



GENERAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

EDUCATION TRAVEL POLICY

(amended and approved July 7, 2011)

General

As fiduciaries of the General Employees' Retirement System (GERS), members of the Board of Trustees have a responsibility to receive information, education, and training regarding pension related areas such as financial, legal, policy, and benefits. Additionally, Section 112.661, Florida Statutes, requires "... continuing education of the board members in matters relating to investments and the board's responsibilities."

The primary method of fulfilling this responsibility is through regular attendance at the scheduled monthly Board meetings. Further information in these matters may also be obtained by attendance at educational programs such as conferences, seminars, and due diligence meetings.

Purpose

This policy is established to provide a set of guidelines regarding travel for the GERS. It is also designed to cover the reasonable expenses incurred while traveling on System business and for educational programs. Furthermore, the policy promotes the prudent use of public funds.

Directed Travel

Board approval is required for each educational program prior to the time of travel. Trustees and the Plan Administrator may attend any approved program held within the state, any program sponsored by FPPTA and NCPERS, and may attend up to 2 any other approved out-of-state programs in any one fiscal year. Contracted professional provider programs, due diligence evaluations, complimentary seminars, or trustee speaking engagements will not count toward the annual attendance limit. Travelers, who attend any approved educational program, both in state or out-of-state, are subject to the limits outlined in this policy and are allowed to stay overnight at the host, affiliated or comparable hotel as covered within this policy.

Covered Travel Days

The number of covered days will include:

- ◆ The day prior to the beginning date of any program or pre-conference sessions.
- ◆ Actual program attendance days.
- ◆ The day following a program conclusion if reasonable travel accommodations do not allow return on the day of program adjournment.

Travel Expenses

Travelers will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred while on GERS business as described below and in accordance with the City's *Policy and Standards Manual (PSM)*. Receipts must be included for any reimbursement except for meals and private vehicle mileage payments.

I. Travel Advance Payment

Upon request, travelers will be advanced \$200 for any trip lasting more than two days or \$100 for any trip lasting two days or less. Advance payment will be figured as part of any reimbursement due a traveler at the conclusion of the trip.

II. Registration

The Retirement Office will make all arrangements for program registrations. A traveler should notify the Retirement Office as soon as possible of any program they want to attend. Early registration at a program may produce significant savings in overall expenses.

III. Lodging

Hotel reservations should be made as far in advance as possible to assure the traveler has a room in the conference hotel. Lodging expenses will be reimbursed for a room at the conference hotel or at a convenient nearby hotel that results in a net savings of room and transportation costs. Reimbursement will be for the least expensive rate available; either conference rate, governmental rate, or special program rate. All sales, occupancy, or other taxes will also be reimbursed. A receipt from the hotel, with a zero amount due, must be presented for any reimbursement.

Covered nights of lodging will include:

- ◆ The night prior to the beginning date of any program or pre-conference sessions unless the opening is scheduled for 6:00 PM or later.
- ◆ Nights of actual program attendance.
- ◆ The night of a program conclusion if reasonable travel accommodations do not allow return on the day of program adjournment.

Hotel or meeting site parking, including valet parking, will be reimbursed with receipt or if part of the hotel bill.

IV. Meals

Meals will be reimbursed in accordance with the City's PSM per diem rate which includes the cost for food, local taxes, and tip. Any meal provided as part of a program, included in the registration cost, or other complimentary meal will not be reimbursed.

V. Air Fare

The “Target Air Fare” is defined as the lowest possible fare for that trip using the Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport as the departure and return point, flying on any regularly scheduled major airline, allowing for intermediate stop(s) not to increase travel time by over 2 hours, departure(s) between 7:00 AM and 8:00 PM local time, and the ticket issued more than 7 days in advance (or current airline policy).

In the event a traveler cannot achieve the “Target Air Fare” due to scheduling problems outside of the traveler’s control, unavailability of seats on “Target” flights, or any other acceptable reason, the traveler will be reimbursed at the actual higher cost “Priority Air Fare”. First Class travel rate will not be reimbursed.

The “Target Air Fare” will be used as the guideline in comparing costs of travel using a personal vehicle vs. air travel.

If the traveler chooses to take a specific airlines or a particular flight for personal reasons that costs more than the “Target Air Fare”, and the “Target Air Fare” is available, only the “Target Air Fare” will be reimbursed.

The “Lowest Air Fare” is the same as the “Target Air Fare” but also allows for up to a 100% penalty, considers using alternate airports, and making reservations at least 30 days in advance (or current airline policy). Alternate airports can be chosen for a travelers’ personal convenience so long as the travel cost is not increased. The use of an alternate airport is encouraged if it reduces the net cost of travel.

The use of the “Lowest Air Fare” is recommended even if there are cancellation penalties when the traveler is reasonably sure of being able to make the trip and scheduling allows such a reservation. Should the traveler be unable to make the trip due to serious personal or work related problems, the traveler will be reimbursed for any penalty incurred.

A traveler will be reimbursed for the cost of a roundtrip flight upon submission of a copy of the airline ticket or copy of an e-ticket receipt. If preferred, a traveler may leave the scheduling and payment of flights to the Retirement Office.

VI. Extended Travel

Extended travel may be requested by the traveler or be dictated by significantly lower airfares.

Travelers are encouraged to travel on weekends when it will result in significantly lower net cost of travel, however travelers are not required to do so.

Extended travel is allowed at the beginning or end of the trip in order to provide savings. Reimbursement will be made for extended travel time as long as the total net cost results in an overall savings.

No reimbursement will be allowed for the extended travel time if a traveler is combining business and vacation and part of the extended travel time consists of a bridge between the two activities.

The current long-term rate for parking at the airport, not to include extended vacation travel time, will be reimbursed with a receipt.

VII. Mileage

Travelers using their personal vehicle will be paid in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service allowance amount in effect at the time of the travel for the round trip distance from their home to the destination point. Specific mileage figures may be obtained from software programs found on the Internet. Mileage rate include costs incurred for fuel, insurance, and maintenance expenses. Total mileage payment will not exceed the equivalent of the lowest airfare plus any normal taxi or shuttle expenses to and from the airport.

The traveler will be paid mileage to and from their home and the airport when a personal car is used, otherwise taxi or shuttle fare to and from the airport will be reimbursed with receipts. Travel expenses to alternative airports will be reimbursed providing there is justification because of flight availability or overall travel cost savings.

VIII. Rental Car

Use of a rental car will be reimbursed in accordance with the City's PSM. Generally, a rental car should not be allowed if the traveler is staying at the program hotel unless normal taxi or shuttle expense would exceed the rental car rate. If a major change in travel during a trip requires the use of a rental car, the traveler should obtain the lowest rental rate available.

IX. Miscellaneous Expenses

A payment for miscellaneous expenses will include:

- ◆ An allowance of \$5.00 will be paid for each covered day.
- ◆ GERS or City business related telephone calls and facsimiles would be reimbursed with a receipt indicating the number called and time of day. Personal calls will not be reimbursed. In-room Internet service, when used for business, will also be reimbursed, if part of the hotel receipt.
- ◆ The cost for airport curbside check-in and/or the airline's checked baggage fee for one (1) suitcase or travel bag will be reimbursed with a receipt.