

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: DBA, DIE-RA

Responsible Office: Financial Services

Out-of-State Travel on Official Business

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and procedures for budgeting and administering funds for all out-of-state travel and for expenses incurred by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) personnel and outside consultants when on approved official business

II. DEFINITIONS

Out-of-state travel is defined as travel outside the State of Maryland or beyond the Washington, DC metropolitan area that requires one or more overnight stays.

III. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR BUDGETING AND ADMINISTERING FUNDS FOR OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

A. General

1. Reasonable and proper costs of transportation, lodging, subsistence, business communications, registration fees, and/or incidental expenses incurred by MCPS personnel while on official business or attending job-related seminars, conferences, or conventions are reimbursable. Usual and customary gratuities are reimbursable.
2. Advance approval in writing must be obtained for all out-of-state travel or for travel beyond the Washington, DC metropolitan area that requires lodging for one or more nights. MCPS Form 281-1: *Request/Accounting for Overnight Travel Funds* is used to obtain advance approval of travel, to request an advance of travel funds, and to request reimbursement for expenses of out-of-state travel or travel requiring overnight lodging. If the employee has obtained a travel advance which exceeds the amount of

reimbursable expenses, a check for the difference must be submitted with MCPS Form 281-1.

3. If an employee is required by the primary account manager to travel, these provisions will always apply. However, with mutual consent of the employee and the primary account manager, arrangements for partial reimbursement are acceptable.
4. These guidelines will be applied to outside consultants under contract with MCPS whenever travel is authorized as a separate expenditure.

B. Transportation

1. The primary account manager will authorize the mode of transportation and the travel schedule that will keep the total cost at a minimum considering the relative costs of both transportation and loss of working time by the employee.
2. When transportation by air is designated, an employee must use the lowest cost available rate that will accomplish the purpose of the trip. Whenever possible, plans should be made far enough in advance to take advantage of available excursion rates requiring advance reservations. First class air accommodations will not be authorized.
3. Employees may be reimbursed for the cost of ground transportation between residence or work location and air or train terminal and between terminal and hotel at destination. Parking fees (supported by receipts) may be reimbursed when transportation to terminal is by privately owned vehicle. When a taxi is used between terminal and hotel at destination, the employee should obtain a receipt, if feasible. The receipt, together with the justification for using a taxi instead of the lowest cost option, typically an airport limousine or shuttle service, should be attached to MCPS Form 281-1.
4. When use of a privately owned vehicle is authorized for official travel, mileage is reimbursed at the rate established by the Board of Education.
5. When use of a privately owned vehicle is authorized for destinations in excess of 150 miles from Rockville, a statement of the justification for

such use must be attached to MCPS Form 281-1. Examples of acceptable justification are:

- a) Two or more employees will travel together in one vehicle, resulting in a lower total cost than if they traveled by common carrier.
 - b) An automobile is needed to perform official duties at the destination, and use of a privately owned vehicle is determined to be more economical than travel by common carrier and rental of a car at destination.
6. Primary account managers may authorize the use of a privately owned vehicle in lieu of a common carrier for the employee's benefit, provided that the total cost including mileage does not exceed the round-trip advance purchase airfare. In such cases, reimbursement for lodging and subsistence during the travel time is limited to the amount that would have been reimbursed had travel been by air. Any excess travel time during working hours must be charged to annual or personal leave.

C. Lodging

1. Employees will be reimbursed for the actual cost of lodging, including applicable taxes. The original hotel or motel bill must be submitted with MCPS Form 281-1 to support the request for reimbursement.
2. When lodging is shared with another person who is not on official business for MCPS, the employee shall be reimbursed only for the cost that would have been incurred if the employee had stayed alone in the same hotel or motel.
3. When an employee in travel status is lodged in a private residence (such as the home of a friend or relative), \$25 per day, up to a maximum of \$100 per trip, will be provided in lieu of lodging expenses. No receipts will be required. Such arrangements should be made only if the total cost, including related items such as ground transportation, results in a saving to MCPS.

D. Subsistence

1. The method for reimbursement of costs for subsistence is reimbursement for actual costs.
2. Employees will be reimbursed for the actual costs of meals, including applicable taxes, up to the federal published CONUS (continental U.S.) rate per diem. Meals on days of travel to or from the employee's home may be reimbursed to a maximum of one half CONUS. Meals prior to departure or following arrival to home are not reimbursable. Only the chief operating officer may approve reimbursements in excess of CONUS. The original meal receipts must be submitted with MCPS Form 281-1 to support the request for reimbursement. When meals are provided as part of conference, seminar or convention fees, reimbursement for additional expenses for those meals obtained outside of the event will not be permitted. Any request for reimbursement totaling \$25 or more will not be reimbursed without receipts. Alcoholic beverage costs will not be reimbursed.

E. Procedures for Budgeting and Administering Funds for Out-of-State Travel

1. Each program manager is responsible for preparing annually a budget request for funds to cover out-of-state travel for himself/herself and staff members, using the above guidelines, and for submitting it to the responsible primary account manager for approval. The amount requested for travel, subsistence, and related costs should be separate from the amount for registration fees for seminars, conferences, and/or conventions. MCPS Form 255-2: *Out-of-State Travel and Fees* is completed and submitted with the budget request.
2. Following approval of the operating budget, each primary account manager advises the program managers of funds approved for the ensuing year.
3. Major changes in approved plans for use by budgeted funds must be submitted to the primary account manager for approval prior to implementation.

Regulation History: Formerly Regulation No. 220-2, July 10, 1981; directory information updated January, 1983; revised May 2, 1988; revised December 12, 2003 revised October 29, 2008.