
TRAVEL, MEAL AND HOSPITALITY EXPENSES POLICY

POLICY:

The Society follows the requirements set out in the Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive as issued by the Ontario Management Board of Cabinet for establishing expense rules where expenses are reimbursed from public funds. This directive includes rules for travel, meal and hospitality expenses.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To set out rules and principles for the reimbursement of expenses to ensure fair and reasonable practices;
- To provide a framework of accountability to guide the effective oversight of public resources in the reimbursement of expenses;
- To set the parameters for the public disclosure of information about expenses; and
- To establish the principles and mandatory requirements for reimbursement of business expenses as established in the Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive issue by Management Board of Cabinet effective April 1, 2011 and subsequent amendments.

This policy applies to any person in the Agency making an expense claim, including the following:

- Appointees, board members, employees and consultants and contractors engaged by the organization.
- Expenses incurred with respect to foster parents' direct care of children are not considered business expenses. Those types of expenses are addressed in the [Reimbursable Expenses Policy](#).

This policy is based on four key principles:

A) Accountability

This Agency is accountable for public funds used to reimburse travel, meal and hospitality expenses. All expenses support business objectives.

B) Transparency

This Agency is transparent to all stakeholders. The rules for incurring and reimbursing travel, meal and hospitality expenses are clear, easily understood, and available to the public.

C) Value for Money

Taxpayer dollars are used prudently and responsibly. Plans for travel, meals, accommodation and hospitality are necessary and economical with due regard for health and safety.

D) Fairness

Legitimate authorized expenses incurred during the course of the business of an organization are reimbursed.

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

Expenditure	Approval
Travel within Ontario	Immediate Manager
Travel outside Ontario, within Canada and Continental USA	Executive Director or Board President for the Executive Director
Travel outside Canada or Continental USA	Executive Director with in consultation with the President of the Board. By Board motion if the travel is by the Executive Director
Employee business expenses	Immediate Manager
Executive Director business expenses	Board President or designate
Board Members expense	Executive Director

1. Expenses must be work related, modest and appropriate and strike a balance among economy, health & safety and efficiency of operations.
2. Expenses of a personal nature will not be reimbursed. Such expenses include but are not limited to expenses for:
 - Recreational purposes;
 - Personal items;
 - Traffic and parking violations;
 - Social events that do not constitute hospitality;
 - Alcoholic drinks, unless part of hospitality; and
 - Friends or family members, unless part of hospitality.
3. The agency shall reimburse persons for travel costs incurred while driving their own vehicles on agency business. Travel costs include parking costs, but do not include traffic tickets or parking tickets.
4. Employees shall not be reimbursed for travel costs associated with getting to and from the job site unless the assigned job site is located more than 50 kilometers from the agency head office.
5. The agency shall negotiate a travel rate with the union from time to time that shall be applied to all employees, foster parents, volunteers and Directors. Notwithstanding, the agency may also determine that foster parents, directors and volunteers may be paid a fixed amount for travel costs at a lower rate.
6. Prior approval by the appropriate authority is required for non-routine business travel

outside of Elgin County. Travel outside Elgin County that is part of regular job duties does not require prior approval but must adhere to all other rules established in this policy.

7. Alcohol cannot be claimed and will not be reimbursed as part of a travel or meal expense.
8. Any **Hospitality** event that is to be conducted must receive the prior approval of the Executive Director.
 - *Hospitality is defined as the provision of food, beverages, accommodation, transportation or other amenities at public expense to persons who are not engaged in work for the Agency.*
9. Service of Alcohol at Hospitality Events:
 - a. The Board President has the approval authority for the service of alcohol at a hospitality event.
 - b. The Board President may delegate to the Executive Director, but no further delegation is permitted.
 - c. Prior written approval is required for each event.
10. Hospitality may never be offered solely for the benefit of anyone covered by this policy.
11. Employees shall be reimbursed for authorized business expenses at functions, which the employee has been required to attend. Employees shall not be reimbursed for functions that are considered to be social events.
12. Records of all transactions covered by this policy will be kept for a period of 7 years.
13. Consultants and other contractors will not be reimbursed for any hospitality, incidental or food expenses. Reimbursement for allowable expenses under this policy can be claimed only when the contract with the agency specifically allows for it.
14. This policy will be posted on the Agency web site.

PROCEDURES:

1. Persons approving claims for reimbursement are responsible for monitoring compliance with Agency policy.
2. Original itemized receipts must be uploaded into the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) with all claims. If the original receipt is not available, submit a written explanation with the claim to provide the approver with adequate information for decision-making.
3. Child Protection workers and other designated permanent staff shall receive an allowance for automobile insurance. The amount is established in the collective agreement.
4. The most practical and economical way to travel (including accommodation) will be chosen in all circumstances, unless an exception is granted by the appropriate Manager.

5. Travel by train is permitted when it is the most practical and economic way to travel. A coach class economy fare is the standard. Business class may be acceptable with prior approval in limited circumstances such as:
 - the need to work with a team;
 - choosing a travel time that allows you to reduce expenditures on meals or accommodation (e.g., compare an economy (coach) class ticket plus a meal, with the cost of a ticket for VIA 1, where the meal is included);
 - accommodation requirements; and
 - Health and safety considerations.
6. Reimbursement will be made for single accommodation in a standard room, and no reimbursement will be made for suites, executive floors, or concierge services.
7. Arrangements for direct billing to the agency may be arranged for overnight accommodations. In cases where this is impossible, employees will be reimbursed at the actual accommodation cost, providing the actual cost has been approved in advance. In both circumstances the employee is responsible to provide the hotel statement to accounting.
8. Upon presentation of receipts, the agency shall reimburse the employee for all overnight accommodation costs for business trips, conventions or staff training provided that the trip and the costs have been authorized by the employee's manager prior to departure.
9. If electronic / online options are available (eg. Zoom or Microsoft Teams meeting), these options must be considered before approving travel related expenses.
10. An employee may not approve their own expenses and expenses for a group must be claimed by the most senior staff positions. (eg. Manager / Director)
11. If an employee is overpaid on an expense claim; arrangements must be made with the Finance Department to facilitate timely repayment.
12. The agency shall provide employees with a vehicle for return business trips to one destination in excess of 300 km.
13. If employees choose to use their own vehicles for business trips in which the agency would normally provide a vehicle, employees shall be compensated at a fixed rate equal to the agency's costs in providing a vehicle for that particular trip. In all other instances where employees are required to use their own vehicles for business trips on behalf of the agency, and where the agency cannot provide a vehicle for the employee, compensation shall be at the rate established in the Collective Agreement. The employee's manager may determine the most economical rate of travel if the event requires an employee to be away from the office for more than one day. The current costs of a rental vehicle are available from the business office.
14. The agency shall reimburse employees, foster parents, volunteers or Directors for any meals purchased while traveling beyond Elgin County boundaries on business trips, conventions or

staff training. Upon presentation of receipts, persons shall be reimbursed at an amount that has been negotiated with the union from time to time or employment contract provisions if applicable. Meal costs for children in care who are traveling with staff shall be reimbursed at the same rate.

15. Original, itemized receipts must be provided with claims for reimbursement of actual meal expenses. Reimbursement must not exceed the amount actually spent (including taxes and gratuities) as validated by a receipt accompanying the claim.
16. Reimbursement for meal expenses are subject to the maximum rates set out in the collective agreement. These rates include taxes and gratuities. The rates are not an allowance. They are for individual meals – you must have eaten the meal to be able to submit a claim for reimbursement. When more than one meal is claimed for any day, you may allocate the combined maximum rates between the meals claimed.
17. When a meeting or training is required to occur over the lunch or dinner hour, the Agency may provide refreshments or a reasonable meal. This business expense must be approved in advance by a Director.
18. Travel outside Ontario is appropriate for business that is client related or has a specific and defined benefit for the Agency. Examples may include repatriating a child to their area of origin, returning a child back to the Elgin area, interviewing of a client that cannot be achieved by a representative and in exceptional circumstances, training for a Staff member that is not available locally.
19. The most cost-effective method of travel must be chosen, while balancing efficiency in operations. A written rationale to demonstrate that the proposed travel is necessary and that the requested travel arrangements are cost-effective, including a detailed itemization of all expenses that will be incurred, will be documented for all travel outside of Ontario and signed by the authority designated above.
20. Employees, who in the course of carrying out agency business sustain breakage, damage or soiling to vehicles, clothing or other personal articles, may make a claim for the agency to pay for the article to be cleaned, repaired or replaced,. The agency may also consider paying for losses that are not covered by the employee's personal auto or homeowners insurance, and not arising out of a traffic accident. The Employee's home or auto insurance is to be used first.
21. Members of the Board of Directors, who travel more than 20 kilometers round trip to attend a Board meeting or an agency function, may claim travel expenses at the approved agency rate. Directors attending conventions, training or other function authorized by the President may claim reasonable business expenses.
22. Volunteers shall be reimbursed for the travel costs incurred during driving assignments. Volunteers may also be paid for the costs of driving from their home to the site of the volunteer assignment if the distance exceeds 20 kilometers round trip. The volunteer will be paid at the approved agency rate.

23. Foster parents or volunteers who have been required to attend at the agency's head office or other location may be reimbursed their travel costs. Foster parents or volunteers who attend conventions, training or other function authorized by the agency may claim business expenses subject to the limits established in this policy for employees.
24. If leaving employment with the Agency any claims for expenses must be submitted before leaving the organization.
25. In planning work schedules, persons shall develop an itinerary that allows for the most efficient use of time and resources without compromising the demands of good service.
26. In computing distances traveled, the starting point shall be the agency head office. When an employee, foster parent or volunteer leaves directly from home to an appointment, the applicable mileage to be paid will be either the distance between the appointment and the employee's home or the agency head office, whichever is less.
27. All claims for reimbursement of expenses shall be made on the current mileage expense form or submitted through CPIN. Employee claims should cover a calendar month be approved by the Manager and submitted to the Accounting Office by the 10th day of the following Month. If submitted by the 10th day of the Month, payment will be made by the 15th day of the Month.
28. **All claims must be submitted within one month following the end of the Quarter in which the expense was incurred.**

QUARTER	SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Q1 April 1st to June 30th	July 31st
Q2 July 1st to September 30th	October 31st
Q3 October 1st to December 31st	January 31st
Q4 January 1st to March 31st	April 30th

29. Foster parents and volunteers should submit their travel expenses to their child protection worker or the Volunteer and Community Engagement Advocate by the end of each month. The child protection worker or Volunteer and Community Engagement Advocate will review and approve the claim and forward it to the accounting department for payment by the 10th day of the following Month. If submitted by the 10th day of the Month, payment will be made by the 15th day of the Month.
30. Hospitality:
(Note: Hospitality is defined as the provision of food, beverages, accommodation, transportation or other amenities at public expense to persons who are not engaged in work for the Agency).

- a) Hospitality should be extended in an economical, consistent, and appropriate way when it will facilitate agency business or is considered desirable as a matter of courtesy.
- b) Hospitality will be extended on behalf of the society for individuals of significant interest and importance for the Agency. These may include social events such as banquets, conventions, meals, accommodation and travel for trainers, speakers, prospective Board members, Government representatives, etc.
- c) Hospitality expenditures should minimize costs but be consistent with: the status of the guest(s), the number of persons attending, and the business purpose to be achieved.
- d) Hospitality expenses must be recorded. Information on the circumstances giving rise to the hospitality, the form of hospitality, the cost, name and location of establishment, number of attendees, and names of individuals entertained and their titles/company name and approvals by the appropriate authority must be documented.
- e) Functions involving only people doing work for the agency as defined in this policy are not considered hospitality functions.
- f) Hospitality may never be offered solely for the benefit of anyone covered by this policy.

30 Where a Manager decides to exercise discretion in making an exception to any of these rules the rationale for the exception must be documented and accompany the claim and include adherence to these Principles:

- Trust – use discretion and latitude for persons and managers to act in a fair and reasonable manner;
- Flexibility – management decisions respect the duty to accommodate, respond to persons' needs and interests, and consider unforeseen circumstances;
- Stewardship – ensure consistent, fair and equitable application of the Policy giving consideration to all circumstances, while maintaining the shared responsibility for wise and prudent use of public resources.