



# **Brazos Valley Regional Advisory Council**

## **Travel and other Expense Reimbursement Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

The Board of Directors of the BVRAC recognizes that board members, officers, and employees (“Personnel”) of BVRAC may be required to travel or incur other expenses from time to time to conduct business and to further the mission of this non-profit organization. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that (a) adequate cost controls are in place, (b) travel and other expenditures are appropriate, and (c) to provide a uniform and consistent approach for the timely reimbursement of authorized expenses incurred by Personnel. It is the policy of BVRAC to reimburse only reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred by Personnel. When incurring business expenses, BVRAC expects Personnel to:

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

### **2. Expense Report**

Expenses will not be reimbursed unless the individual requesting reimbursement submits a written BVRAC Expense Report. The Expense Report, which shall be submitted at least monthly or within two weeks of the completion of travel if travel expense reimbursement is requested, must include:

- The individual’s name.
- If reimbursement for travel is requested, the date, origin, destination and purpose of the trip, including a description of each BVRAC-related activity during the trip.
- An itemized list of all expenses for which reimbursement is requested.

BVRAC has placed reimbursement limits for training and meeting expenses. Expenses occurred during State required meetings or training may exceed those BVRAC policy reimbursement limits.

### **3. Receipts**

Receipts are required for all expenditures except meals to include items billed directly to BVRAC, such as airfare and hotel charges. No expense in excess of \$25.00 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).



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#### **4. General Travel Requirements**

##### **a. Advance Approval**

All trips involving air travel or at least one overnight stay must be approved in advance by the BVRAC Board of Directors.

##### **b. Necessity of Travel**

In determining the reasonableness and necessity of travel expenses, Personnel and the person(s) authorizing the travel shall consider the ways in which BVRAC 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 BVRAC 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 BVRAC may incorporate personal travel or business with their Company-related trips; however, Personnel shall not arrange Company travel at a time that is less advantageous to BVRAC or involving greater expense to BVRAC 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 BVRAC. Expenses associated with travel of an individual's spouse, family or friends will not be reimbursed by BVRAC.

#### **5. Air Travel**

##### **a. General**

Air travel reservations should be made as far in advance as possible in order to take advantage of reduced fares. BVRAC 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 BVRAC 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



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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 BVRAC 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.

### **6. Lodging**

Personnel traveling on behalf of BVRAC may be reimbursed at the single room rate for the reasonable cost of safe 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 state, corporate and discount rates for hotels whenever possible. "Deluxe" or "luxury" hotel rates will not be reimbursed.

### **7. Meals**

BVRAC members who travel within the state of Texas shall be reimbursed per diem for meals. Reimbursement for travel within the State of Texas is based upon the State of Texas policy which uses the GSA's Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates for Meals & Incidental Expenses (M&IE). If the city is not listed, but the county is listed, the county will be used as the rate. For areas not listed (city or county) BVRAC M&IE will not exceed \$45 per day.

BVRAC members who travel outside the State of Texas but within the continental United States shall also be reimbursed for their M&IE expenses. However, these reimbursements may not exceed the locality-based rates specified in the GSA's federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates unless preauthorized by the BVRAC Board of Directors. If rates cannot be determined, then M&IE rates of \$45 will be used.

Personnel traveling on behalf of BVRAC to out-of-town meetings and trainings that do not require overnight lodging are eligible for meal reimbursement should the meeting or training exceed six hours from agency's members employment. Meal will be subject to a maximum per diem meal allowance of \$45 per day or \$11.25 per quarter.

- Per Diem is a formula of "quarters" taking maximum M&IE allowed per day



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divided by 4, beginning at midnight in 6 hour increments. No additional documentation or receipt is required.

- If a meal is provided at the meeting, per diem is not allowed for that quarter. A one day meeting is 6 or more hours away from the BVRAC home office and/or from BVRAC representing agency.
- Meals purchased prior to departure of travel or after return from travel will not be reimbursed.

#### **8. Ground Transportation**

Employees are expected to use the most economical ground transportation appropriate under the circumstances and should generally use the following, in this order of desirability:

##### **a. Courtesy Cars**

Many hotels have courtesy cars, which will take you to and from the airport at no charge. The hotel will generally have a well-marked courtesy phone at the airport if this service is available. Employees should take advantage of this free service whenever possible.

##### **b. Airport Shuttle or Bus**

Airport shuttles or buses generally travel to and from all major hotels for a small fee. At major airports such services are as quick as a taxi and considerably less expensive. Airport shuttle or bus services are generally located near the airport's baggage claim area.

##### **c. Taxis**

When courtesy cars and airport shuttles are not available, a taxi is often the next most economical and convenient form of transportation when the trip is for a limited time and minimal mileage is involved. A taxi may also be the most economical mode of transportation between an individual's home and the airport.

##### **d. Rental Cars**

Car rentals are expensive so other forms of transportation should be considered when practical. Employees will be allowed to rent a car while out of town provided that advance approval has been given by the BVRAC Board of Directors and that the cost is less than alternative methods of transportation.

#### **9. Personal Cars**

Personnel are compensated for use of their personal cars when used for Company 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 would normally be made by air, e.g., Out-of-State Travel, 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.



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#### **10. Parking/Tolls**

Parking and toll expenses, including charges for hotel parking, incurred by Personnel traveling on Company business will be reimbursed. The costs of parking tickets, fines, car washes, 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. Valet parking is permissible if no other reasonable parking is available.

#### **11. Other Expenses**

Reasonable BVRAC 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 BVRAC.

#### **12. Non-Reimbursable Expenditures**

BVRAC 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 nonprofit, charitable organization. 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 BVRAC and the individual elects to stay elsewhere, reimbursement is made at the amount no higher than the rate negotiated by BVRAC. 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 organization.
- Participation in or attendance at golf, tennis or sporting events.
- Purchase of golf clubs or any other sporting equipment.
- Spa or exercise charges.
- Clothing purchases.
- Business conferences and entertainment which are not approved by the BVRAC Board of Directors
- Car washes
- Toiletry articles
- Expenses for spouses, friends or relatives. If a spouse, friend or relative accompanies

