

Albuquerque Housing Authority

Travel Policy

June 2015 Edition



ALBUQUERQUE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Empowering people in our community through affordable housing and self sufficiency opportunities

1840 University Boulevard SE

Albuquerque, NM 87106

Phone: (505) 764-3920

Fax: (505) 764-3981

www.abqha.org

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Travel Policy complies with the Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the City of Albuquerque, Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS), Albuquerque Housing Services (AHS) Division (the predecessor-in-interest to the Albuquerque Housing Authority (AHA), a Public Body Corporate and Politic), and with current HUD guidance on applicable federal regulations, and applicable State of New Mexico and Local Laws.

It is the practice of AHA to develop and implement policies and procedures which will provide guidelines by which all employees are expected to carry out their work responsibilities and assignments. All travel references provide guidance for the employee and the housing authority to be knowledgeable of their own responsibilities for the fair and equitable treatment of all persons or firms involved in travel by AHA. Representatives of AHA are expected to uphold the values which encompass accountability, service, integrity and stewardship.

This policy supersedes and replaces any earlier policies, practices, guidelines as well as any previous agreements, whether written or oral, expressed or implied, related to the subjects covered in this policy. This policy was reviewed and approved by the AHA Board of Housing Commissioners prior to its issuance to be placed in practice.

2 GENERAL PROVISIONS

2.1 General

AHA establishes this Travel Policy to provide for a travel program that is valid, necessary and at a reasonable cost; provide guidance for the employee and the authority acknowledging their responsibilities for the fair and equitable treatment of all persons or firms involved in travel by AHA; assure travel and expenses incurred with staff training, education or certification are procured efficiently, effectively, and the most favorable prices available to AHA; assure that AHA travel actions are in full compliance with applicable federal standards, HUD guidance, state and local laws.

2.2 Purpose of Travel and Reimbursement

Employees may occasionally be required to travel on AHA business in conjunction with their normal job assignments. AHA is committed to ensuring that employees who travel on AHA business do so comfortably, conveniently and safely. It is our intent that employees suffer no financial loss from such business-related travel.

To ensure consistency, the following guidelines have been developed to document and clarify what are allowable business expenses. If an employee is unsure of what to expense, please discuss it with their Department Manager, Accounts Payable (A/P), or Human Resources.

Participants of travel for AHA may include employees, consultants and board members completing work on behalf of AHA.

Reimbursement of expenses incurred for travel will be made only for AHA business. Non-exempt employees are paid for travel, even on days off, that occurs during their normal work hours. Non-exempt employees who have a special one-day assignment outside the area of operation will be paid for travel time outside of normal work hours that exceeds their normal commute if payment is required. The area of operation is defined, for the purpose of this policy, as outside of Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties. Travel outside the area of operation will be authorized in advance by Department Director. Properly prepared and executed Travel Form must be presented before reimbursement will be authorized. All reimbursement will be subject to the regulations delineated in this policy. Reimbursement for mileage in a personal vehicle will be at the rate approved by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for tax purposes.

2.3 Definition

The term “Travel,” as used in this Policy, includes the procuring, purchase, leasing, or renting of: (1) lodging, (2) airline travel, (3) conference or educational training and event registration fees, (4) transportation, (5) other related services. The type of travel will be defined by way of the following:

- **Day Travel:** Travel inside or outside of the area of operation that does not require an overnight stay.
- **Overnight Travel:** Travel outside AHA’s area that precludes same day round trip travel as feasible and includes an overnight stay.
- **Designee:** An employee authorized by the Executive Director to approve travel, lodging, meal or other expense reimbursement.
- **Emergency:** The occurrence of unforeseen or exigent circumstances that may result in harm to the public good or one’s immediate family.
- **AHA Business:** Business that relates directly to a person’s work function and that benefits AHA.
- **Combined AHA Business and Personal Travel:** Business and personal travel may be combined; however, there can be no extra costs to AHA.
- **Per Diem Rate:** The GSA rate will be offered to employees, consultants, representatives and commissioners for travel inside the continental (lower 48 U.S. states) while on official AHA business. These rates are part of Appendix A to Chapter 301 of the Federal Travel Regulation and updated on a federal fiscal year cycle, effective October 1 of each year (also known as CONUS rates). The United States General Services Administration (GSA) sets the CONUS rates each federal fiscal year. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) sets the OCONUS rate for per diem for travel to Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. Territories and Possessions (Outside the Continental United States – OCONUS rates). U.S. overseas Territories and Possessions include, but are not limited to: the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (PR), U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI), Guam (GU), American Samoa (AS), and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI). The U.S. Department of State (State Department) sets the rates for per diem for foreign travel (to locations in the Republic of Mexico, for example).

2.4 Traveler Responsibilities include

Traveler responsibilities include the following:

Complete the Training Form for all potential conferences, workshops, seminars, both local and non-local.

- Include vendor information for payment of registration fee.

- Obtain estimated lodging and airfare cost for non-local travel.
- Sign form and submit to your manager for approval. Travel Form must be approved by your immediate manager and Department Director. This level of approval includes consideration of:
 - scheduled resources during employees absence
 - recognition of purpose and validation of travel as necessary
 - budget approval at the department level
- Approval by the Deputy Director or the Executive Director must also be obtained for overnight travel. This level of approval considers all of the above mentioned items, as well as, consideration of HA travel as viable and beneficial at the agency wide level.
- After all required approvals are obtained, the documentation will be sent to the Travel Coordinator to execute the arrangements which may include pre-registration for conference, training or seminar.

Travel Coordinator responsibilities include the following:

Travel Coordinator will arrange all AHA representative and employee non-local travel.

- Conference registrations will be made by direct payment through Accounts Payable (AP) or Purchase Travel Card.
- The Travel Coordinator will prepare a travel packet including transportation tickets and lodging verification for each individual approved for travel.

Procedures upon Return

Within 15 days of returning from travel, the employee must forward to his or her manager for review and signature of all travel forms. Once approved at the Department level the request for reimbursement or just final audit is then forward to the Travel Coordinator for audit and approval. Once approved and expenditures validated by the Travel Coordinator, then documents are forwarded to the Finance Department for processing, if reimbursement is necessary.

Claims submitted by consultants, commissioners, or others acting officially on behalf of AHA will be processed by the department they represented.

2.5 Emergency Travel Procedures

The Executive Director or designee must approve all emergency situations before travel or, if unable, upon completion of travel.

1. Travel conditions due to unforeseen weather;
2. Health or medical conditions;
3. Any reasonable condition that may cause harm to AHA employee or traveling companion.

2.6 Travel Authorization

Travel authorization is approved by Board of Housing Commissioners through the AHA budget process, as reflected in the Annual Comprehensive Budget, or a formally adopted revision of the budget.

Travel, training and educational certifications will be scheduled by Department managers and incorporated into the annual budget; exceptions to the budget may be considered by the Executive Director when both budget surpluses exist and travel is validated as necessary.

- Day travel, as a scheduled and previously budgeted item may be approved at the Department level.
- Unscheduled travel/training or unbudgeted travel/ training will be processed at the Director level.

- Overnight travel shall be subject to Deputy Director or Executive Director Approval.

Authorization of expenditures includes the following considerations:

1. If expenses are incurred without prior approval and no emergency exists, expenses will not be reimbursed.
2. Emergency travel must be authorized in accordance with AHA definition.
3. Persons authorizing travel will ensure budgeted funds are available and the number of persons engaging in the travel activity is the minimum necessary to achieve the expected benefit to AHA. The traveler provides information about the applicable travel as follows:
 - Requested travel will be for official AHA business.
 - Travel Form describes the relationship between travel and work function.
 - Travel form indicates the benefit to AHA.
 - Travel form is accompanied by a travel itinerary; printed material indicating the overall content and quality of the event and an itemized list of reasonable anticipated expenses.

2.7 Personal Vehicle Use

Employees are encouraged to use AHA fleet vehicles for essential business purposes. Use of an employee's personal vehicle for essential travel should be authorized by a manager or Department Director. AHA representatives and employees are obligated to maintain a Mileage Travel Voucher for all miles spent traveling in their personal vehicle between their assigned workplace, home or designated sites, whichever applies.

- **Mileage Reimbursement** will be at the mileage rate approved by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for tax purposes. There is no reimbursement for commuting miles between the employee's home and their official workplace, even on days the employee does not customarily work, unless specified in a specific contract or employment agreement.
- **AHA fleet vehicle:** the use and operation of that vehicle is covered under insurance provided by AHA.
- **Personal Vehicle:** the employee's personal automobile insurance will be primary coverage for the use and operation of that vehicle.

When two or more employees are attending the same seminar, convention or meeting, every attempt should be made to carpool using an AHA fleet vehicle, before using a personal vehicle. Carpooling is encouraged to promote cost savings to the agency and to reduce our carbon footprint and traffic congestion. **The employee who is driving is considered to be working if carpooling at the employer's request or for the employer's benefit and will need to be paid for the time spent driving others.**

3 TRAVEL COSTS

3.1 General

This policy is intended to ensure that travel and expenses incurred with training, education or certification are procured efficiently, effectively, and the most favorable prices available to AHA. When traveling, expenses will be handled as follows:

1. Air travel outside AHA's jurisdiction will be by the route most advantageous or at the lowest cost, e.g., the state contract.
2. If a non-customary (luxury) mode of transportation is used from the airport to the event site (e.g., limousine service), no expenses will be reimbursed. Individuals are encouraged to use hotel van service to shuttle to and from the airport/event site, if possible.

3. Transportation cost while on overnight stay will only be reimbursed to and from the airport and lodging, from lodging to event, or from lodging to the business function.
4. Traveler will be provided their GSA or DOD or Department of State per diem payment for meals and incidentals prior to departure. The per diem funds provided by AHA may be issued prior to departure, if approved by Department Manager.
5. Per Diem payments to the Traveler may not, under any circumstances, be considered a personal loan by AHA to any AHA representative or employee. Any expenditure thereof, other than for official business purposes, will be considered a misappropriation of funds.
6. When rental vehicles are authorized for a person conducting official business, government rates (state travel contract) will be utilized. All local travel vehicle rentals will be arranged through Travel Coordinator as applicable.
7. Mileage will be reimbursed when a private vehicle is used for AHA business. Mileage reimbursements will be based on the Standard Mileage Rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service.
8. All travel must be arranged through the Travel Coordinator and all airline tickets will be purchased with an AHA credit card, unless otherwise instructed.

3.2 Local Travel

Local travel will apply to travel within a local commuting area of the office. The boundaries of which are determined by the Executive Director and considerations will be made to encompass travel agenda timelines commuting. Considerations include the separate cities, towns, or installations adjacent to or close to each other, within which the commuting public travels during normal business hours on a daily basis. When travel is local, travel-related expenses will be handled as follows:

1. Transportation between a person's home and official workplace is not reimbursable.
2. The starting and ending location of local travel is the assigned office workplace.
3. When automobile transportation is necessary, an AHA fleet vehicle will be used where practical.
4. The Finance Department is responsible for administering and announcing the current IRS mileage rate for business-related travel.
5. Necessary toll charges and parking costs will be reimbursed.
6. When day travel is outside of the Albuquerque jurisdiction of Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties, for example to Santa Fe County, and encompasses hours over either: breakfast, lunch or dinner time, the meal for the employee may be reimbursed.
7. For non-exempt employees, hours worked and travel time includes and originates from the assigned office workplace.

3.3 Lodging Authorization

Lodging authorization will be handled as follows:

1. Lodging authorization is subject to completion and approval of AHA.
2. Lodging reservations are made through the Travel Coordinator.
3. All attending conference members will be booked in the same hotel provided that adequate occupancy exists.
4. For seminars, conferences or conventions, lodging will be reserved at the host hotel, provided adequate occupancy exists and/or prior approval. If no vacancy is available, the following will apply:
 - a. The Travel Coordinator will research comparably priced hotels in the general vicinity and if no adequate lodging is available within a reasonable price and distance of the event site, the Travel Coordinator will arrange an alternate lodging site.

3.4 Lodging Costs

Lodging costs will be paid by AHA, except in an emergency. In case of emergency, reasonable costs will be reimbursed, if approved. Lodging costs will only cover the expense of the AHA employee, agent or Board Member traveling and will not pay for upgrades or other room accommodations other than for the AHA employee, agent or Board Member. Accessible Travel Accommodations for disabled AHA employees, agents or Board Members needing reasonable accommodation of a disability will be a covered expense (example: facilities designed to be accessible to travelers under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)).

Costs actually incurred are reimbursable as follows:

1. A person is in overnight travel status.
2. Lodging receipts are submitted.
3. Lodging costs in the host city may be claimed from the night before an authorized event starts through the night before it ends, unless timely return transportation is not available, thereby necessitating additional lodging costs at a reasonable price (emergency only or prior approval).
4. If the lodging receipt indicates double occupancy charge, the traveler will only be reimbursed at the single occupancy rate unless the other occupant is an AHA employee performing AHA business. Reimbursement will only be given to the holder of the lodging receipt.

All non-business lodging will be at the expense of employee or AHA representative. Expenses incurred other than for authorized travel expenses, will not be reimbursed, i.e., all non-AHA business phone calls, movies, video games, etc.

3.5 Meals and Incidental Expenses

Reimbursable expenses will be allowed for all reasonable subsistence expenses incurred during the authorized travel period and in general will include the following items:

- Necessary local ground transportation, including taxis, bus, boat and train fare.
- Necessary automobile rental.
- Necessary communication charges (including charges for internet access).
- Meal reimbursement rates are set at the CONUS rate (which is located at the GSA website <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>) for travel in the lower 48 continental United States and at the OCONUS Rate for travel to Hawaii, Alaska and U.S. Territories and Possessions (examples: PR, USVI, GU, AS, CNMI), and at the U.S. Department of State rate for foreign travel (for example: the Republic of Mexico)
- Baggage fees and handling services when necessitated by physical limitations, disabilities, or when carrying excessive baggage or equipment required for business related purposes.

All claims for reimbursement for local travel (mileage, ferry, fares, parking, toll charges, etc.) will be submitted on the Travel Form when travel has been completed, or monthly if the employee uses his/her own vehicle on a regular basis. The mileage statement must be submitted to the employee's manager, Department Director or designee for approval of payment. The Director will then forward the mileage report to the Travel Coordinator for audit and approval. Once approved the form is forwarded to the Finance Department for processing.

3.6 Non-Local Travel Expense Reimbursement

Expenses eligible for reimbursement will be for individuals on official AHA business travel status. Meals and incidental expenses will be reimbursed at the established CONUS or OCONUS or Department of State per diem rate for the host city. The source of rates will vary between cities in the lower 48 states (CONUS by GSA), and AL/HI (OCONUS by DOD) and foreign cities outside the USA (U.S. Department of State)

1. The Travel Coordinator or the Finance Director can advise employees as to current city per diem rate.
2. The per diem rate will only be approved for overnight travel and cover expenses such as meals, fees and tips to baggage carriers, concierges and hotel staff.
3. The per diem rate is paid by the following percentages:

Meal	% Per Diem	Time Frame
Breakfast	20%	12:00 am – 11:00 am
Lunch	30%	11:01 am – 5:00 pm
Dinner	50%	5:01 pm – 11:59 pm

- a. The partial per Diem rate is to be used on the day travel began or was completed using the above hours as guidelines. For example, travel begins at noon: lunch and dinner may be reimbursed.
- b. The partial per diem rate is also to be used when one or more meals are provided as part of the conference or travel arrangements (i.e., airlines).
- c. If less than the percentage per diem rate is applied for as a reimbursement, receipts must be provided. No more than the percentage (up to 100% for a full day) may be reimbursed.

4 NON-REIMBURSEABLE MEAL and REFRESHMENT COSTS

Meal and refreshment costs **will not be paid** by AHA as a direct expenditure when:

- Meals are included and rolled into another AHA paid expense, i.e., a seminar or conference registration fee (if a meal is required for medical reasons, inform Travel Coordinator in advance).
- Incurred for recreational or social events such as office, going away, retirement parties, or other personalized events.
- A violation of the NM State Constitution, or NM Statute 10-16-2 to 10-16-4 NMSA 1978, which prohibits a gift of public funds, would occur. (NM statute 10-16-B-2 1978, B. "gift" means: any donation or transfer without commensurate consideration of money, property, service, loan, promise or any other thing of value, including food, lodging, transportation and tickets for entertainment or sporting events.)
- There is no reimbursement for alcoholic beverages.
- There is no reimbursement for tobacco products.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Directors or designee/Travel Coordinator: are responsible for reviewing and recommending approval and reimbursement for all local and non-local travel and for assuring that the necessary signatures are obtained in a timely manner.

Employees: are responsible for minimizing actual expenses, keeping and submitting accurate records, and submitting a Travel Form within 15 calendar days after returning from travel.

Claims and Forms: Claims and forms submitted by Commissioners will be processed the Travel Coordinator and forwarded to the Finance Department. Claims and forms submitted by consultants and others acting on behalf of AHA will be approved by the Department Director or designee and forwarded to the Finance Department.

Expense Control: Managers and the Travel Coordinator are responsible for minimizing actual expenses and authorizing AHA paid travel only for legitimate business reasons.

Finance Department: The Finance Department will be the final authority for auditing and certifying all claims for accuracy and for conformance with policy. Any questions raised relative to “reasonableness” of a claim will be cleared with the Department Director.

6 SUMMARY OF TRAVEL GUIDELINES

Reasonable training/travel expenses will be processed and paid in the following manner:

1. Training/Travel Form – Employee and Travel Coordinator will complete a Travel Form in advance of the travel. Except for unusual circumstances, travel advances will be made no more than three (3) business days prior to travel.
2. Registration fees - 100% of the registration fees will be paid in advance by the Housing Authority.
3. Lodging - Overnight lodging will generally not be allowed for same day trips within a 200 mile radius of Albuquerque, although weather and seminar beginning times will be taken into account by the Executive Director and a waiver may be granted. Where overnight lodging is approved, 100% of lodging expenses will be paid by the Housing Authority in advance of the employee’s travel (unless the employee makes his/her own reservations).
4. Airfare - 100% of approved airline expenses will be paid by the Housing Authority in advance of the employee’s travel, unless the employee makes his/her own reservations.
5. Meal allowances - Meal allowances will be provided for travel/training that requires an overnight stay and day travel that for an employee’s attending an event outside of their normal regional home base.
 - a. Employees will be advanced 100% of the meal allowance, with exceptions when the hotel provides meals and/or the seminar/conference includes meals, these meals will be deducted from the meal allowance.
6. Miscellaneous travel expenses
 - a. 100% of the actual cost of approved ground transportation, including shuttles and taxis, baggage fees, mileage, and/or airport parking fees will be reimbursed by the Housing Authority and will not be advanced. The employee must provide receipts for all such expenses for which reimbursement is being sought. Failure to provide a receipt will result in the Housing Authority not covering or reimbursing the cost of the expenditure.
 - b. If an employee wishes to utilize his/her privately-owned vehicle *instead of* a common carrier (such as an airline, railway or bus line), the employee will be reimbursed for the lowest common carrier rate or for his/her mileage, whichever is lower. Mileage for travel is reimbursed at the current IRS rate. Mileage will be calculated from the Housing Authority office to the conference/training site.

7 RELEVANT INTERNAL CONTROLS

Internal Controls relate to managements plans, methods, and procedures use to meet its mission, goals and objectives. They include process and procedure for planning, directing, organizing and controlling program operations as well as the system for measuring reporting and monitoring program performance. The following internal controls are relevant to the execution of the travel policy:

- a. Controls over management, financial and operational.
- b. Controls over expenditures to ensure that they are eligible, necessary, and reasonable.
- c. Controls over accounting for cost allocations and inter-program receivables and payables.
- d. Controls over the approvals and justification of travel and training.
- e. Controls over procurements.
- f. Controls over travel expense vouchers, travel justification and travel approval.

8 SEVERABILITY CLAUSE

If any section, paragraph, sentence, clause, word or phrase of this policy is for any reason held to be invalid or unenforceable in any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this Policy. The AHA Board of Housing Commissioners hereby declares that it would have adopted this Policy and each part, section, paragraph, sentence, clause, phrase or word thereof irrespective of any provision being declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid.

9 SELF-CERTIFICATION

AHA certifies that this revised edition of the Travel Policy replaces and supersedes all prior versions of the AHA Travel Policy, including any policy adopted previously on an interim basis. AHA certifies that use and implementation this 2015 revised edition of the AHA Travel Policy was approved by adoption of policy Resolution 2015-12 by the AHA Board of Housing Commissioners.

PASSED and ADOPTED this 29th day of June 2015
BY A VOTE OF 3 FOR, AND 0 AGAINST.

Members Absent: Stephen J. Vogel, Roxanne Rivera-Wiest

Members voting against: _____

ALBUQUERQUE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF HOUSING COMMISSIONERS

By: s/Todd Clarke
Mr. Todd Clarke, Vice Chairperson of the Board

ATTEST:

s/Linda Bridge
Linda Bridge, Secretary to the Board and Executive Director