

## TRAVEL

RAILS will pay nonexempt employees for travel if it extends their normal commute time or workday in order for them to attend work-related conferences, provide emergency support, attend long-distance meetings, etc. The employee will be compensated for travel in accordance with applicable law, with their supervisor's advance approval.

RAILS recognizes that employees and RAILS Board of Director members may be required to travel for RAILS business from time to time. RAILS will reimburse full and part-time employees and RAILS Board of Director members for reasonable authorized expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties. All RAILS personnel and Board members are responsible for controlling travel and meeting expenses and are expected to exhibit good judgment, as well as to supply detailed receipts documenting expenses.

The purpose of this policy is to establish control of travel sufficient to prevent obligation of funds exceeding budget limitations and to hold travel to the minimum required for the efficient and economical conduct of the system's business. Whenever possible, RAILS business travel arrangements will be made using governmental entity discount rates.

There is no prohibition on a spouse and/or family member accompanying an employee or Board member on an official out-of-town trip that is eligible for reimbursement under this policy, provided that their presence does not detract from the performance of duty and all expenses attributable to the family member are paid by the employee by cost-allocating them from any receipts submitted for reimbursement.

There is no prohibition on a RAILS employee or Board member taking a vacation at the beginning or end of travel for RAILS business. In cases where vacation time is added to a business trip, any cost variance in airfare, car rental, lodging and/or any other expenses related to personal travel must be clearly noted on receipts and eliminated from the Expense Reimbursement Form submitted for reimbursement.

If a RAILS employee or Board member is not able to attend a meeting for which RAILS has expended funds, then the individual will normally be required to reimburse RAILS, unless special circumstances exist and/or approval is obtained from the Executive Director.

## Allowable Expenses

### Ground Transportation

RAILS encourages the use of a RAILS-owned vehicle for transportation. If the use of a RAILS-owned vehicle is not possible, employees may use their own personal vehicle and request mileage reimbursement. For mileage expense reimbursements, RAILS follows the U.S. General Services Administration guidelines at <http://www.gsa.gov/>. These guidelines, upon entering a

travel location, show maximum lodging rates (excluding taxes) and a daily meal and incidental expense amount for that location. Mileage will only be reimbursed for RAILS employees at the number of miles originating from their assigned RAILS office or from their home, whichever is less. Mileage for RAILS board members will be reimbursed at the number of miles originating from their representative library or from their home, whichever is less.

If car rental is necessary or more cost-effective, all travelers are expected to rent intermediate sized cars or smaller unless special circumstances exist and prior approval from the Executive Director is obtained. Rental vehicles must be used for RAILS business only. Travelers must decline all fuel option pre-purchases and return the car with a full tank of gas or whatever amount is required to avoid a fuel charge. In addition, travelers are to decline all insurance options as this coverage is provided by RAILS for employees performing business travel. To be covered under the RAILS insurance policy, travelers must provide a copy of the RAILS auto insurance card to the rental company and be traveling solely on RAILS business. Rental vehicle usage is not eligible for mileage reimbursement, but other rental vehicle costs such as parking, tolls, and fuel are eligible for actual reimbursement. For rental vehicle expenses, RAILS requires employees to secure the lowest cost options that reasonably meet the required travel schedule.

Other types of ground transportation, such as rail, bus, or taxi, may be reimbursed if the costs and convenience justify their use, and their use is confined to RAILS business travel. Reasonable tips for taxi services are eligible for reimbursement.

Travelers may be reimbursed for the use of public transportation, ride share transportation such as Uber or Lyft, or taxi services to and from their homes to an airport or travel depot if driving their own vehicle and if the cost is less than the total cost of mileage and associated parking costs. Long-term parking must be used if a personal vehicle is used to travel to the airport, and the vehicle is to remain parked there during travel.

## Airfare

For airfare expenses, RAILS will reimburse employees for the cost of a coach/economy airline ticket and baggage fees. Employees should secure the lowest cost option that reasonably meets the required travel schedule, and upgrades beyond coach/economy will not be reimbursed.

## Meals

RAILS will reimburse actual and reasonable meal expenses when travel is required. A full day's meal and incidental expenses should not exceed the per diem amounts for the travel location as prescribed on the U.S. General Services Administration website. This

includes the reduction of meals and incidental expenses for the first and final days of travel.

In some cases, RAILS employees and board members may have shared meal expenses on a single receipt. If it is not possible or practical to request separate checks, the person responsible for payment for the group will be reimbursed upon providing a completed and signed expense reimbursement form accompanied by a detailed receipt with a list of employees and board members that dined with them. When possible, all alcoholic beverages should be placed on a separate check. Alcoholic beverage expenses are not eligible for reimbursement.

Expenses for meal delivery and transportation to meals may be reimbursed. Tips for meals not to exceed 20% of the total bill will be reimbursed if documented.

## Lodging

For lodging expenses, RAILS requires employees to secure lodging that offers a governmental rate where possible. Please note that RAILS employees are not State of Illinois employees, and are not eligible for State discounts, only a "governmental rate." Rates for lodging reimbursement should not exceed the actual cost of travel as determined by the General Services Administration for the travel location, unless pre-approved by the Executive Director. Any employee attending a conference or seminar may stay in accommodations arranged by the conference/seminar organizations and will be reimbursed for the conference lodging rates as negotiated for the event. When selecting hotels, the employees should choose hotels that are closest to the convention center or event and those offered up to the mid-price range. Luxury hotels at the top of the price range are to be avoided.

Rental lodging, such as Airbnb or VRBO[, may be reimbursed if the costs and convenience justify their use. Employees must submit detailed receipts and a list of RAILS employees who shared the lodging. Any additional costs incurred for family members of employees staying in the lodging must be cost allocated out of any expense reimbursement requests.

Tips for cleaning staff will be reimbursed if reasonable (limited to \$5 per day) and documented.

## Non-Allowable Expenses

- Alcoholic beverages
- Coat check
- Entertainment
- Repairs or towing of personal vehicles

- Late checkout and room guarantee charges (unless special circumstances exist and Executive Director approval is obtained)
- Parking tickets or other traffic tickets and charges associated with locksmith services
- Tips exceeding the limits mentioned above
- Travel insurance
- First class or business class airline tickets or upgrades
- Clothing and toiletry articles
- Expenses for family and friends traveling with employees

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