203: Reimbursement of Travel, Meal and Lodging Expenses Policy

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The Northbrook Public Library (“library”) will reimburse employee board member travel, meal, and lodging expenses incurred in connection with pre-approved travel, meal, and lodging expenses incurred on behalf of the library. Employees and officers are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses for official business as a prudent person would in spending personal funds.

# Definitions

"Entertainment" includes, but is not limited to, shows, amusements, theaters, circuses, sporting events, or any other place of public or private entertainment or amusement, unless ancillary to the purpose of the program or event.

"Travel" means any expenditure directly incident to official travel by employees and officers of the library involving reimbursement to travelers or direct payment to private agencies providing transportation or related services.

# Authorized Types of Official Business

Travel, meal and lodging expenses will be reimbursed for employees and officers of the library only for purposes of official business conducted on behalf of the library. These include but are not limited to off-site or out-of-town meetings related to official business and pre-approved seminars, conferences and other educational events related to the employee’s or board member’s official duties. If you are unsure whether an expense is reimbursable, please contact Administration.

# Categories of Expenses

## Airfare

Travelers are expected to obtain the lowest available airfare that reasonably meets business travel needs. Travelers are encouraged to book flights at least 30 days in advance to avoid premium airfare pricing. Only coach or economy tickets will be paid or reimbursed. The traveler will pay for the difference between higher priced tickets and coach or economy tickets with their or their personal funds.

## Personal Automobiles

Mileage shall be based on the following formula as described in the Employee Handbook:

1. If leaving from the library and returning to the library: Total miles driven.
2. If leaving from home and returning to the library or vice versa: Total miles driven minus ½ normal round-trip commute.
3. If leaving from home and returning home: Total miles driven minus normal round trip commute. An employee or officer will be reimbursed at the prevailing IRS mileage rate. The traveler will only be reimbursed up to the price of a coach airfare ticket if they drive to a location for which airfare would have been less expensive.

## Public Transportation

In the case of local training or official business where an employee or officer chooses to use public transportation, reimbursement for use of public transportation is based on mileage from the agency office to the training site (not from the traveler’s residence), regardless of the transportation method chosen. When attending training or business directly from an employee’s or officer’s residence, no reimbursement will be made if the distance is less than the mileage of a normal commute to the workplace. If the distance is higher than the normal commute, reimbursement will paid at the differential of the commute less the mileage of a normal commute to the workplace.

## Other Transportation

The traveler should utilize hotel shuttle service or other shuttle services, if available. If none are offered, the use of the most economic transportation is encouraged.

## Hotel/Motel Accommodations

The traveler will be reimbursed for a standard single-room at locations convenient to the business activity. Reimbursement for lodging shall be limited to the number of nights required to conduct the assigned Library business. If a conference, for example, opens on a Sunday evening and closes Thursday at noon, reimbursement for Sunday through Wednesday night would be allowed. Cancellation charges will not be reimbursed by the library unless approved by a vote of the Board of Trustees.

## Meals

Meal reimbursement is limited to the current U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) regulations in place at the time the expense is occurred.

Prior approval by the Board of Trustees and submission of receipts are required for per diem allowances. Meals provided by the conference or seminar should be deducted from the per diem allowance. Partial reimbursement may be made for departure and return days based on time. Meals during in-state travel that is not an overnight stay will be reimbursed for actual cost not to exceed the GSA regulations.

## Vacation in Conjunction with Business Travel

In cases where vacation time is added to a business trip, any cost variance in airfare, car rental, lodging and/or any other expenses must be clearly identified on the Travel, Meal, and Lodging Expense Report form and paid by the traveler.

1. Accompanied Travel: When a traveler is accompanied by others not on official business, any lodging, transportation, meals or other expenses above those incurred for the authorized traveler will not be reimbursed by the library.
2. Parking: Parking fees at a hotel/motel, conference center, or other site will be reimbursed only with a receipt.
3. Entertainment Expenses: No employee or officer of the library shall be reimbursed for any entertainment expense, unless ancillary to the purpose of the program, event or other official business.

# Approval of Expenses

1. Expenses for Members of the Board of Trustees: Travel, meal, and lodging expenses incurred by any member of the Board of Trustees must be approved by roll call vote at an open meeting of the Board of Trustees.
2. Expenses for Officials or Employees Other than Members of the Board of Trustees: Travel, meal, and lodging expenses incurred by any official or employee not covered by paragraph 1 (member of the Board of Trustees) in excess of the maximum IRS or GSA rate must be previously approved in an open meeting by a majority roll-call vote of the Board of Trustees.
3. Advanced Expenses: Travel, meal, and lodging expenses advanced as a per diem to any employee or official of the library must be approved by roll call vote at an open meeting of the Board of Trustees prior to payment. Documentation of expenses must be provided in accordance with Sections C, D and F of This policy, and any excess from the per diem must be repaid.
4. Other Expenses: All other expenses that do not fall within paragraphs E.1, E.2, or E.3 are subject to the Executive Director

# Documentation of Expenses

Before an expense for travel, meals, or lodging may be approved under Section E of this Policy, the following minimum documentation must first be submitted, in writing, to the Executive Director on a CE request form:

1. an estimate of the cost of travel, meals, or lodging if expenses have not been incurred or a receipt for the travel, meals, or lodging if expenses have already been incurred;
2. the name of the individual who received or is requesting the travel, meal, or lodging expense reimbursement;
3. the job title or office of the individual who received or is requesting the travel, meal, or lodging expense reimbursement; and
4. the date or dates and nature of the official business for which the travel, meal, or lodging expense was or will be expended.

All documents and information submitted in connection with this policy are public records subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.