

TWAIN HARTE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
Policy and Procedure Manual

POLICY TITLE: Training and Travel Authorization and Expense Reimbursement Policy
POLICY NUMBER: 2083
ADOPTED: August 11, 2016

2083.10 Purpose - Twain Harte Community Services District believes in providing sufficient training opportunities for board members and employees in order to achieve high levels of performance and to enable effective and sound decision making. The purpose of this policy is to prescribe the manner in which District employees and directors may receive approval to attend training events and be reimbursed for expenditures related to District training and out-of-county travel.

2083.20 Intent - Provisions regarding expense reimbursement are intended to result in no personal gain or loss to an employee or director and are intended to be consistent with prudent use of public funds, best business practices and applicable laws.

2083.30 Training/Travel Authorization - Employee and Board of Director training and/or out-of-county travel may be authorized when deemed necessary and in the best interest of the District or as a pre-approved employee professional development plan.

2083.31 Employee Training/Travel - Employees may travel to participate in pre-approved training programs and conferences or to attend to District business that cannot take place locally. Travel and cost estimates must be approved in advance by the Department Manager or General Manager using the District's Training/Travel Authorization and Expense Authorization Form.

2083.32 Board of Directors Training/Travel - Members of the board may travel to participate in training programs and conferences or to attend to District business that cannot take place locally. Training and travel must be approved in advance as set forth in policy 4090 – Training, Education & Conferences.

2083.40 Eligible Travel Expenses - District employees and directors are eligible to receive reimbursements for transportation, meals, lodging, and other reasonable and necessary expenses for attending the above occurrences on behalf of the Twain Harte Community Services District. Travel on the day before an event will generally be allowed when attendance would require travel time before 6:00 a.m. in order to make it in time to the event. Return travel on the day after the event will generally be allowed in the event that traveling on the last day of the event would result in the attendee arriving at his/her place of residence after 8:00 p.m.

2083.41 Registration Costs – Costs for seminars, conferences, workshops, and meetings will, whenever possible, be pre-paid by the District when the employee has been authorized to travel to such events. Attendees should make every effort to submit travel authorization requests in enough time to utilize early-bird registration discounts or avoid late registration fees.

2083.42 Transportation - Transportation will be by the most economical means, as determined by the District. Employees are encouraged to use a District vehicle for travel, if available, and when travel by vehicle is the most economical option.

2083.42.1 District Vehicle – When a district vehicle is used, transportation reimbursement will be limited to the cost of fuel only.

2083.42.2 Personal Vehicle – When a personal vehicle is used, transportation reimbursement will be calculated on a per mile basis according to the current IRS Standard Mileage Rate. The following will also apply:

- Mileage will be computed from the distance of the employee’s or Director’s residence or normal designated worksite to the destination, and return. Mileage may also include travel to and from an airport or other place of public transportation used to travel to and from the final destination.
- Fuel costs will not be reimbursed in addition to the standard mileage rate.
- No reimbursements will be made for the repair of a private vehicle.
- The driver must possess a valid driver’s license and carry liability insurance.

2083.42.3 Air Travel – When airfare is the most economical method of transportation, the following rules and guidelines shall apply:

- Use of a carrier that delivers the most direct and economical option should be used.
- Reimbursement will be based on travel by coach/economy class.
- No additional charges or higher airline rates may be incurred for reimbursement by the District for the purpose of obtaining frequent flyer miles or any other promotional discounts for future use.

2083.42.4 Car Rental – Rental cars may be used if public transportation is not available and it is the most economical means of transportation. The following rules and guidelines shall apply:

- The type and size of the automobile rented shall be the least expensive option appropriate to the use required by the employee or Director.

- Luxury cars are not to be rented under any circumstance.
- Effort should be made to obtain the lowest rate whenever possible.

2083.42.5 Use of Taxis – Use of taxis is discouraged. Attempts must be made to utilize hotel/motel shuttle services to and from an airport or train/bus station. Taxi services will not be reimbursed for travel to a restaurant unless there are no available facilities at or near the venue of the event or at the place of lodging.

2083.43 Lodging – The District will pay for lodging for as many nights as necessary for the business purpose of the trip. Lodging costs shall not exceed the maximum group rate published by the conference or activity sponsor. If a published group rate is unavailable, the cost of lodging shall not exceed the IRS approved standard lodging rate for travel. (see www.gsa.gov) Receipts are required.

2083.43.1 – Lodging is generally allowed for the evening before an event if the attendee has to leave before 6:00 a.m. on the day of the event to arrive on time.

2083.43.2 – Lodging is generally allowed for the last day of the event if traveling on the last day would result in the attendee arriving at his/her residence after 8:00 p.m.

2083.43.3 – Employees may choose to share or have their own lodging accommodation.

2083.44 Meals – The cost of each meal shall not exceed the below rates. Receipts are required.

- Breakfast - \$16.00
- Lunch - \$17.00
- Dinner - \$31.00

2083.44.1 – Partial travel day meals are reimbursable when travel takes place during mealtimes subject to the below time frames:

- Breakfast – allowed on the day of travel when travel begins before 6:00 a.m.
- Lunch – allowed if first day of travel begins before 11:00 a.m. or if last day of travel ends after 1:30 p.m.
- Dinner – allowed if first day of travel begins before 4:30 p.m. or if last day of travel ends after 6:30 p.m.

2083.44.2 – Attendees are expected to take advantage of meals that are included in the cost of an attended event. An exception may be granted if a written justifiable reason (e.g.

dietary concerns, meeting with peers, etc) is submitted with the Training/Travel Authorization & Expense Reconciliation Form.

2083.50 In-Eligible Travel Expenses

2083.51 Personal Expenses – The cost of personal items such as in-room movies, personal phone calls, laundry service, fitness center, valet parking (unless hotel self-parking option is not available), and alcoholic beverages are ineligible.

2083.52 Other Family Members – The cost of providing transportation, meals, lodging, etc. for a spouse or other family member(s) is ineligible.

2083.53 No-Show Charges – An attendee will be responsible for all non-refundable costs or no-show charges resulting from failure to attend an event. Exceptions may be granted for emergencies or illness. The attendee shall make every effort to notify their supervisor, the General Manager or Finance Officer as soon as possible of such an occurrence.

2083.54 Unreasonable Expenditures – Expenses that do not adhere to this adopted reimbursement policy or the IRS reimbursable rates, and that do not receive prior approval from the Board of Directors in a public meeting (applicable to board members) or the General Manager (applicable to employees) prior to the expense being incurred shall not be eligible for reimbursement.

2083.55 Response by Fire Employees Under Mutual Aid Agreements – Responses by District Fire employees to incidents or emergencies declared by other agencies are defined by Mutual Aid Agreements that have been approved by the Board. Therefore, expenses, including meals, are subject to the Mutual Aid Agreements and are not eligible expenses under this policy.

2083.60 Reimbursement Procedure

2083.61 Employee Travel Cards - All employees except department managers are required to use a District Travel Card when traveling. Employees may checkout a District travel card no earlier than two days before expected travel. Credit cards will only be issued to employees who have an approved travel authorization/cost estimate form for the specific event on file with the District office. The travel card must be returned to the District office within one (1) working day of the employees return. District directors will not be issued District credit cards for travel expenses and will instead be reimbursed for expenses after travel ends according to sections 2083.62 and 2083.64.

2083.62 Training/Travel Authorization or Expense Reconciliation Forms – The Training/Travel Authorization and Expense Reconciliation Form must be submitted and approved prior to travel and must be submitted to the Finance Officer with all receipts attached within five (5) working days of the employees return.

2083.62 Travel Reimbursement Request Forms – Directors must complete and submit a Board Training/Travel Reimbursement Form to the Finance Officer within fifteen (15) days of return.

2083.63 Approval of Reconciliation and Reimbursement Request Forms - The District Finance Officer or the General Manager will review and approve reconciliation forms.

2083.64 Timing of Reimbursement – Once the expense claim form has been approved, a check for costs not charged to a District credit card will be cut within two weeks as part of the District's normally scheduled bill payments.