

**The Charter Institute at Erskine**  
**Institute Travel and Meals Policy and Procedures**

**OFFICE OF RESPONSIBILITY:** Finance

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 07/01/2019

**THE CHARTER INSTITUTE AT ERKSINE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE CONTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART.**

**POLICY:**

Travel and transportation at the expense of the Charter Institute at Erskine (Institute) will be authorized only when officially justified and by those means which meet State and Federal Government requirements consistent with good management practices. The Superintendent and the Director, with joint agreement, are empowered to make non-material modifications to Institute policies without additional approval of the Board of Directors.

All Institute travel expenses must be prior approved by the Director and CEO prior to purchase.

**PROCEDURE:**

**General Information**

The following procedures have been established for travel and expenses. If federal funds are being used for travel and expenses, additional measures will be taken as outlined in this document.

**TRAVEL ADVANCES (PRIOR TRIP EXPENSES):**

**Registration**

The Institute will pay the registration fee in advance for attendance for all approved conference(s), seminar(s), or workshop(s). Any meal included in the registration fee cannot be claimed on an expense report even if the traveler chooses not to partake of the meal. An itinerary should be attached to all expense reports that request per diem.

**Transportation**

All flights should be booked in advance using an Institute credit card. If the traveler elects to book their flight expenses on their personal credit card, then the traveler will not be reimbursed for flight expenses until returning from travel. When purchasing flights, employees may choose a transferable or refundable rate.

**Lodging**

The Institute will pay for hotel lodging in advance for attendance at approved conference(s), seminar(s), or workshop(s). All lodging should be booked using an Institute owned credit card. If the traveler elects to book their lodging expenses on their personal credit card, then the traveler will not be reimbursed for the lodging expenses until the return from travel. Hotel reimbursements for one-day meetings will not be reimbursed unless arrangements have been pre-approved with the Director and the CEO. Hotel lodging may be paid for the night before a one-day or multiple-day conference, seminar, or workshop only if the employee can not travel to the conference on time if they depart by 8:00 AM.

Staff members have to check the maximum funds that can be expended for lodging using the US General Services Administration website: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.

If the hotel/lodging is at the same place as the conference, seminar, or workshop, the total amount of the hotel/lodging will be allowed upon approval by the CEO, Director, and Finance Office.

If the hotel/lodging is not at the place or not provided by the conference, seminar, or workshop, the staff has to indicate it on the Travel Authorization Form and get approved by the CEO, Director, and Finance Office.

For staff members who live more than 50 miles from the Institute office, overnight lodging related to job duties must receive prior written permission from the Director and the CEO. The lodging will be approved on a case-by-case basis. The approval will be based in whole or in part on the employee's well-being, safety and to maximize the staff time in the service of Institute schools.

**TRAVEL EXPENSES (POST TRIP REIMBURSEMENTS):**

**Per Diem**

Per diems will be permitted as follows if the itinerary does not state that meals will be included in the registration fee.

<b>MEALS</b>	<b>DEPART BEFORE</b>	<b>RETURN AFTER</b>	<b>IN-STATE</b>	<b>OUT-OF-STATE</b>
Breakfast	6:30AM	11:00AM	\$8.00	\$10.00
Lunch	11:00AM	1:30PM	\$10.00	\$15.00
Dinner	5:15PM	8:30PM	\$17.00	\$25.00
<b>MAXIMUM DAILY ALLOWANCE</b>			<b>\$35.00</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>

**Mileage Reimbursement**

The Institute will reimburse for mileage when the travel exceeds 50 miles round trip. Mileage will not be reimbursed for staff members traveling within 50 miles roundtrip in the ordinary conduct of their job duties. Only employees that receive a waiver for 50 miles can seek reimbursements less than 50 miles round trip.

Mileage will not be reimbursed for employees traveling to the Columbia office regardless of their home location.

Reimbursement for mileage will be allowed for the use of an employee's personal vehicle while on an approved Institute business. The travel reimbursement rate is subject to the GSA rate. The mileage rate may be reviewed yearly, and updates may be made when needed.

For employees attending a one day or multi-day conferences/workshops, mileage will not be reimbursed for driving from a hotel to the conference or travel to get meals, unless approved in writing by the Director and the CEO.

Staff members who are required to work after 5:00 pm to attend a scheduled meeting for the Institute, visit schools to attend school board meetings and other school events after their regular work hours from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, can seek reimbursements for an in-state per diem meal. The staff must provide the agenda/program or the meeting invitation along with the approval of the director and CEO to seek reimbursement. Federal funds will not be used for these expenses.

When possible, staff members are expected to travel in a group when multiple members are traveling to the same destination.

The staff is recommended to use a car rental service for any travel more than 130 miles round trip. Round trip calculation is per day. For example, a three-day conference in Myrtle Beach (300 miles round trip from Columbia) would not be eligible for a car rental as the total distance traveled is less than 390 miles (130 miles per day x 3 days).

<u>Enterprise</u>	<u>Car</u>	<u>Rental</u>	<u>Information</u>
ACCOUNT NUMBER:	XZ2689A		
ACCOUNT:	CHARTER INSTITUTE AT ERSKINE		

**Traveling Covered By Federal Funds**

Staff members traveling on federal program projects will follow the same Institute mileage policy in addition to the below:

- If expenses will be paid by federal funds for lodging, the staff has to check the maximum funds that can be expended for lodging using the US General Services Administration website: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.

If the hotel/lodging is at the same place as the conference, seminar, or workshop, the total amount of the hotel/lodging will be allowed upon approval by the Federal Programs and Finance Office.

If the hotel/lodging is not at the same place the conference, seminar, or workshop, the staff must to indicate it on the Travel Authorization Form and get approved from the Federal Programs and Finance Office.

### **Driving in Lieu of Airline Travel**

When the most economical means of transportation is an airline flight and the employee elects to travel by personal vehicle, mileage reimbursement will not exceed the price of airfare, taxes and fees for a round-trip coach ticket at the time of completing the Pre-Authorization Request. Staff member must provide the documentation that shows the cost of the airfare at the time of request.

### **Family/Friends Accompanying Employee**

If an employee will be accompanied by family or friends on an authorized business trip, only the authorized expenses directly attributed to the employee will be reimbursed.

### **Documentation of Expenses**

Employees must provide documentation for the following expenses:

- Program/Agenda of the meeting
- Pre-Authorization Form
- Institute Expense Reimbursement Form
  - Signed by the immediate supervisor
  - As applicable signed by respective federal programs contact
  - Signed by Institute Finance Director
- Travel map summary to show the number of miles
- Receipts
  - Hotel/Motel Receipt with “-0-“ balance
  - Registration receipt
  - Parking receipts
  - Boat or Train fare receipt
  - Air Transportation receipt
  - Toll receipts
  - Bus ticket
  - Taxi/ride-share receipt
  - Rental car receipt and gas receipt for the rental

### **Prohibited Reimbursements**

Employees will not be reimbursed for the following expenses:

- Entertainment Expenses (i.e. in-room movies)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Tobacco Products

**CEO in-state travel will adhere to the Superintendent contract.**

### **CEO and Director Meals Restrictions**

The CEO and the Director are not subject to the restrictions of reimbursement for meals. The CEO and the Director shall receive actual expenses for meals if the cost is reasonable.

Staff, excluding the Director and the CEO, will not be able to pay for meals for Institute staff member(s) or outside agency staff member(s) and the like on behalf of the Institute. The cost of the meal for outside agency members must be reasonable.

### **Staff Lunches and Dinners**

To increase staff morale and retain highly skilled staff, the Institute may, at its expense, conduct lunch meetings at the discretion on the CEO and the Director. Only on rare circumstances and with proper judgment, will staff meet for dinner. These expenses will contain no cost for entertainment, alcohol, and tobacco. These reimbursements will not fall under the per-diem category. Federal funds will not be used for these expenses.

At the discretion of the CEO or Director, the Institute may conduct lunch meetings at its expense to celebrate major accomplishments or events.

At the discretion of the CEO or Director, the Institute may pay for lunches as a result back to back meetings.

### **Institute Credit Card Usage During Travel**

Allowable expenses that may be made with the Institute's Credit Card includes gas for the rental car, baggage fees, transportation, and preapproved transaction(s). Food, alcohol beverage, tobacco products, and luxury accommodations unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of the travel are not considered acceptable or allowable. All receipts for transactions made with the credit card during the travel must be submitted along with the expense reimbursement form with appropriate signatures to the Finance Office upon returning from the trip.

### **Staff Only Policy**

Birthday Lunches and Reward Lunches, etc (optional staff participation)

- The Institute staff will develop a contribution method to celebrate team member birthdays or other celebratory events. State dollars shall not be used to pay for such meals or events.

### **Staff Reimbursement Process**

- The employee is responsible to complete the Expense Reimbursement Form within 10 business days from the date of purchase.
- The employee will submit the completed reimbursement form to the fiscal coordinator.
- The fiscal coordinator will verify the information on the form
- The fiscal coordinator will collect signatures on the verified expense reimbursement forms from the director and the CEO.
- The fiscal coordinator will submit the approved expense reimbursement form to the Finance Director for final approval and payment.

Approved 10/09/2018, Modified 08/19/2020, Modified 01/17/2024