

The Supreme Court of Ohio

GUIDELINES FOR TRAVEL BY COURT APPOINTEES

These guidelines are adopted by the Supreme Court and are intended to establish consistent standards and expectations regarding travel by Court appointees while on Court business.

These guidelines have not been adopted as rules pursuant to Article IV, Section 5 of the Ohio Constitution and should not be construed as requiring adoption.

SECTION 1.0. DEFINITIONS.

1.1. Definitions.

As used in these guidelines:

(A) “Court appointee” means either of the following:

(1) A person serving on a board, commission, advisory committee, or task force, as appointed by the Court, the Chief Justice of the Court, or a Justice of the Court.

(2) A person performing an official duty or responsibility for the Court at the request of the Chief Justice, a Justice, or a senior staff employee of the Court.

(B) “Travel status” means the time a Court appointee is traveling on Court business, beginning when travel to the destination commences and continuing until the time of return from such destination.

SECTION 2.0. AUTHORITY FOR TRAVEL.

2.1. Authority for Travel.

A Court appointee may travel on Court business when authorized by the Court employee who staffs the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned or by the Chief Justice, Justice, or senior staff employee who requested the appointee perform an official duty or responsibility for the Court.

SECTION 3.0. PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF TRAVEL.

3.1. In-State Travel.

A Court appointee shall obtain prior approval to travel in state on Court business from the Court employee who staffs the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to

which the appointee is assigned or the Chief Justice, Justice, or senior staff employee who requested the appointee perform an official duty or responsibility for the Court. The prior approval may be given verbally and may be of a continuing nature.

In limited circumstances, a Court appointee may be required to attend a continuing education conference, seminar, or workshop as part of the appointee's training to serve. In this circumstance, the Court appointee shall follow the requirements of Administrative Policy 11 (Training and Education).

3.2. Out-of-State Travel.

A Court appointee shall obtain prior written approval to travel out of state on Court business from the Court employee who staffs the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned or the Chief Justice, Justice, or senior staff employee who requested the appointee perform an official duty or responsibility for the Court.

The procedure to obtain approval to travel out of state shall occur in the following order:

- (A) The Court appointee shall complete a "Travel and Conference Approval Form" (copy provided as Attachment A) and attach a copy of the notice, agenda, course description, or letter of invitation relating to the event the appointee will attend and reasonable estimates of the reimbursable expenses the attendee expects to incur;
- (B) The Director of Fiscal Resources shall indicate the availability of funds to reimburse the Court appointee for the expenses that will be incurred by signing the form;
- (C) The Administrative Director shall indicate approval of the travel by signing the form.

SECTION 4.0. TIME OF TRAVEL.

4.1. Dates of Departure.

A Court appointee who is traveling out of state on Court business may begin such travel at Court expense no earlier than the day before the event begins.

4.2. Dates of Return.

A Court appointee who is traveling out of state on Court business may end such travel at Court expense no later than the day after the event ends. Court appointees shall, at all times, use prudent judgement in the use of Court resources, incurring only those expenses necessary to carry out the official business of the Court.

4.3. Beginning and End of Event.

For purposes of determining the time a Court appointee who is traveling out of state on Court business is authorized to travel at Court expense, an event begins at the time of the first scheduled event as listed on the notice, agenda, course description, or letter of invitation attendees are invited or required to attend and concludes with the last scheduled event listed on the notice, agenda, course description, or letter of invitation attendees are invited or required to attend.

4.4. Extended Stay at Court Expense.

A Court appointee who is traveling out of state on Court business may be authorized to travel at Court expense for one or more days in addition to those authorized by Guidelines 4.1 and 4.2 if the appointee demonstrates the extension of the appointee's travel will result in a net reduction in travel expenses to be reimbursed by the Court, as determined by the Director of Fiscal Resources. A net reduction in travel expenses to be reimbursed by the Court may be established by demonstrating the availability of a lower airfare, taking into account additional lodging, meal, and other travel expenses the appointee may incur during the extension of the appointee's travel time.

4.5. Extended Stay at Personal Expense.

A Court appointee who is traveling out of state on Court business may elect to extend the duration of the travel at the appointee's personal expense and begin or end the travel on days other than the days authorized in Guidelines 4.1 and 4.2. A Court appointee who elects to extend travel shall not cause any additional expenses to the Court as a result of the appointee's extended travel.

SECTION 5.0. REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES.

5.1. Reimbursement of Transportation Expenses.

(A) Common carrier

A Court appointee shall be reimbursed for transportation expenses incurred when traveling on Court business by common carrier. Reimbursement shall be at actual cost, provided the cost is reasonable as determined by the Director of Fiscal Resources. Reasonableness shall be based upon a demonstration that the cost is similar to rates by other reputable carriers in effect at the time the travel arrangements are made for travel by the same mode of transportation, to the same destination, and at a similar time. Reimbursement shall not be provided for unused reservations on common carriers unless the Director of Fiscal Resources determines the failure to cancel or use the reservation was unavoidable. Unused tickets shall be returned to the Office of Fiscal Resources. Reimbursement for in-state travel by common air carrier is not permitted.

(B) Privately-owned motor vehicle

Travel by privately owned motor vehicle is authorized only if the owner of the vehicle is insured under a policy of liability insurance complying with the requirements of R.C. 4509.51. A Court appointee shall be reimbursed for mileage expenses incurred while traveling on Court business by privately-owned motor vehicle at the Internal Revenue Service's business standard mileage rate. If the Court appointee is traveling out of state, the appointee shall be reimbursed in an amount not to exceed the lowest common carrier rate to and from the destination. Reimbursement shall be made only to one of two or more Court appointees who are traveling in the same privately-owned motor vehicle.

(C) Taxi, shuttle service, and rented motor vehicle

A Court appointee shall not be reimbursed for transportation expenses incurred while traveling in state on Court business by taxi; shuttle service, including services such as Uber and Lyft; or rented motor vehicle.

A Court appointee who has traveled out of state on Court business by common carrier shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred for taxi; shuttle service, including services such as Uber and Lyft; or rented motor vehicle at the out-of-state destination. Reimbursement shall be at actual cost, provided the cost is reasonable as determined by the Director of Fiscal Resources.

Reasonableness in the use of a rented motor vehicle shall be based upon a Court appointee demonstrating that the use of a rented motor vehicle is more economical than using any other mode of transportation or the destination was not easily accessible by any other mode of transportation. The employee shall purchase liability insurance and loss damage waiver for accidents arising out of the operation or use of the rented motor vehicle and include that cost in determining whether the motor vehicle rental is the most economical mode of transportation.

(D) Parking, tolls, and other transportation expenses

A Court appointee shall be reimbursed for other transportation expenses incurred while traveling on Court business, including parking, tolls, and common-carrier baggage fees. Reimbursement shall be at actual cost, provided the cost is reasonable as determined by the Director of Fiscal Resources.

5.2. Reimbursement of Meals and Incidentals.

(A) Reimbursement per diem

A Court appointee shall be reimbursed for meals and incidental expenses incurred while traveling on Court business only when overnight lodging is required. A Court appointee may receive per diem for meals and incidental expenses in accordance with the [per-diem rates](#) established by location within the continental United States

as set by the Federal General Service Administration. Per diem is designed to offset the additional cost of travel, not to entirely pay for the Court appointee's meal and incidental expenses. The amount of the per diem shall be adjusted on departure and return days based upon the time of departure and return. The standard meal and incidental expenses allowance is based on twenty-four hours of official travel within the continental United States. Where overnight lodging is required and where a Court appointee is on travel status for less than a full day, the meal and incidental expenses rate for the departure and return days shall be pro-rated as follows:

- Twenty-five percent of the standard meal and incidental expenses allowance if the appointee is on travel status for less than six hours;
- Fifty percent of the standard meal and incidental expenses allowance if the appointee is on travel status for six hours, but less than twelve hours;
- Seventy-five percent of the standard meal and incidental expenses allowance if the appointee is on travel status for twelve hours, but less than eighteen hours;
- One-hundred percent of the standard meal and incidental expenses allowance if the appointee is on travel status for eighteen hours but less than twenty-four hours.

If a Court appointee is attending a meeting, conference, seminar, or workshop and the registration fee includes one or more meals, the appointee shall not be reimbursed for other meals purchased during the same meal period, except for a breakfast purchased when a continental breakfast is included as part of the registration fee or because of special dietary needs.

(B) Incidental expenses

Incidental expenses included in the per diem allowance are listed as follows and are thus not separately reimbursable:

- All gratuities given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, flight attendants, taxi drivers, wait staff, and all other services related to the hospitality industry;
- Any transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the temporary lodging or business site.

5.3. Reimbursement of Lodging Expenses.

A Court appointee shall be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred in commercial establishments while traveling overnight on Court business. Reimbursement shall be at

actual cost, provided the cost is reasonable as determined by the Director of Fiscal Resources. A Court appointee shall be reimbursed for lodging expenses only when the appointee incurs the expense more than forty-five miles from the appointee's residence, or more than thirty miles from the appointee's resident for attending conferences. This limitation shall not apply to a Court appointee who is responsible for serving as staff support for or is otherwise required to attend a meeting, conference, seminar, or workshop sponsored or conducted by the Court. A Court appointee shall attempt to secure the lowest rate at a convenient commercial establishment and shall specifically request the government rate, if available, and exemption from applicable taxes.

5.4. Reimbursement of Miscellaneous Travel Expenses.

(A) Miscellaneous living expenses

A Court appointee shall be reimbursed for miscellaneous living expenses, including laundry and dry cleaning services, incurred while traveling on Court business for more than one week, including a weekend. Reimbursement shall be at actual cost, provided the cost is reasonable as determined by the Director of Fiscal Resources.

(B) Non-Reimbursable Travel Expenses

Non-reimbursable travel expenses include, but are not limited to, the following expenses purchased by a Court appointee:

- (1) Alcoholic beverages;
- (2) Entertainment expenses;
- (3) Incidental expense, which include personal expenses incurred during travel that are primarily for the benefit of the employee and not directly related to the official purpose of the travel;
- (4) Political expenses;
- (5) Travel insurance expenses, excluding liability coverage and loss damage waiver expenses incurred in renting a motor vehicle pursuant to section 5.1(B) of these guidelines.

SECTION 6.0. CLAIMING EXPENSES.

6.1. Travel Expense Report.

(A) Reporting requirement

A Court appointee shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in accordance with these guidelines upon submission of a completed "Travel Expense Report" to the Office of Fiscal Resources (copy provided as Attachment B). A "Travel

Expense Report” submitted by a Court appointee shall be signed by the Court employee who staffs the board, commission, advisory committee, or task force to which the appointee is assigned or the Chief Justice, Justice, or senior staff employee who requested the appointee to perform an official duty or responsibility for the Court.

(B) Reporting deadline

A Court appointee shall submit a “Travel Expense Report” no later than sixty days after the travel expense is incurred. The Administrative Director may extend this deadline if mitigating circumstances exist. However, in no case may the Administrative Director extend the timeframe by more than ninety days from the last date of travel. A completed request for travel expense reimbursement may be denied for reasons including, but not limited to, a Court appointee’s failure to submit the request in a timely, accurate, or truthful manner.

(C) Receipts

Except as otherwise provided, original receipts are required for all transportation, lodging, and miscellaneous expenses for which reimbursement exceeding \$10.00 is sought. The Director of Fiscal Resources may require any reasonable form of verification of an expense, in addition to or in lieu of the required receipts, if additional verification is necessary to ascertain the propriety of the reimbursement or if the required receipts are not available. The Court reserves the right to contact the provider of any service claimed as an expense for such verification, including requesting duplicate itemized receipts. Failure to provide receipts or additional forms of requested verification shall be cause to disallow a request for reimbursement, except when a per-diem reimbursement is claimed.

SECTION 7.0. MISCELLANEOUS GUIDELINES.

7.1. Application of Guidelines.

These guidelines shall apply to all boards, commissions, advisory committees, and task forces, with the exception that all requirements involving the Administrative Director and the Director of Fiscal Resources as set forth herein shall be performed by the Director of the Board of Professional Conduct for all Court appointees of that board and by the Administrator of the Board of Commissioners of the Lawyers’ Fund for Client Protection for all appointees of that board.

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