Travel Training

Training Takeaways:

- Policies, rules, regulations, and procedures related to traveling on WSU business;
- Full travel process from approval to reimbursement; and
- Answers to frequently asked questions.

Agenda

- Pre-Trip
  - Approval
  - Booking Travel
  - Methods of Payments
- During Travel
  - Travel Status
  - Allowable Expenses
  - Unallowable Expenses
- Post-Trip
  - Preparing the TEV
  - Processing the TEV
  - Reimbursement
- Frequently Asked Questions

Travel Services
Washington State University

PRE-TRIP

Travel Services
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Approval to Travel

- Prior approval is required for ALL official University travel in order for the traveler to be eligible to travel and to be reimbursed (see BPPM 95.05).
- Employee in-state travel allows for verbal approval except when:
  - Requesting an exception to policy, and/or
  - Travel is partially or fully funded by a third party.
- All other travel requires written approval done via the Travel Authority (TA) form, or department's substitute form.
  - Following the record retention policy for travel approval is the department's responsibility.

Travel Services
Washington State University

Booking Travel

- WSU has decentralized booking for travel (see BPPM 95.01 for General Travel Policies).
- Departments/Travelers may book through:
  - A travel agency,
  - Directly with a vendor, or
  - An online agency.
- The department is responsible for ensuring the authorized travel plan is the most economical and advantageous to the state.
- The traveler is responsible for exercising prudent judgment in making travel arrangements.
- Various state contracts are available for cost savings.

Travel Services
Washington State University

Methods of Payment

- Central Travel Account (CTA): A corporate backed, visa ghost card (see BPPM 95.04).
  - Should be used for all air, rail, and bus fare purchases.
  - No need to process an expense reimbursement through Central.
- Purchasing Card (Pcard): A corporate backed visa card (see BPPM 70.08).
  - Should be used for all conference registration fees and all non-employee travel expenses, except airfare.
  - No need to process an expense reimbursement through Central.
- Corporate Travel Card: A personal liability visa card (see BPPM 95.03).
  - Can be used for all employee travel expenses in place of personal resources.
  - Process an expense reimbursement through Central upon completion of the trip.
    - Cardholder is responsible for paying off the balance of the statement in full regardless of having received the reimbursement yet.

Travel Services
Washington State University

Methods of Payment Cont'd

- Direct to Vendor: Payments are processed through Travel Services.
  - Can be used for non-employee car rentals, non-employee lodging (see BPPM 95.06 on when allowable for employees), and conference registration fees.
- Personal Resources
  - Can be used for all employee and non-employee travel expenses.
  - Process an expense reimbursement through Central upon completion of the trip.
    - WSU cannot process a reimbursement prior to the trip, if that is required it will need to be done via an advance and comply with that policy.
- Travel Advances: Advances are processed through Travel Services (see BPPM 95.05).
  - Traveler must be an employee, in travel status for more than 14 days, and have no outstanding advances.
  - Advances cannot be provided more than 30 days before the trip start date.

Travel Services
Washington State University

DURING TRAVEL

Travel Services
Washington State University

Travel Status

- Travel status begins when the traveler leaves their official station or residence on the way to a temporary duty station and ends upon return to either location.
- The traveler needs to keep the following receipts:
  - Lodging,
  - Transportation (i.e. airfare, rental car, etc.),
  - Allowable miscellaneous travel expenses in excess of $50, per item per day,
  - Itemized meal receipts when reimbursed at actual cost, and
  - Miscellaneous supplies less than $50.
    - Excess of $50 should be purchased per state purchasing requirements.

Travel Services
Washington State University

Allowable Expenses

- Lodging (see BPPM 95.06) – Reimbursed at the actual cost up to the daily maximum allowable lodging rate in effect at the time of travel for the location.
  - Only the applicable taxes are reimbursable beyond the maximum rate.
  - Lodging within 50 miles of the closer of either the traveler's official residence or official station is not reimbursable.
- Meals (see BPPM 95.06)- Reimbursed at the meal allowance (per diem) in effect at the time of travel for the location.
  - If actual cost is used, an itemized receipt is required and reimbursement will be capped at per diem for the location and time.
  - For single day trips that meet the 3-Hour Rule, all meal reimbursements are taxable. If the 3-Hour Rule is not met the meals are not reimbursable.

Travel Services
Washington State University

Allowable Expenses Cont'd

- Transportation (see BPPM 95.07) - When available, the tourist-class air fare is the maximum amount that is reimbursed regardless of mode chosen. Price comparisons are required when a different mode is chosen.
  - Rental cars are reimbursed at rental cost and actual gas receipts (see BPPM 95.12).
  - Privately-owned vehicles are reimbursed at applicable mileage rate for miles traveled outside of standard commute (see BPPM 95.11).
    - WSU is not liable for any damage to the vehicle while in travel status.
- Miscellaneous travel expenses - Other expenses essential to the transaction of official state business are reimbursable at actual cost to the traveler.
  - Any miscellaneous expenses in excess of $50 must be submitted with original receipts.

Travel Services
Washington State University

Unallowable Expenses

Personal expenses and those not essential to the transaction of official state business are not reimbursable. During the audit process additional information may be requested in order to determine whether an expense can be reimbursed.

The following are examples of unallowable expenses:

- Duty station parking
- Trip/health/travel insurance
- Medical/hospital services
- Room service
- Any expense paid with miles/points
- Itinerary changes without a business purpose (i.e. change/cancellation fees)
- Expenses/fees due to negligence of the traveler (i.e. fines or parking tickets, locksmith, missed flight, etc.)
- Personal entertainment expenses, including transportation to and from the location
- Bellhop services
- Valet parking unless it is required
- Alcohol
- Spouse/dependent expenses without a bona fide business purpose
- Fuel for personally-owned vehicles

Travel Services
Washington State University

***This is not an exhaustive list and there may be additional restrictions based on the funding source as well.*

POST-TRIP

Travel Services
Washington State University

Preparing the TEV

- Prepare a TEV for the following:
  - To claim reimbursement for travel expenses;
  - To report and account for travel advances; and
  - To account for travel supported by third-parties.
- Best practice is to have one TEV per trip per traveler.
  - In group travel, each traveler should pay for their own travel related expenses.
- All WSU employees seeking reimbursement must utilize the E-forms system. This allows for electronic document retention and significantly reduces processing time from initiation to payment.
  - For user guides: http://public.wsu.edu/~forms/eforms.html

Travel Services
Washington State University

Preparing the TEV Cont'd

- Upon returning from a trip, the traveler is responsible for submitting required receipts and providing the level of detail to fill out the form.
  - Trip start and end date on the top of the form must match the dates in the trip information.
  - Primary destination needs to be accurate.
  - Departure and return times need to be the ***actual times*** that the traveler enters and ends travel status.
    - This is important for determining if expenses can be reimbursed and if they need to be taxed.
  - The purpose of the trip needs to provide detail to document the business purpose.
  - The 'Travel Details' section needs to include any additional information to justify or explain an unusual travel expense or request an exception to policy.
- The traveler and authorized personnel in the department sign the fully completed TEV, certifying and approving the travel and expenses, and route to Travel Services.

Travel Services
Washington State University

Preparing the TEV Cont'd

- The TEV must be submitted within 60 days of the trip end date. If this is not done, the expenses will be taxed per IRS as not having met the accountable plan method.
- Third-party funded trips require a TEV be submitted with all required details and receipts.
  - If the traveler received reimbursement directly from the third-party they are to provide documentation of that reimbursement to be attached to the TEV.
- If the traveler received an advance, the reimbursement will be limited based on that amount. If the traveler owes WSU money the TEV needs to be submitted with the check to process a recovery of the expense.
  - Any unspent portion that has not been recovered within 120 days after the trip end date will be fully taxed as having not met the accountable plan.

Travel Services
Washington State University

Processing the TEV

- TEVs are processed by the travel staff based on the last name of the traveler.
- Travel staff conducts an audit of the TEV:
  - Name and address on the form match what is in the WSU system;
  - WSU ID number is correct;
  - Trip end and start dates are accurate;
  - Per diem is correct based on location;
  - If lodging exception is being claimed that a rule number is provided for justification;
  - All required receipts are attached;
  - Signed by expenditure authority of the budget(s) being used;
  - Appropriate funding is used (i.e. 17A where needed);
  - Identify any taxable expenses and route those to Payroll; and
  - Compliance with WSU and state travel policies.
- Central will request additional information when needed and can deny reimbursement of expenses if they do not comply with WSU and state policies.

Reimbursement

- Travel staff has 10 business days to finalize a properly filled out TEV for reimbursement.
  - For claimants that require a vendor number be created this turn around time may be extended.
    - Departments can request a vendor number be created prior to the submission of the TEV to streamline the processing of reimbursement.
- Reimbursement timing from payment schedule date based on method:
  - Direct Deposit: Deposited 2-3 business days after scheduled date.
  - Check: Mailed 1 business day after scheduled date.
  - Wires: Issued 1 business day after scheduled date.
  - Employee's Paycheck (taxable expenses): Issued on the pay cycle's paycheck.
- For electronic forms, there is a lag of two days from the date of finalization to the payment schedule date to allow for review of payment request errors after the upload.

Travel Services
Washington State University

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Travel Services
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Frequently Asked Questions

- Can I be reimbursed for….?
  - Seat upgrades: No, this is a personal preference item.
  - Travel insurance/protection: No, personal preference item.
  - Change fees: With proper justification included on the TEV.
  - Airfare purchased with miles: No, would be a cash gain for the traveler.
  - Rental car upgrade: No, this is a personal preference item.

- What documentation is required when bringing in foreign visitors?
  - International Programs is the best resource when deciding to bring in a foreign visitor. There are restrictions to payments and tax implications based on residency status and visa classification. This should be looked into prior to entering into any agreement.

Travel Services
Washington State University

Frequently Asked Questions Cont'd

- How do I account for personal time that is added to a business trip?
  - If booking a flight, the roundtrip ticket to and from the location for the business trip needs to be priced out and documented for the days required by work to travel. WSU will reimburse up to that amount only.
    - The CTA can still be used, but the traveler must write a check for any difference in cost.
  - Meal per diems are for the days while in transit and any days during the actual business trip.
- How do I process a recovery for expenses?
  - BPPM 30.53 outlines the cash handling policy and deposit process.

Travel Services
Washington State University

Frequently Asked Questions Cont'd

- What if I am in an accident or experience damage to my personal vehicle while on a business trip?
  - When using your own personal vehicle, WSU is not responsible for any loss or damage. Your personal insurance is the primary coverage and the mileage rate provided for reimbursement factors in the cost of insurance and maintenance for standard wear and tear. Specific questions should be addressed to Risk Management.