

## POLICY MANUAL

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### 2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

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#### 2.02 Cost Allowability for Travel, Incentive Items, Tuition Reimbursement, and Renovations.

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##### A. POLICY OVERVIEW:

The local agency (LA) shall be reimbursed for travel according to this policy and shall obtain State Agency (SA) approval prior to arranging overnight or out-of-state travel, purchasing incentive items, granting staff approval to enroll in classes for reimbursement, or completing renovations through the grant agreement.

##### B. POLICY:

###### 1. Travel

- a. The reimbursement amount for travel and subsistence shall be no higher than the rates established by Commonwealth Travel and Subsistence Rates unless prior approval is received from the SA. A copy of the Commonwealth Travel and Subsistence Rates can be found at [www.health.pa.gov/vendors](http://www.health.pa.gov/vendors).
- b. Both the Commonwealth's Travel Policy and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of WIC's Cost Allowability for Travel, Incentive Items, and Tuition Reimbursement, and Renovations (this Policy) control the reimbursement of travel to the LAs.

###### (1) General

- (a) LAs will be held liable for the repayment of any travel expenditures disallowed by the SA review process or by audit.
- (b) All LAs shall have in place their own written travel policies. This policy should not be interpreted as suggesting what every LA's travel policy should contain. This policy is to inform the LAs the maximum level the SA will reimburse for travel. If a LA's policy is to make reimbursement at less than the State rate, the LA's rate should be used. If a LA's policy is to make reimbursement at greater than the State rate, the maximum that can be billed is the State's maximum rates identified in this policy. There should be no differential treatment made between travel reimbursement to WIC employees and other agency staff members.
- (c) LAs are responsible for ensuring that WIC travel expenses claimed are proper, accurate, and incurred in accordance with this policy. Immediate supervisors shall be responsible for reviewing and approving of travel claims.
- (d) Receipts for all travel expenses must be submitted to the SA for reimbursement, regardless of dollar amount upon request.

###### (2) Authorization to Travel

- (a) At a minimum, travel shall be approved prior to travel by each WIC employee's immediate supervisor.

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- (b) All overnight travel requires prior approval by the SA. Requests shall be made at least three weeks in advance of such travel.
  - (c) All out-of-state travel requires prior approval by the SA. Requests shall be made at least three weeks in advance of such travel.
  - (d) Participation in meetings, seminars, trainings, and conferences must be approved by the Training Unit prior to the request for authorization to travel (Refer to P&P 1.01). Approval for travel will be based on the impact on the staff person's workload, staffing pattern and budget. If a seminar is being held at various locations at different times, there should be an effort to schedule attendance at the nearest location. Prior approval by the SA is required for reimbursement of conference and convention registration fees.
- (3) Cash Advances
- No cash advance will be made from the SA to a LA for travel. The SA will not reimburse travel expenses until the employee has traveled and their expenses are documented.
- (4) Transportation
- (a) Employees will not be eligible for reimbursement between headquarters and personal residence. When an employee is required to travel directly from residence to a work site other than their official headquarters, the distance from residence to work site, or headquarters to work site, whichever is shortest, will be used to compute mileage reimbursement.
  - (b) Two or more employees traveling to the same destination on official business should be encouraged to travel in the same vehicle.
  - (c) The mileage reimbursement rate shall be at the rate established in the LA's travel policy or the Commonwealth Travel and Subsistence rate in effect at the time the travel occurs, whichever is lower. There should be no differential treatment made between travel reimbursement to WIC employees and other agency staff members.
- (5) Lodging
- (a) Reimbursement for lodging expenses will not be allowed at sites located within a reasonable commuting distance of headquarters

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or residence. Either fifty miles or one and one-half hours of travel time each way at a normal rate of speed are considered reasonable commuting.

- (b) The "Commonwealth of PA Preferred Hotel Guide" shall be used when booking overnight lodging. Reasonable effort shall be made to locate the least expensive accommodations available. If a Local agency is unable to obtain lodging at a facility on the Commonwealth approved lodging list, they must maintain documentation of the reason for not using the commonwealth approved lodging and effort to obtain the least expensive alternative lodging.
- (c) If a guest accompanies an employee, reimbursement shall only be made for the rate established for a single occupancy.

#### (6) Subsistence

- (a) Subsistence will be reimbursed in accordance with Commonwealth Travel and Subsistence Rates.
- (b) Tips shall be reimbursed at a maximum of 20% of the allowable portion of the receipt.

#### (7) Luncheon or Dinner Meetings

Employees on official business attending luncheon or dinner meetings are entitled to receive reimbursement for actual costs incurred. This applies whether the engagement is held at a residence or official headquarters. Luncheon or dinner meetings must meet the following criteria:

- (a) The meetings must be planned in advance. Meetings must include employees who are not employed by the agency and must be approved by the agency's Executive Director.
- (b) The meal must be an integral part of the meeting.
- (c) The meal must be served at the same establishment that hosts the meeting.
- (d) The purpose of the meeting must be to discuss business.

#### (8) Other Expenses

- (a) Employees may be granted reimbursement for miscellaneous expenses such as telephone, registered or certified mail, or FAX charges incurred during the course of conducting official business. Justification of the need for and purpose of such charges must be

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provided on the travel reimbursement request. Charges for laundry, dry cleaning, tips to bellboys or maids, alcoholic beverages, or other personal services are not reimbursable.

- (b) Expenditures for non-travel related items such as office supplies not needed for the purpose of the travel cannot be reimbursed on a travel reimbursement claim. Such items should be purchased through normal agency procurement procedures.

#### (9) Documentation of Travel

- (a) Requests for reimbursement of travel expenses shall be submitted for each individual employee monthly and on a form which includes, at a minimum the following information:

1. Traveler's name
2. Program travel is being charged to
3. Dates of travel
4. Departure/return dates and times
5. Itemized listing of travel costs incurred such as transportation, lodging, meals, and miscellaneous costs. Each category should be identified separately.
6. Purpose of travel should be completely explained.
7. Total amount requested
8. Traveler's signature
9. Immediate supervisor's signature

- (b) Travel expenses will only be reimbursed with a corresponding receipt unless a reason is given and approved for why it was impossible to secure a receipt.

#### 2. Incentive Items

- a. Reimbursement for costs incurred for the purchase of incentive items may be allowable if all the following conditions are met:

- (1) Program incentive items are reasonable and necessary to promote specific program purposes of outreach, nutrition education, or breastfeeding promotion.

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- (2) Incentive items are primarily intended for use by program participants or potential participants.
  - (3) Items must present a WIC outreach or nutrition education message and must be expected to be seen widely by the target population. Items in which exposure is likely limited to the office or clinic surroundings of the staff members will generally not be allowable incentive costs.
  - (4) Prior written approval for all incentive items shall be obtained from the SA.
- b. The LA shall submit a request to the SA prior to the purchase of incentive items.
  - c. Costs incurred for incentive items shall be charged to the line item in which the benefit is received and for which it is approved (outreach, nutrition education, or breastfeeding promotion).
- ### 3. Tuition Reimbursement
- a. Reimbursement of tuition for a maximum of one course per employee per Federal Fiscal Year is permissible when all the following conditions have been met:
    - (1) Funding is available in the budget.
    - (2) The person is a full-time WIC employee.
    - (3) The course is directly related to the employee's job and would strengthen the person's ability to perform the job.
    - (4) The course is NOT required for the employee to meet minimum academic training requirements of his/her current position.
    - (5) The employee will not be paid for time involved in class attendance or associated travel.
    - (6) Prior written approval has been obtained from the SA. Requests for approval for tuition reimbursement must be submitted to the SA at least fifteen days prior to the beginning of the course.
    - (7) Reimbursement shall be for tuition only, not other fees, textbooks, etc.
    - (8) Reimbursement approval is contingent upon the successful completion of the course with a grade of 'B' or better. Evidence must be received by the SA verifying successful completion of the course with a grade of 'B' or better.
    - (9) The maximum annual reimbursement to be provided to an employee shall be \$750.00.

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- b. The maximum value of the reimbursement will be based on the tax-free amount allowed per section 127 of the Internal Revenue Code as amended per 2 CFR 200.431(j)(2) and will be adjusted for employees who receive grant or scholarship funds. Grant or scholarship funds shall be distributed proportionally across the expenses for tuition and fees. The remaining portion of tuition shall be used to calculate the reimbursable tuition amount.
- c. The budget period to be charged shall be the contract period in which the individual successfully completes the course.

#### 4. Renovations

- a. Renovations are defined as capital expenditures exceeding \$5,000 that materially increase the value or useful life of the property. For the purposes of this policy, painting and carpeting shall be considered renovations.
- b. Reimbursement for costs incurred for renovations may be allowable if all the following conditions are met:
  - (1) Requests for approval must be submitted to the SA by June 1.
  - (2) Following SA review the requests will be forwarded to USDA for final approval.
  - (3) Requests must be submitted on the Request for Renovations Form and must be accompanied by three bids. If the lowest bid is not selected, justification must be provided.

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#### Reference(s):

1. Internal Revenue Code section 127 as amended per 2 CFR 200.431(j)(2)

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#### Policy Status:

1. This Policy supersedes P&P Number 2.02, dated October 2, 2017.,
2. This P&P supersedes P&P Number 3.05, dated January 1, 2013.
3. This P&P supersedes P&P Number 3.08, dated November 1, 2013.
4. This P&P supersedes P&P Number 3.14, dated June 1, 1995.