

POLICY & PROCEDURE

TITLE: Staff Travel and Other Expense Reimbursement

APPROVAL DATE OF CORPORATE COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE: 06/03/2024	EFFECTIVE/IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 06/06/2024
SIGNATURE OF CORPORATE COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR: <i>Eileen S. Berg</i>	
APPROVAL DATE OF POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE: 06/03/2024	POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE CHAIR SIGNATURE: <i>Eileen S. Berg</i>

BACKGROUND, PURPOSE & RATIONALE:

The Board of Directors of Birch Family Services (herein referred to as Birch or the Corporation) recognizes that Board members, Officers, and employees (“Personnel”) of Birch may be required to travel or incur other expenses from time to time to conduct Corporation business.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- (a) ensure that adequate cost controls are in place,
- (b) ensure that travel and other expenditures are appropriate, and
- (c) provide a uniform and consistent approach for the timely reimbursement of authorized expenses incurred by Personnel.

POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of Birch to reimburse personnel for only reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred by Personnel. Birch will follow the expense reimbursement guidelines and requirements stipulated in Social Service law 363-D, Part 18NYCRR Part 521 and the Internal Revenue Service Guidelines.

When incurring business expenses, the Corporation expects Personnel to:

- Exercise discretion and good business judgment with respect to those expenses.
- Be cost conscious and spend the Agency’s money as carefully and judiciously as the individual would spend his/her own funds.
- Report expenses, supported by required documentation, as they were actually spent.

PROCEDURE:

1. Expenses will not be reimbursed unless the individual requesting reimbursement submits a written Expense Report via the established expense reimbursement process. The Expense Report, shall be submitted in a timely fashion after the completion of travel. If travel expense reimbursement is requested, the report must include:

- The individual’s name.

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- If reimbursement for travel is requested, the date, origin, destination, and purpose of the trip, including a description of each Agency-related activity during the trip.
- An itemized list of all expenses for which reimbursement is requested.
- Expense reports must be submitted and approved by the employee's supervisor. The Accounts Payable (AP) Manager will review. Authorization is required for expense requests submitted by management personnel.
- Expense reports of the Chief Executive Officer must be approved by the Chair of the Board.

Falsification of expenses: Submission of fraudulent receipts or falsifying expense reports will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

2. Receipts are required for all expenditures billed directly to the Corporation, including but not limited to airfare and lodging charges. No expense in excess of \$500 will be reimbursed to Personnel unless the individual requesting reimbursement submits, with the Expense Report, written receipts from each vendor (not a credit card receipt or statement) showing the vendor's name, a description of the services provided (if not otherwise obvious), the date, and the total expenses including tips, if applicable.
3. Employees authorized to do business for the Corporation and attend meetings in other places, as authorized by their supervisor may submit receipts for tolls and parking fees, associated with the business trip, via the expense reimbursement process. Mileage incurred by use of personal vehicles will be reimbursed at a rate established by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Reimbursable mileage does not include an employee's normal commute between home and work. Trips made between sites during work times or unscheduled work related trips made between home and work may be claimed for reimbursement. Mileage from the start and end point of the trip will automatically be calculated when submitted via the expense reimbursement process. Submission of expenses should be completed in a timely manner.
4. When claiming mileage for business related trips that exceed an employee's usual commute, reimbursable mileage should not include an employee's mileage between home and work. For example, if driving to Buffalo and an employee's normal commute is 10 miles, then 10 miles should be subtracted from the mileage claimed for reimbursement. If a business-related trip is less than the employee's normal commute, no mileage should be claimed for reimbursement.

5. General Travel Requirements

A. Advance Approval

All trips involving air travel or at least one overnight stay must be approved in advance by the individual's supervisor; however, any out-of-state travel must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer or their designee.

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B. Necessity of Travel

In determining the reasonableness and necessity of travel expenses, Personnel and the person authorizing the travel shall consider the ways in which the Corporation will benefit from the travel and weigh those benefits against the anticipated costs of the travel. The same considerations shall be taken into account in deciding whether a particular individual's presence on a trip is necessary. In determining whether the benefits to the Corporation outweigh the costs, less expensive alternatives, such as participation by telephone or video conferencing, or the availability of local programs or training opportunities, shall be considered.

C. Personal and Spousal Travel Expenses

Individuals traveling on behalf of the Corporation may incorporate personal travel or business with their Corporation-related trips; however, Personnel shall not arrange Corporation travel at a time that is less advantageous to the Corporation or involving greater expense to the Corporation in order to accommodate personal travel plans. Any additional expenses incurred as a result of personal travel, including but not limited to extra hotel nights, additional stopovers, meals, or transportation, are the sole responsibility of the individual and will not be reimbursed by the Corporation. Expenses associated with travel of an individual's spouse, family, or friends will not be reimbursed by the Corporation.

6. Air Travel

A. General

Air travel reservations should be made as far in advance as possible in order to take advantage of reduced fares. The Corporation will reimburse or pay only the cost of the lowest coach class fare actually available for direct, non-stop flights from the airport nearest the individual's home or office to the airport nearest the destination.

B. Saturday Stays

Personnel traveling on behalf of the Corporation are not required to stay over Saturday nights in order to reduce the price of an airline ticket. An individual who chooses to stay over a Saturday night shall be reimbursed for reasonable lodging and meal expenses incurred over the weekend to the extent the expenses incurred do not exceed the difference between the price of the Saturday night stay ticket and the price of the lowest price available ticket that would not include a Saturday night stay. To receive reimbursement for such lodging and meal expenses, the individual must supply, along with the expense report, documentation of the amount of the difference between the price of the Saturday stay and non-Saturday stay airline tickets.

C. Frequent Flyer Miles and Compensation for Denied Boarding

Personnel traveling on behalf of the Corporation may accept and retain frequent flyer miles and compensation for denied boarding for their personal use. Individuals may not deliberately patronize a single airline to accumulate frequent flyer miles if less expensive comparable tickets are available on another airline.

7. Lodging

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Personnel traveling on behalf of the Corporation may be reimbursed at the single room rate for the reasonable cost of hotel accommodations. Convenience, the cost of staying in the city in which the hotel is located, and proximity to other venues on the individual's itinerary shall be considered in determining reasonableness. Personnel shall make use of available corporate and discount rates for hotels. "Deluxe" or "luxury" hotel rates and any luxury or additional hotel services will not be reimbursed.

8. Out-Of-Town Meals

Personnel traveling on behalf of the Corporation are reimbursed for the reasonable and actual cost of meals (including tips) subject to a maximum per diem meal allowance established by the IRS per day and the terms and conditions established by the Corporation relating to the per diem meal allowance.

9. Ground Transportation

Personnel are expected to use the most economical ground transportation appropriate under the circumstances.

10. Personal Car

Personnel are compensated for the use of their personal cars when used for Corporation business. When individuals use their personal car for such travel, including travel to and from the airport, mileage will be allowed at the currently approved IRS rate per mile.

In the case of individuals using their personal cars to take a trip that normally would be made by air, mileage will be allowed at the currently approved rate; however, the total mileage reimbursement will not exceed the sum of the lowest available round-trip coach airfare.

11. Parking/Tolls

Parking and toll expenses, including charges for hotel parking, incurred by Personnel traveling on Corporation business will be reimbursed. The costs of parking tickets, fines, car washes, valet service, etc. are the responsibility of the employee, and will not be reimbursed.

On-airport parking is permitted for short business trips. For extended trips, Personnel should use off-airport facilities.

12. Entertainment and Business Meetings

Reasonable expenses incurred for business meetings or other types of business-related entertainment will be reimbursed only if the expenditures are approved in advance by the employee's supervisor and qualify as tax-deductible expenses. Detailed documentation for any such expense must be provided, including:

- Date and place of entertainment.
- Nature of expense.
- Names, titles, and business affiliation of those entertained.
- A complete description of the business purpose for the activity including the specific business matter discussed.

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- Vendor receipts (not credit card receipts or statements) showing the vendor's name, a description of the services provided, the date, and the total expenses, including tips, if applicable.

13. Other Expenses

Reasonable Corporation-related telephone and fax charges due to absence of Personnel from the individual's place of business are reimbursable. In addition, reasonable and necessary gratuities that are not covered under meals may be reimbursed. Finally, emergency secretarial work and/or postal charges incurred are reimbursable for the purpose of work on behalf of the Corporation.

14. Cell Phones

All employees should use their Corporation supplied cell phone when traveling for Corporation Business.

15. Non-Reimbursable Expenditures:

The Corporation maintains a strict policy that expenses in any category that could be perceived as lavish or excessive will not be reimbursed, as such expenses are inappropriate for reimbursement by a non-profit, charitable Corporation. Expenses that are not reimbursable include but are not limited to:

- Travel insurance.
- First class tickets or upgrades.
- When lodging accommodations have been arranged by the Corporation and the individual elects to stay elsewhere, reimbursement is made at the amount no higher than the rate negotiated by the Corporation. Reimbursement shall not be made for transportation between the alternate lodging and the meeting site.
- Limousine travel.
- Movies, liquor, or bar costs.
- Membership dues at any country club, private club, athletic club, golf club, tennis club, or similar recreational Corporation.
- Participation in or attendance at golf, tennis, or sporting events, without the advance approval of the Chief Executive Officer.
- Purchase of golf clubs or any other sporting equipment.
- Traffic citations.

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- Credit card interest charges.
- Laundry or dry-cleaning.
- Spa, massage, or exercise charges.
- Clothing purchases.
- Business conferences and entertainment that are not approved by a supervisor and/or designated Executive/Officer of the Corporation.
- Valet service.
- Car washes.
- Toiletry articles.
- Expenses for spouses, friends, or relatives. If a spouse, friend, or relative accompanies Personnel on a trip, it is the responsibility of the Personnel to determine any added cost for double occupancy and related expenses and to make the appropriate adjustment in the reimbursement request.
- Overnight retreats without the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer or their designee.
- Political or charitable contributions.