

Travel Tips for Council Members

Travel arrangements and reimbursement of travel expenses for TCDD Council Members are coordinated with the TCDD Executive Assistant (Koren Vogel). If you have any questions or need assistance with travel, please contact Koren at (512) 437-5416 or koren.vogel@tcdd.texas.gov. Please remember that it is easier to solve issues/problems PRIOR to the trip than after!

TCDD travelers are required to utilize state contract rates whenever possible for various expenses such as hotel and airfare. Those expenses are then billed directly to TCDD's designated state agency –Texas Education Agency (TEA). Other expenses such as meals, mileage, airport parking, etc. are reimbursed to the member after their trip. Members must complete a travel voucher form (**TCDD715 – lavender form**) and submit it along with necessary receipts to Koren following the travel. This can be turned in at the end of a Council meeting or mailed after you return home. Koren will process the voucher and submit to TEA's travel section that will process for payment from the state Comptroller's office.

Important tips when traveling for TCDD business:

Airline Travel

- After obtaining your preferred travel times, Koren will book an airline ticket using the state of Texas contracted travel agent (Short's Travel Agency.)
- Your flight itinerary and access codes to print your boarding passes will be emailed to you.
- Airplane tickets are billed directly to TEA so you will not have to pay out-of-pocket for your airplane ticket expenses.
- "1st checked bag" fees are reimbursable: however, any additional luggage must be business related (presentation materials, etc) in order to be reimbursed.

Hotels

Council Meetings:

- TCDD generally coordinates Council meetings at hotels. Hotel sleeping rooms for members will be direct billed to TEA so members do not have to pay out-of-pocket for the room rate, tax, or parking.
- Members are expected to pay for incidentals (room-service, internet, phone, movies, etc) upon check-out or to not charge those items to the room.

Other TCDD Travel:

- Hotel rates follow the US General Services Administration (GSA) guidelines for different city locations. Council members are allowed to exceed these rates but generally try to stay as close as possible to government rates. Please coordinate with Koren who will check on state contracted room rates in your city destination.
- Please obtain a receipt upon check-out that includes the information listed below.
- Do not book rooms using internet booking sites such as Orbitz, Travelocity, etc. These sites often charge extra fees and block access to necessary receipts.

Out-of-State Travel

- If traveling to an out-of state conference, Koren will coordinate with you in advance to make hotel arrangements.

Hotel Receipts must include:

- Name AND address of hotel
- Traveler's name
- Dates of stay
- Itemized expenses
- Zero balance (i.e, show that the bill was paid)

PLEASE obtain correct receipt upon check-out - many hotels are implementing privacy policies that make it very complicated to get a final receipt after the trip, especially from out-of-state hotels.

Rental Cars

Rental cars are allowable **only** when approved in advance based on business necessity. Depending on the destination and amount of travel, a rental car may be more cost efficient than taxis or other means of transportation. Please coordinate with Koren to determine if a rental car is a reasonable option and consideration will be made by the Council Chair.

Meals

- TCDD often provides one meal during quarterly Council and Committee meetings.
- **Actual** expenses for other meals are allowable based on the location of travel; Members should only claim expenses for meals or food consumed while on Council business. *Do not round or estimate amounts of your meals.*
- If you have questions about the allowable amounts for meals, please confirm with Koren.
- Tips are **not** reimbursable expenses.
- Alcohol is **not** a reimbursable expense.
- Receipts are **not** necessary but they are helpful. As a minimum, members need to itemize actual meal expenses for each day of travel.

Mileage

- Should you choose to drive for Council business (to meetings or other events), mileage is reimbursable from point to point (i.e.: home to hotel, home to airport, etc) at the state allowable rate – currently \$0.56.5 / mile.
- In order to be reimbursed, Koren will need to provide a Mapquest map showing the mileage OR you may provide odometer readings for each trip.
- If you need to make side trips (to drop off children with a sitter, etc) those are allowable but will need to be documented with the travel voucher (Mapquest maps) – please provide addresses.
- Round-trip mileage to be dropped off or picked up at the airport for flights can be reimbursed but only if the cost is less than airport parking for the duration of the trip.

Public Transportation

- Shuttles, taxis, metro lines, etc are reimbursable for business related travel.
- Expenses to travel to restaurants for meals while out-of-town are reimbursable.
- Tips are not reimbursable.
- Receipts are helpful but not required.

Miscellaneous Charges

- Parking should be obtained at the **least expensive** rates. Do not use valet if self-parking is available, providing the self-parking location is a reasonable distance from your business and is in a safe location.
- Toll fees are reimbursable.
- Phone calls and internet usage are reimbursable if used for **business** (receipts ARE needed for charges exceeding \$10).

Personal Attendants or Respite Care

- TCDD will reimburse for expenses related to a personal attendant or for respite care for a child of a member if those services are not already paid for by another state program such as HCS or CLASS.
- Additional hours not covered by those programs (such as overnight hours) can be reimbursed by the TCDD.
- Attendants and respite care are reimbursed at a rate of up to \$10/hour (maximum 12 hours per day) and \$35 for an overnight stay (up to \$155 during a 24 hour period).
- Expenses for an attendant's meals can be reimbursed **to the Council member**; HOWEVER, receipts are required for the attendant's meals. Guidelines for Council member meals apply.
- A receipt signed by the provider must be included with the request for reimbursement.

Receipt must include:

- Date and number of hours for each day
- Provider's name
- Provider's signature

Travel Advance

- TCDD can arrange for a travel advance for members to minimize financial burden on travelers for out-of-pocket expenses.
- Please coordinate with Koren to determine a best estimate of travel expenses for an advance. If you spend more than the advance, you will still be reimbursed for the additional expense.
- If actual expenses for the trip are **less** than the travel advance, the member must **pay back** the balance as soon as the travel voucher is processed. Remember, an advance is for actual expenses incurred for TCDD business travel. If you didn't spend it, it's not yours to keep.