others traveling on behalf of the College.
- 2.3. The Chief Executive Officer has delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer to act as her or his designee(s) for authorizing and approving travel and travel related expenses as may be required. All such authorizations and approvals shall be made in accordance with the provisions of this rule.
- 2.4. Travel may be authorized only for official business and only if the institution has the financial resources to reimburse the traveler for travel expenses.
- 2.4.1 Approval to travel shall be secured in advance by the employee according to this regulation. Under no circumstances should an employee travel without the proper approval of the Chief Financial Officer, or designee.
- 2.4.2 A traveler will be required to justify significant variances between an approved travel authorization and final travel settlement. A ten percent (10%) variance will be considered significant. A significant variance that cannot be justified due to the traveler's negligence will be deemed as *unapproved* travel expenses and, therefore, considered a personal expense of the traveler and will not be reimbursed.
- 2.5. Employees are responsible for submitting a travel expense account settlement form, with all required attachments, within 15 days after the last day of approved travel in order to receive reimbursement of expenses.
- 2.6. The responsibility to audit a traveler's expense account settlement lies with the institution. Approval of a traveler's expense account settlement by the institution means that the expense settlement meets all criteria established by this rule for reimbursement. The institution shall audit and submit an accurate expense account settlement for reimbursement to the State Auditor's Office within a reasonable amount of time after receiving such settlement from the traveler.

SECTION 3. Travel Regulations Applicability

- 3.1. Employees: This rule shall govern reimbursement of travel expenses to employees authorized to travel for official College business and only if the College has the financial resources to reimburse the traveler for travel expenses.
- 3.2. Members of the Governing Board: This rule shall govern reimbursement of travel expenses to members of the Board when a Board member requests reimbursement for official College business travel and if the College has the financial resources to reimburse the traveler for travel expenses.
- 3.3 Non-Employees: When non-employees are eligible to receive reimbursement of travel expenses, reimbursement shall be made in accordance with this rule and the policies and procedures of the College.

SECTION 4. Policy

- 4.1 Transportation: Travelers are expected to make transportation arrangements that will secure the least expensive mode of transportation possible for out-of-state travel and may be required for in-state travel. In making the least expensive choice the traveler should compare the cost of traveling via air, rail, state-owned vehicles, personal vehicle, and commercial rental vehicle. If a change in the cost of travel is incurred (as indicated on the approved travel authorization), the charge is reimbursable if the traveler is directed by the CFO to change his or her travel plans, or if extenuating circumstances arise. In cases where a traveler chooses to a more expensive mode of transportation, reimbursement will not exceed the lowest available alternative. Increased or extra charges incurred due to the traveler's negligence or lack of regard for an approved travel authorization, will be considered a personal expense of the traveler and shall not be reimbursed.

4.1.1. Air Transportation

- 4.1.1.1 Commercial Airlines. Allowable reimbursement for commercial airline travel shall include the actual expense or cost of the least expensive logical fare via the most direct route, or a reasonable alternative route if it results in lower fare. Travelers may not specify a particular airline in

order to accumulate mileage or promotional plans, such as frequent flyer programs, if it results in a higher airfare.

4.1.1.2 Travelers are expected to make advance bookings through a contracted travel service vendor or as otherwise approved by the institution to secure the least expensive airfare possible. Reimbursement may be made to the traveler in advance for airfare purchased up to 120 days before the trip begins.

4.1.1.3 In order to receive reimbursement, the traveler must submit the "passenger coupon", E-Ticket Receipts or certified copy from the commercial airline ticket. If airfare is reimbursed prior to the trip, it must be referenced on the traveler's final expense account settlement. Refundable or unused airline tickets shall be returned immediately.

4.1.1.4 Commercial airline tickets may be direct billed to the institution and paid in advance.

4.1.1.5 Deliberately causing increased costs or delays for the purpose of obtaining personal gratuities, such as denied boarding compensation, frequent flier points or mileage, or similar benefits is prohibited. Conversion of airline tickets for personal benefit, such as downgrading tickets, returning unused tickets for cash, credit, or personal airline tickets, or similar actions, is also prohibited.

4.1.2. Ground Transportation:

4.1.2.1 The traveler may use a state owned vehicle, privately owned vehicle, commercial rental vehicle or rail service for ground transportation when traveling on official business of the institution. Receipts and documentation are required by the institution.

4.1.2.2 The operator (traveler) of a vehicle must possess a valid operator's license. The operator is personally responsible for any fines and/or penalties resulting from citations, charges, or warrants attributable to

operator negligence. Such fines and/or penalties shall not be reimbursable.

4.1.2.3 The operator (traveler) of a vehicle may be required to complete the safe driving training as provided the Board of Risk Management Office when available. When required, the Certificate of completion must be submitted to the CFO, or designee. If required, the operator (traveler) will not be approved for travel without evidence of completion of this training.

4.1.2.4 State Owned Vehicles: The availability and use of a state owned vehicle will be determined by the institution's policies and procedures.

4.1.2.5 Privately Owned Vehicles/Courtesy Vehicles: Privately owned and courtesy vehicles may be used when traveling on institutional business. Reimbursement will be made at the rate per mile established by the Chief Executive Officer for actual miles traveled using the shortest practicable route to the point of arrival at the traveler's destination. This rate is intended to cover all operating costs of the vehicle (including fuel, maintenance, depreciation, insurance, etc.), and no additional reimbursement will be made.

4.1.2.6 Commercial Rental Vehicles: Commercial rental vehicles may be used when traveling on institutional business. Reimbursement for rentals not made with the contracted car vendor requires authorization from the CFO, or designee. Reimbursement will be made at actual cost for the daily rental fee for a mid-size/standard vehicle, plus mileage fees and fuel costs. For travel of more than a few days in duration, weekly rental rates may be reimbursed if they will result in a lower total cost than the daily rate. Reimbursement may be made for full size vehicles if more than three (3) people are traveling together on institutional business and, for larger vehicles if a group of five (5) or more is traveling together. Reimbursement may also be made for a larger or specially equipped vehicle if required to accommodate a traveler with a disability

or handicap. Receipts/documentation is required for reimbursement of car rental and mileage charges or fees. Receipts and/or documentation are required for reimbursement of car rental. Reimbursement may be made for actual fuel costs. Receipts should be attached to the travel settlement. Travelers must return rental cars with the same quantity of fuel as when picked up; refueling costs charged by rental agencies are not reimbursable.

4.1.2.7 Insurance: Collision damage waivers for rentals of seven (7) days or less are also reimbursable, and should be taken, unless the rental has been made using the State P-Card, which provides collision damage coverage at no cost for rentals up to 60 days. Collision damage waivers for rentals of more than seven (7) days are not reimbursable and should not be taken. The State of West Virginia insurance program automatically covers collision insurance for vehicle rentals in excess of seven (7) days. No other insurance or insurance-like product is reimbursable for rentals used in the United States, unless required by law. Full coverage insurance is a reimbursable expense for any approved rental vehicle used outside the United States.

4.1.2.8 Rail Service: May be used for ground transportation in accordance with the institution's policies and procedures. Travelers are expected to make advanced bookings through a contracted travel service vendor and use the least expensive logical fare via the most direct route, or other reasonable route that results in a lower fare. Receipts and/or documentation are required for reimbursement.

4.1.2.9 Miscellaneous Ground Transportation:

4.1.2.9.1 When courtesy transportation is provided by a hotel, motel, or other service facility, the traveler is encouraged to use their service; receipts are required if applicable.

4.1.2.9.2 Travelers may be reimbursed for taxi, bus, and other forms of public transportation. Receipts are required.

4.1.2.10 Roadside assistance services for fleet, rental and personal vehicles, if needed, may be reimbursed at actual cost if deemed appropriate and reasonable by an institutional officer authorized to approve travel expenses.

4.2 Lodging

4.2.1 Reimbursement for lodging shall include actual expenses for overnight accommodations, use of a room during day time, and all applicable taxes and surcharges when the travel exceeds 100 miles distance from the College. Reservations for lodging shall be made according to the institution's policies and procedures. Itemized lodging receipts are required for reimbursement.

4.2.2 If a change in the lodging charge is incurred, the change is reimbursable if the traveler is directed by an appropriate agency officer to change his or her travel plans, or in other extenuating circumstances, as approved by the immediate supervisor of the traveler. Charges incurred due to failure of the traveler to notify the facility will be considered the personal expense of the traveler.

4.2.3 Lodging may be direct billed; however, the traveler must attach a copy of the itemized lodging invoice or other proof of lodging to the traveler's final expense account settlement

4.2.4 All group travel must be submitted together in order for the Finance Office to forward to the State Auditor's office for payment. Therefore, each traveler in the group should submit a travel settlement form as soon as possible, but no later than 15 days within the last day of approved travel, in order not to hold up other group members' travel reimbursement. If the traveler has no expenses to claim, notify the Finance Office.

4.2.5 Reimbursement for multiple occupancy, when only one of the travelers is on college business, shall be at the least expensive single room rate. In the event that a single room rate cannot be determined, state "single room rate same as double" on settlement form.

- 4.2.6 For multiple occupancy, reimbursement may be claimed fully by one traveler with no claim filed by the other traveler. If accommodations are shared with other travelers, their name(s) must be noted on the travel settlement.

4.3 Meals

- 4.3.1 Meal expense reimbursement shall be made in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Board. Reimbursement will be made at the maximum daily rate for in-state and out-of-state travel as established by the Chief Executive Officer. Reimbursement may be limited to actual expenses for food, service and gratuities for the traveler only, up to the applicable maximum daily rate. Specifically excluded are alcoholic beverages and entertainment expenses. Meal reimbursement is allowed when lodging is listed as "gratis" or "no charge." Receipts may be required for meal reimbursement.

- 4.3.1.1 Agency employees will be reimbursed actual costs not to exceed the maximum daily rate as established by the Chief Executive Officer.

- 4.3.1.1.1 Exceptions may be granted to these rates in situations when authorized by the Chief Executive Officer. If reimbursement is made in excess of the maximum daily rate as established by the Chief Executive Officer, receipts are required and the Chief Executive Officer must approve the travel settlement.

- 4.3.1.1.2 When meals are provided for a traveler, the traveler's maximum daily rate shall be reduced by an appropriate amount. For the purpose of determining the amount of deductions for meals on a uniform basis, allowances for meal expenses shall be deducted accordingly: breakfast = 20% of the maximum daily rate; lunch = 20% of the maximum daily rate; dinner = 60% of the maximum daily rate.

- 4.3.2 On the first and last days of travel of an overnight trip when no meals are provided, the allowable reimbursement is based on 75% of the maximum daily

rate as established by the Chief Executive Officer. Departure and arrival times are not considered. If a meal(s) is provided gratis or included within a registration fee of the business travel, the daily rate must be reduced by the appropriate amount as indicated in 4.3.1.1.2.

4.3.3 Meal expense reimbursement for single day travel (when there is not an overnight stay) is not allowed. Travel without an overnight stay will not qualify as being away from home for purposes of receiving non-taxable meal reimbursement.

4.4 Registration Fees

4.4.1 Fees or charges for attendance at conferences, meetings, seminars, and/or workshops, as well as event related materials, are reimbursable expenses to the traveler. Employees should verify acceptable payment methods with the conference before the conference. Registration fees may also be direct billed to the institution when feasible. Advance payment of registration fees is permitted if required or if doing so results in a savings to the institution.

4.4.2 Receipts are required for reimbursement. The receipt/documentation provided by the event sponsor shall be sufficient for reimbursement. E-mailed receipt/documentation is acceptable.

4.4.3 The traveler will not receive an allowance or reimbursement for lodging or food that is included in registration fees. Travelers are reminded to adjust meal reimbursement requests for meals included with the registration fee.

4.4.4 If a cancellation charge is incurred, the charge is reimbursable if the traveler is directed by the appropriate institutional officer to change her or his travel plans, or if other extenuating circumstances arise. Charges incurred due to the failure of the traveler or the traveler's representative to notify the event sponsor will be considered a personal expense to the traveler.

4.5 Other Expenses

4.5.1 Travelers may incur other business related expenses for which reimbursement may be made if appropriate. Receipts are required for reimbursement of any

miscellaneous individual expenditure in excess of \$10.00 or as specified. The spending officer, or designee, may require any and or all receipts at their option, as a means of cost control. Such expenses and reimbursement may include, but are not limited to:

4.5.1.1 Baggage handling and gratuities when using public transportation or conveniences (i.e., taxi, limousine, air porter services, or airport/rail curbside check-in), or when using a lodging facility that has portering (i.e., "bell person") services rather than a facility where the traveler is expected to carry her or his own luggage; \$2 per bag up to three bags may be reimbursed.

4.5.1.2 Baggage storage between appointments, and between hotels and meeting places;

4.5.1.3 Tolls, garage and parking fees, including gratuities; receipts are required;

4.5.1.4 Communication expenses such as: (1) Local calls which may include a surcharge; (2) Long distance calls which may include toll charges and surcharges; (3) Surcharges for long distance calls when the toll charges are direct billed; (4) Cellular telephone charges; and (5) Facsimiles, cablegrams, or telegrams which may include toll charges, surcharges, or delivery charges.

4.5.1.5 Currency conversion;

4.5.1.6 Guides, interpreters, and visa fees;

4.5.1.7 Taxi; receipt required; and

4.5.2 Trips involving multiple days of travel or for single day travel where the traveler is unexpectedly delayed for business reasons, the traveler may make one personal telephone call home per day. Reimbursement shall be made at actual cost, not to exceed the maximum amount established by the institution's policies and procedures, provided the call is not charged to the telecommunications card issued by the state or the institution.

4.5.3 Non-reimbursable travel related expenses include the cost of passports (not as a travel expense, but may be considered as a direct charge to the institution), interest on late payment of individually held credit cards, laundry fees, and personal flight or baggage insurance. Exceptions may be approved by the Chief Executive Officer or designee.

4.5.4 Persons traveling in foreign countries should report their expenditures in United States dollars. The total expenditure in foreign currency must be converted into United States dollars at the rate or rates at which the foreign money was obtained. The rates of conversion and the commissions charged must be shown. Travelers are encouraged to use the corporate travel card to receive the best conversion rates and avoid high currency conversion fees.

SECTION 5. Form of Payment for Business Travel

5.1 Corporate Charge Card or Credit Card: Travelers should use the corporate charge card issued by the State of West Virginia for business related travel expenses. No personal purchases are permitted. The College and the State expect their employees to observe a standard of conduct which will not reflect discredit upon the integrity of the Agency. Delinquency may result in suspension or cancellation of charging privileges. The employee is responsible for all purchases and advances charged to his/her card.

5.2 Blue Ridge Community & Technical College shall adopt and actively pursue policies and procedures to manage and minimize credit losses by employees using the corporate charge card.

5.3 Direct Billing: Direct billing may be authorized by the spending officer in accordance with the institution's policies and procedures. The traveler is responsible for attaching to her/his final expense account settlement copies of receipts, invoices, documentation, etc. for any direct billed fee.