

Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District
Travel Policy
March 2013
Approved 3-4-13

A. General Statement

This policy governs allowable expenses, the means by which travel is obtained and the required procedures and documentation. Travel to conduct Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District business should be accomplished in the most economical and efficient manner possible.

This policy applies to all library employees and board members conducting official library business and must be followed by anyone who arranges, approves, pays for or processes transactions related to travel.

B. General Guidelines

1. It is employee's responsibility to seek official clarification from the Director, System Administrator, or Business Services Associate if the meaning or application of policies, forms, and procedures are unclear.
2. With signed travel authorization, Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District pays or reimburses reasonable and necessary expenses for Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District travel.
3. Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District's reimbursement policies are based on IRS guidelines allowing Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District to reimburse employees for authorized business expenses without creating a taxable event for the employee.
4. It is employee's responsibility to demonstrate that expenses incurred are reasonable and necessary. As needed, employees should include explanations and documentation to fully substantiate travel expenses. Deliberate disregard for Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District travel policies and procedures or intentionally filing or approving a fraudulent or misleading expense report are grounds for disciplinary action including termination of employment.
5. Where feasible and appropriate, airfare and registration may be paid prior to the trip. Eligible expenses incurred are reimbursable after travel has occurred.
6. Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District has a credit card and is the preferred method of payment except where use is not an option.
7. Employees may apply for blanket travel authorization for state-wide, regional (list counties), or Butler County travel.
 - a. Blanket authorization is granted and justified on a fiscal year basis for employees who have regular business in the State and who may hold an office associated with state or regional consortial business, professional organizations benefiting the library, regular library duties, and authority of position.
 - b. At the beginning of each fiscal year, employees must seek reauthorization for blanket travel.
 - c. Blanket travel covers mileage only.

- d. Any expenses for per diem and lodging must have a separate travel authorization.
- e. Claims for mileage covered by blanket travel, may be claimed monthly for state and regional travel and quarterly for Butler County travel.

C. Types of Travel Expenses

1. Vehicle

For travel by personal vehicle, employee must use MapQuest or other equivalent method to calculate travel mileage to and from destination. Travel claim must include a copy of MapQuest report. The requirement to include a copy is waived if travel is in Butler County vicinity. Employee must provide destination information on travel claim.

2. Air Travel

Employees are expected to exercise prudent care when arranging airfare in order to obtain the lowest feasible fare. Only coach fare is allowed. Employees should obtain the lowest reasonable, logical airfare at least 21 days in advance. When this is not possible, documentation must accompany travel request and claim.

3. Lodging

Employees are expected to select the location, type and cost of lodging meeting the Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District's work requirements. Reasonable and necessary amounts are allowed for the cost of lodging at the single room rate. In areas where comparable accommodations are available at significantly different prices employee should seek prior approval before selecting higher priced lodging and document the reason(s) for selecting the higher priced lodging.

Federal per diem for lodging is the standard to evaluate the cost of lodging in specific areas. Employees may use the library credit card to pay for lodging or personal funds and seek reimbursement via the library's travel claim and subject to Director's approval. When making reservations employees must ask for government rate. It is up to the employee to ask for facility's criteria and to acquire proof of government employment prior to travel. Lodging is exempt from state sales tax. Employees must take tax exempt form(s) with them. At the time of check-in, provide a copy of Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District's Missouri Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate. Upon check out, employee must receive an itemized statement furnished by the lodging provider and documentation of payment for attachment to travel claim.

4. Meals

Federal per diem for meals is the standard for meal reimbursement. Employees may claim applicable per diem rate for each eligible meal (breakfast, lunch or dinner) while in travel status. Tips on meals are part of the per diem and may not be claimed separately. Employees may not use Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District's credit card to pay for meals while on travel. Employees must pay for meals from their own funds. Actual expense may differ from the applicable meal per diem.

5. Travel status

Employee is on travel status when employee leaves residence or domicile to travel on Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District's business. No part of the employee's commute time or mileage may be calculated into travel claim.

6. Qualification of Meal Reimbursement

To qualify for meal per diem when no overnight lodging is indicated, employee must document on travel claim employee was in travel status for twelve (12) hours or more.

Eligible meal is defined as follows:

- When overnight lodging is indicated:
 - ❖ Breakfast – on the day of departure if travel status begins no later than 7:00 a.m. plus any other day until return.
 - ❖ Lunch – on the day of departure if travel status begins no later than 10:00 a.m. plus any other day where travel status continues past 2:00 p.m. until return.
 - ❖ Dinner – on the day of departure if travel status begins no later than 5:00 p.m. plus any other day where travel status continues past 7:00 p.m. until return.
- When employee is in twelve hour travel status, eligible meals are the same as above.
- When attending a meeting or conference, employee may claim the applicable meal per diem for those meal times where it is documented no meal was provided. Documentation may include meeting agenda, email invitation describing meeting, or other written documentation.

D. Miscellaneous Expenses

1. Employee may request reimbursement for reasonable and necessary business expenses actually incurred related to travel, including:

- Taxis or other ground transportation to or from airport and to or from meetings away from hotel. No receipt is required for reasonable taxi fares.
- Parking
- Tips for baggage handling. Tips for taxis/shuttles should be included as part of the cost of the taxi/shuttle. Tips for meals are part of the meal per diem and may not be claimed separately.
- Transportation to attend official events outside the hotel or to get a meal.
- Toll charges for bridges and turnpikes.
- Incidental expenses such as postage, small emergency supplies, telephone, internet, fax, and other like charges when necessary for transacting library business while traveling. Proof of payment must be attached to travel claim.

Expenses incurred for employee's sole benefit, such as any type of insurance, travel loan finance charges, personal credit card fees or dues, entertainment such as television or movie charges, bar bills, fitness membership fees, extra meals or snacks, bulk food/beverage purchases, newspapers, magazines and other like charges are not allowed as reimbursable travel expenses. Prepaid travel expenses

are documented on travel claim and deducted from the total expenses. Employee is paid the balance of the travel claim as related to the allowable expenses described above.

E. Reimbursement Process

1. Employee files travel claims monthly. Travel claims are attached to a copy of travel authorization. All travel claims for the previous month are due to Business Services Associate no later than the 5th working day of the month. Employees must attach itemized receipts for lodging expenditures, any expenditure over \$75 and any other required receipts.
2. Claimants must sign the form and submit it Director's approval.
3. The expense report must indicate leaving and arriving point.
4. Travel expenses are reimbursed by check.
5. The expense report must include original signatures (electronic form is acceptable) of the claimant and approver verifying that the reimbursement claim is correct. Expense accounts must be approved by the Director. In no case may employee or the employee's staff approve the expense report.
6. When the approver is relying on information or approval by others such as an email, the approver should attach documentation of that information or approval to the expense report. This includes situations where the approved expense report does not include the claimant's original signature. In these cases the attached documentation should indicate the claimant has taken responsibility for incurring and claiming the expenses.

F. Other Requirements

1. **Travel Expenses For Others**
Employees must claim only expenses incurred by themselves. If employees share double occupancy lodging, the hotel/motel will split the bill and employees must request this at time of check-in.
2. **Alternate Travel Arrangements**
Employees may request approval to travel by alternative means or under an alternative time frame. Examples are traveling by personal vehicle to a meeting and extending the time of travel before and/or after the meeting. Poplar Bluff Public Library will pay or reimburse no more than what it would have had the employee traveled by conventional means and under normal time constraints. The travel authorization will only cover those expenses necessary for the employee to fulfill his/her responsibilities. Unless employee is using non-duty hours such as a weekend to extend travel, no leave report may be filed. If an employee uses duty time to extend travel, employee must have approved time off.
3. **Use of personal vehicle**
If an employee elects to drive a personal vehicle rather than fly, he/she must provide a comparison between the estimated total cost to drive and estimated total cost to fly. If approved, Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District will reimburse the lower amount of estimated cost to drive or fly.
4. **Additional provisions regarding alternate arrangements include:**

- Liability coverage is allowable only when employee is on Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District business.
- If an employee personally rents a vehicle for Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District business travel because they want to take a non-employee with them in the rental, the employee must purchase liability and collision coverage through their personal auto insurance or directly from the rental company. In the event of an accident, the employee's coverage or insurance purchased from the rental agency would provide primary coverage. Any expenses incurred beyond the rental charge and fuel costs are not allowable for reimbursement. Also, reimbursement for rental charges must be reasonable and at the best possible costs. Employee may get three costs as a comparison and ask for government rates from rental agencies.

G. Travel Expenses Paid by Other Organizations

The traveler must obtain prior Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District approval for travel paid by other organizations such as the State of Missouri and professional organizations. Travel expenses that another organization will reimburse should be charged to or paid by Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District either directly or through a library issued credit card only when necessary. The employee is responsible for reimbursing Poplar Bluff Municipal Library District as outlined in the travel authorization.

H. Spouse and Family Expenses

Expenses for a spouse and family at an official business function are not allowable.