
Rosamond Community Services District

3060 – TRAVEL EXPENSES

POLICY TITLE: TRAVEL EXPENSES

POLICY NUMBER: 3060

3060.1 Business Purpose. The District will pay in advance and/or reimburse Directors and employees for costs of travel, lodging, and other expenses reasonably and necessarily incurred for travel that is conducive to and substantially related to the advancement of the interests of the District (“Business Trips”). Business Trips generally involve: (i) attending District sponsored events; (ii) meeting with consultants, professionals or governmental entities in the performance of the participant’s District duties; (iii) meeting with representatives of regional, state and national government regarding District policy positions; (iv) participating in regional, state and national organizations which affect the District’s interests, as long as the District is a member of the organization; or (v) attending education seminars, conferences or activities designed to improve the participant’s skill and information levels, as long as the District is a member of the organization sponsoring the activity.

3060.1.1 Errands. Brief travel carried out pursuant to regular duties of an employee that has an estimated total reimbursable cost under \$50 (“Errand”) shall be reimbursed separately from the requirements for Business Trips and, instead, is governed by the expedited reimbursement procedures set forth under this subsection. Errands generally include trips in execution of clerical duties including, but not limited to, deliveries to a post office, Fed Ex location, or governmental entity.

3060.1.1.1 Employees may carry out a one-time or recurring Errand only after receiving verbal or written approval from the Director of Administration/Board Secretary, or his/her designee, prior to the Errand. Employees shall submit an expense report form (“Expense Report”), as provided by the District, to the Director of Administration/Board Secretary for approval within thirty (30) days of incurring the expense.

3060.1.1.2 Automobile mileage is reimbursable at the Internal Revenue Service rate in effect at the time of the Errand. The reimbursable amount shall be based on the actual mileage traveled for the purposes of the Errand.

3060.2 Travel Requests. For all Business Trips, Directors and employees shall fill out and sign a “Request to Attend” form provided by the District (“Request Form”), and submit the Request Form to the Director of Administration/Board Secretary. The Director of Administration/Board Secretary, or his/her designee, shall review the Request Form for completeness and, if complete, present it to the General Manager for approval. The General Manager shall approve Business Trips that conform to the standards of this Policy.

3060.2.1 Deadlines. Directors and employees shall submit the Request Form at the earliest time reasonably possible to ensure that the District can book the least expensive rates for travel, lodging and other expenses. For conferences that offer less expensive “early bird” rates or impose late fees for registration, hotels and/or other expenses, Directors and employees shall submit the Request Form no

fewer than seven (7) days prior to the “early bird” or late fee deadline, whichever is earlier. If the Request Form is not submitted by the foregoing deadline due to an unreasonable delay on the part of the Director or employee, the Director or employee may be required to pay the difference in price and/or any late fees incurred by the District. The General Manager may waive the deadline if he or she deems a waiver is appropriate under the circumstances.

3060.2.2 Expense Limit. Effective July 1, 2007, the District will pay no more than \$6,150.00 per Director per fiscal year for Business Trips (“Trip Allotment”). Trip Allotments shall not carryover from one fiscal year to another or transfer between Directors. Directors shall pay from their own personal funds any Business Trip expenses exceeding their Trip Allotment.

3060.3 Travel Arrangements. Once a Business Trip has been approved by the General Manager, Directors and employees shall make specific transportation and lodging arrangements through the Director of Administration/Board Secretary, or his or her designee. To conserve District resources and keep expenses within reasonable standards, the Director of Administration/Board Secretary, in consultation with the Director or employee requesting the Business Trip, shall follow the guidelines below.

3060.3.1 Transportation. The District shall pay for the most economical mode and class of transportation with the most direct route that reasonably satisfies scheduling needs and cargo requirements. Generally, airfare or train fare for travel in coach or economy class and car rental fees for compact or mid-sized cars will be approved.

3060.3.1.1 Special Rates. Government and group rates offered by a provider of transportation shall be used when available.

3060.3.1.2 Personal Automobiles. Automobile mileage is reimbursable at the Internal Revenue Service rate in effect at the time of the Business Trip. The reimbursable amount shall be based on the actual mileage traveled for the purposes of the Business Trip.

3060.3.2 Lodging. The District shall pay for standard accommodations in hotels, motels, or similar lodgings when a Business Trip reasonably requires an overnight stay.

3060.3.2.1 If the lodging is in connection with a conference or other organized educational activity, lodging costs shall not exceed the maximum group rate published by the conference or activity sponsor, provided that lodging at the group rate is available to the Director or employee at the time of booking. If the group rate is not available, the Director or employee shall use comparable lodging that is (i) consistent with the reimbursable per diem rates for lodging as established by the U.S. General Services Administration; or (ii) offered at a governmental rate by the provider of lodging.

3060.3.2.2 If the lodging is not in connection with a conference or other organized educational activity, the Director or employee shall use comparable lodging that is (i) consistent with the reimbursable per diem rates for lodging as established by the U.S. General Services Administration; or (ii) offered at a governmental rate by the provider of lodging.

3060.3.3 Meals and Gratuity. The District shall pay for the basic cost of meals, sales tax and customary gratuity, including, but not limited to, gratuity for wait staff, valet parking, bellhops and housekeeping, by

advancing Directors and employees with a *per diem* allowance at the rate set by the U.S. General Services Administration (“GSA”) for “Meal and Incidental Expense” (“M&IE”) for the most expensive region(s) of the state to which they travel, regardless of the region within that state where the Business Trip actually takes place. For the first and last calendar days of the Business Trip, the *per diem* allowance shall be 75% of the aforementioned GSA rate.

3060.4 Incidental Expenses. The District shall reimburse Directors and employees for actual expenses incurred under conditions conducive to and substantially related to the Business Trip. Directors and Employees are expected to use prudence and good judgment and incur the fewest expenses that conform to this Policy.

3060.4.1. Incidental expenses that generally will be reimbursed in full include the following: (i) fares for shuttle, airport bus service or public transportation; (ii) fares for taxi or equivalent only when less expensive transportation is unavailable or inefficient; (iii) bridge and road tolls, (iv) parking fees; (v); (vi) Charges for telephone calls, fax, internet and similar services required for business purposes; (vii) charges for laundry services for trips of five (5) or more days.

3060.4.2 The District will not reimburse for personal expenses including, but not limited to, the following: (i) mileage for a personal portion of any trip; (ii) expenses for guests, including a partner’s expense when accompanying the Director or employee on the Business Trip, (iii) entertainment expenses, including theater, movies (either in-room or at the theater), sporting events (including gym, massage and/or golf-related expenses), or other cultural events. (iv) family expenses such as day care for children or boarding for pets; (v) Non-mileage personal automobile expenses, including traffic citations; (vi) political or charitable contributions or events; (viii) personal care items; and (ix) personal losses incurred while on District business. If the Director or employee uses a vehicle owned, leased, or rented by the District, it may not be used for personal reasons unless prior approval has been granted by the General Manager.

3060.5 Travel Alterations. A Business Trip may be altered after its commencement if the proposed alteration is (i) conducive to and substantially related to the advancement of the interests of the District and (ii) approved in advance by the General Manager. The District shall reimburse Directors and employees for actual costs for additional transportation, lodging, meals and incidental expenses necessarily incurred by the Director or employee due to the alteration. Such additional expenses must conform to the cost-efficient standards set forth in this Policy.

3060.5.1 Travel Delays. The District shall reimburse Directors and employees for actual costs for additional transportation, lodging, meals and incidental expenses necessarily incurred by the Director or employee due to delays caused by a public emergency or dangerous weather. Such additional expenses must conform to the cost-efficient standards set forth in this Policy.

3060.5.2 Personal Emergencies. If a Director or employee must abandon the Business Trip early due to (i) an incapacitating illness or injury which is not due to the employees own misconduct or (ii) an emergency situation involving serious illness, injury or death of a family member, the District may, upon approval by the General Manager, reimburse the Director or employee for actual transportation costs incurred by the Director or employee for his or her return travel.

3060.5.3 Per Diem. Directors and employees must reimburse the District for any *per diem* advanced to them for days or meals that become unnecessary due to an alternation to the Business Trip.

3060.6 Reimbursement. In order to be reimbursed by the District, Directors and employees must submit an Expense Report pursuant to the requirements below within thirty (30) days of incurring the expense.

3060.6.1 Employees. Employees must submit an Expense Report to their respective department supervisor for the supervisor's signed approval. The employee shall then submit the Expense Report to the Director of Administration/Board Secretary, or his/her designee, who shall review the Expense Report for completeness pursuant to the requirements set forth below and, if complete, present it to the Finance Department for processing.

3060.6.2 Directors/General Manager. Directors must submit an Expense Report to the Director of Administration/Board Secretary, or his/her designee, who shall review the Expense Report for completeness pursuant to the requirements set forth below and, if complete, present it to the General Manager for Approval. Expense Reports submitted by the General Manager shall be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors on the Consent Calendar with documentary evidence provided. Once approved by the General Manager or Board of Directors, the Director of Administration/Board Secretary, or his/her designee, shall forward the Expense Report to the Finance Department for processing.

3060.6.3 Documentation. The Expense Report must (i) include a declaration, signed by the Director or employee under the penalty of perjury, declaring that all expenses listed are accurate and were necessary, reasonable and incurred in conformity with this Policy and (ii) be accompanied by documentary evidence, such as a receipt, canceled check or bill, for each expense.

3060.6.3.1 The documentary evidence should show the amount, date, place, and essential character of the expense. If the evidence submitted is a bill, it must be itemized so as to sufficiently indicate which costs the Director or employee claims are in connection with the Business Trip and for what purpose such costs were incurred. For example, an itemized hotel bill listing the incidental expense claimed would contain sufficient level of detail to meet this requirement.

3060.6.3.2 If documentary evidence is unavailable, the following limitations on reimbursement shall apply: (i) no expense in excess of \$75.00 shall be reimbursed; and (iii) expenses of less than \$75.00 shall be reimbursed where substitute documentary evidence is provided.

3060.6.3.3 In order to qualify for reimbursement using substitute documentary evidence the substitute evidence must corroborate the following: (i) the amount of the expense; (ii) the time and place where the expense was made; (iii) the business purpose of the expense; and (iv) the business relationship between the person making the expenditure and the person benefiting from the expenditure, if any. Acceptable forms of substitute documentary evidence may include, but is not limited to, written statements from the Directors' or employees' co-travelers or other witnesses, setting forth detailed information about the expense.

3060.6.4 Disputed Expenses. An employee seeking reimbursement of an expense that was denied by his/her supervisor may appeal the supervisor's decision to the General Manager, who may approve reimbursement if he/she determines that the expense is proper under this Policy. A Director seeking reimbursement of an expense that was denied by the General Manager may appeal the General

Manager's decision to the Board of Directors, which may approve reimbursement, in open session, if it determines that the expense is proper under this Policy.

3060.7 Reporting. Each Director and employee shall provide a brief oral report on any event attended at the District's expense at the next available Board meeting. If more than one Director or employee attends the same event, the Board President shall designate one attendee to give the report. The other attendees will be permitted to briefly report on any topics omitted by that designated attendee.

3060.8 Assistance. The Director of Administration/Board Secretary, or his or her designee, may give guidance and assistance on procedures related to travel arrangements, Expense Reports or other travel issues. Any question regarding the propriety of a particular type of expense should be resolved before the expense is incurred.

3060.9 Abuse. The District considers abuse of this Policy to be a very serious matter. Abuse includes falsifying Expense Reports to reflect costs that were not actually incurred or that were not business-related. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 53232.4, penalties for misuse of public resources or falsifying Expense Reports in violation of Expense Reporting policies may include, but are not limited to, the following: (i) the loss of reimbursement privileges; (ii) restitution to the local agency; (iii) civil penalties for misuse of public resources pursuant to Section 8314 and (iv) prosecution for misuse of public resources, pursuant to Section 424 of the Penal Code. Furthermore, failure to follow this business travel expense Policy may be grounds for disciplinary action including, but not limited to employment termination.