

Travel Policy

Knox County Housing KCHA
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Article I. Purpose/Scope of the Policy

Section 1.01 The purpose of this policy is to provide travel and reimbursement procedures that ensure fair, equitable, and compliant treatment to all individuals traveling on Knox County Housing Authority (KCHA) business at the expense of the agency.

Section 1.02 This policy applies to all employees, commissioners, and agents of the KCHA where travel is required for the purpose of agency business.

Section 1.03 The Executive Director (ED) of the KCHA or the designee of the ED shall be responsible for the enforcement of these travel regulations.

Article II. General Provisions

Section 2.01 In the interpretation and application of this policy, the term “traveler” or “authorized traveler” means any appointed KCHA officer or employee, including members of the KCHA’s board of commissioners and committees appointed by the board, employees of such boards and committees, residents, and all other such agents of the agency who are traveling on official KCHA business and whose travel was authorized in accordance with this policy. “Authorized traveler” shall not include the spouse, children, other relatives, friends, or companions accompanying the authorized traveler on KCHA business, unless the person(s) otherwise qualifies as an authorized traveler under this policy.

Section 2.02 Authorized travelers are entitled to reimbursement of certain expenditures incurred while traveling on official business for the KCHA. Reimbursable expenses shall include expenses for transportation, lodging, meals, registration fees for conferences, conventions and seminars; and other actual and necessary expenses related to official business as determined by the ED.

Section 2.03 Authorized travelers can request either a travel advance for the projected cost of authorized travel, advance billing directly to the KCHA, or a reimbursement of costs for registration fees, air fares, meals, lodging, conferences and similar expenses. Travel advance requests are not considered documentation of travel expenses. If travel advances exceed documented expenses, the traveler must reimburse the KCHA. It will be the responsibility of the ED to initiate action to recover any undocumented travel advances.

Section 2.04 Travel advances are available at the discretion of the ED and only after completion and approval of the travel authorization form.

Section 2.05 A travel expense reimbursement form will be used to document all expense claims.

Section 2.06 To qualify for reimbursement, travel expenses must be:

- (a) Directly related to the conduct of KCHA business for which travel was authorized;
- (b) Actual, reasonable and necessary under the circumstances; and
- (c) Approved by the ED.

Section 2.07 Expenses considered excessive will not be allowed.

Section 2.08 Claims of \$5.00 or more for travel expense reimbursement must be supported by the original paid receipt for lodging, vehicle rental, phone call, public carrier travel, conference fee(s), meals and other reimbursable costs.

Section 2.09 Any expense paid by direct means (KCHA credit card or check payment, agency invoiced, etc.) must be documented with the original paid receipt.

Section 2.10 Any person attempting to defraud the KCHA or misuse KCHA travel funds is subject to legal action for recovery of fraudulent travel claims and/or advances.

Section 2.11 Mileage and hotel expenses incurred within Knox County are not ordinarily considered eligible expenses for reimbursement, except that mileage within Knox County is a reimbursable expense if an agency car is not available for use.

Section 2.12 Travel Requests/Reimbursements

- (a) To ensure reimbursement for official travel, all travel must be approved.
- (b) Lack of pre-approval does not prohibit reimbursement, but it does assure reimbursement within the limits of the KCHA travel policy.
- (c) All costs associated with the travel should be reasonably considered when booking travel arrangements.
- (d) An approved authorization form is needed before advance expenses are paid or travel advances are authorized.

Section 2.13 It is the responsibility of the authorized traveler to:

- (a) Prepare and accurately describe the travel;
- (b) Certify the accuracy of the reimbursement request;
- (c) Note on the reimbursement form all direct payments and travel advances made by the traveler and by the KCHA;
- (d) File the reimbursement form with the necessary supporting documents and original receipts.

Section 2.14 Travel Reconciliation

- (a) The reimbursement form should be filed with the finance department within 10 days of return or at the end of the month, whichever is more practical.
- (b) The traveler is expected to complete and file the expense reimbursement form.

- (c) The reimbursement form must be certified by the traveler that the amount due is true and accurate. Original lodging, travel, taxi, parking and other receipts must be attached. If the KCHA provided a travel advance or made advanced payment, the traveler must include that information on the expense form. In the case of advances, the form must have a reconciliation summary, reflecting total claimed expenses with advances and KCHA prepayments indicated. The balance due the traveler or the refund due the KCHA must be clearly shown below the total claim on the form or in a cover memo attached to the front of the form.
- (d) A copy of the documents pertinent to the requested travel, if applicable, should be attached to the form. These documents include, but are not limited to:
 - (i) Conference registration and certification forms;
 - (ii) Travel receipts – airline, rental car, bus/train tickets, etc.;
 - (iii) Meal receipts; and
 - (iv) Incidental expense receipts – parking, tolls, taxi, etc.
- (e) If the traveler received a travel advance and spent less than the advance, the traveler should attach a check made payable to the KCHA for that difference.
- (f) The ED will address special circumstances and issues not covered in this policy on a case-by-case basis.

Article III. Modes of Transportation

Section 3.01 All potential costs should be considered when selecting the modes of transportation. For example, airline travel may be cheaper than automobile when time away from work and increased meal and lodging costs are considered. When time is important, or when the trip is so long that other modes of transportation are not cost beneficial, air travel is encouraged.

Section 3.02 If the traveler goes outside the state by means other than air, the reimbursement will be limited to air fare at tourist or economy class, ordinary expenses during the meeting dates, and one day's meals and motel before and after the meeting. The traveler will be required to take personal time (vacation, personal days) for any additional time taken beyond the day before and the day after the meeting dates.

Section 3.03 When the traveler extends the trip with personal time to take advantage of discount fares, all expenses and savings associated with extending the trip must be submitted with the expense reimbursement form. Reimbursement for expense/savings associated with extending the trip will be limited to the lesser of the:

- (a) Actual expenses incurred; or
- (b) Amount that would have been incurred for the business portion only. The calculations for the business portion of the trip must be made using the least expensive rates available.

Section 3.04 Air Travel:

- (a) The KCHA will pay for or reimburse an amount not to exceed tourist or economy class air travel.

- (b) The traveler should get the most affordable, least expensive and reasonable fare and take advantage of discount fares.
- (c) Mileage credits for frequent flyer programs accrue to the individual traveler. However, the KCHA will not reimburse for additional expenses — such as circuitous routing, extended stays, layovers to schedule a particular carrier, upgrading from economy to first class — for travelers to accumulate additional mileage or for other personal reasons.
- (d) Airline travel can be paid by direct billing to the KCHA or through reimbursement to the employee.

Section 3.05 Train or Bus Travel

- (a) The KCHA will pay for the actual cost of a rail or bus fare ticket.
- (b) The traveler should get the most affordable, least expensive and reasonable fare and take advantage of discount fares.
- (c) Train/Bus travel can be paid by direct billing to the KCHA or through reimbursement to the employee.

Section 3.06 Vehicle Travel

- (a) Automobile transportation may be used when a common carrier cannot be scheduled, when it is more economical, when a common carrier is not practical, or when expenses can be reduced by two or more KCHA employees traveling together.
- (b) The use of a personal, KCHA, or rental vehicle is governed by the KCHA Vehicle Use Policy.
- (c) The KCHA shall reimburse for mileage at the current applicable IRS Standard Mileage Rates.
- (d) Reasonable tolls will be allowed when the most direct travel route requires them.
- (e) Fines for traffic or parking violations incurred by an authorized traveler using a personal, KCHA, or rental vehicle will not be reimbursed by the KCHA.

Section 3.07 Taxi, Limousine and Other Common Carrier Transportation Fares

- (a) When an individual travels by common carrier, reasonable fares will be allowed for necessary ground transportation.
- (b) Bus, shuttle, or limousine service to and from airports should be used when available and practical.
- (c) The KCHA will reimburse mileage for travel to and from the local airport and parking fees, provided such costs do not exceed normal taxi/limousine fares to and from the airport.
- (d) For travel between lodging quarters and meetings, conferences, or meals, reasonable taxi fares will be allowed.
- (e) Transportation to and from shopping, entertainment, or other personal trips is the choice of the traveler and not reimbursable by the KCHA.

Article IV. Lodging

Section 4.01 The amount allocated for lodging shall not ordinarily exceed the maximum per diem rates authorized by the federal rate schedule.

Section 4.02 The Government Services Administration provides guidelines for determining the maximum that can be reimbursed for lodging. These amounts are available on line at <http://www.gsa.gov>. The rates are the maximum reimbursable rates for hotel rooms plus appropriate taxes.

Section 4.03 Original lodging receipts must be submitted with the reimbursement form. Photocopies are not generally acceptable.

Section 4.04 If a traveler exceeds the maximum lodging per diem, excess costs are the responsibility of the traveler.

Section 4.05 If the best rate is secured, and it still exceeds the maximum lodging per diem, the ED may authorize a higher reimbursement amount.

Section 4.06 Even if it costs more, travelers may be allowed to stay at the officially designated hotel of the meeting; however, more moderately priced accommodations must be requested whenever possible. It will be the traveler's responsibility to provide documentation of the "officially designated meeting site" room rates, if these rates are higher than the normal reimbursable amounts.

Section 4.07 If two or more KCHA employees travel together and share a room, the lodging reimbursement rate will be the maximum of two single rooms. If an employee shares a room with a non-employee, the actual cost will be allowed up to the maximum reimbursable amount. The receipt for the entire amount must be submitted with the expense form.

Article V. Meals and Incidentals

Section 5.01 The authorized traveler will be reimbursed the actual amount of meal expense per day, not to exceed the maximum allowed under the GSA rate schedule and the authorized length of stay. Receipts are required to be submitted to document actual meals and incidental expenses. The per diem meal amounts are expected to cover meals, tips, porters and incidental expenses. The authorized traveler will not be reimbursed more than the daily amount based on the GSA rate schedule.

Section 5.02 Whether meals may be claimed depends on when the traveler leaves and returns to the official station. Meal reimbursements for work requiring travel away from an employee's official station will be based on the time of day the travel is undertaken. If the traveler is traveling during a normally scheduled meal time, the meal expense shall be reimbursed within the applicable per diem rates. The traveler's official station is home or work, whichever produces the least cost to the KCHA. The hour and date of departure and return must be shown on the expense reimbursement form.

Section 5.03 All reimbursement rates include tip, gratuity, etc.

Section 5.04 Alcoholic beverages are not eligible for expense reimbursement.

Section 5.05 The excess cost of a day's meals may be allowed provided proper documentation or explanation is submitted with the expense reimbursement form.

Section 5.06 If a meal is included as part of a conference or seminar registration, or is included with the air fare, then the allowance for that meal should be subtracted from the total allowance for the day. For example, if a dinner is included as part of the conference fee, the maximum meal allowance for the day should be reduced by the allowed dinner amount.

Article VI. Miscellaneous Expenses

Section 6.01 Registration fees for approved conferences, conventions, seminars, meetings and other educational programs will be allowed and will generally include the cost of official banquets, meals, lodging and registration fees. Registration fees should be specified on the original travel request form and can include a request for pre-registration fee payment.

Section 6.02 A \$5.00 allowance will be reimbursable for hotel/motel check-in and baggage handling expenses.

Section 6.03 Laundry, valet service, tips and gratuities are considered personal expenses and are not reimbursable.

Section 6.04 For travel outside the United States, all expenses claimed must be converted to U.S. dollars. The conversion rate and computation should be shown on each receipt.

Section 6.05 Entertainment expenses are not allowed and will not be reimbursed by the KCHA.

Article VII. Travel Reimbursement Rates/Schedules

Section 7.01 Authorized travelers shall be reimbursed according to the federal travel regulation rates. The KCHA's travel reimbursement rates will automatically change when the federal rates are adjusted.

Section 7.02 Applicable schedules generally include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Standard Mileage Rates
- (b) General Services Administration (GSA) Per Diem Rates – Lodging, Meals, Incidentals

Section 7.03 When submitting travel reimbursement requests, travelers should include a printout documenting current applicable reimbursement rates.

Section 7.04 In some circumstances, the KCHA may pay directly to the provider for expenses such as meals, lodging and registration fees for conferences, conventions, seminars and other education programs.

Section 7.05 When possible, the traveler should make full use of discounts for reservations and registrations. The traveler should request conference, government, or weekend rates when making reservations.

Article VIII. Violations of this Policy

Section 8.01 Violations of this travel policy will be handled in accordance with employee disciplinary action as outlined by the Knox County Housing KCHA Personnel Policy.