

Travel Information

Several FFY 2027 Local Agency NOFOs allow for pre-approved travel to conferences. Grantee agencies must adhere to the number of attendees, allowable costs, and pre-designated costs as they appear in the corresponding NOFO.

While some conferences post their upcoming dates, locations, and/or registration fees with plenty of advance notice, some conferences may not have put out public notification of such information prior to the grant application deadline. In this event, pre-designated costs have been determined to allow for travel to more expensive locations to help ensure cost coverage. Once the dates, locations, and registration fees have all been posted, the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Bureau of Safety Programs and Engineering (BSPE) will notify the affected agencies. Costs will then be altered based on actual expenses (e.g., registration fees). In this event, grantees may submit a Budget Revision Request & Approval (BSPE 02) form to assign any over-funded amounts to other budget line items.

No grantees attending conferences in Illinois will be reimbursed for airfare. Some conferences with unknown locations as of the posting date of the NOFOs may have airfare listed as an allowable cost; however, it will be deemed unallowable should the location be in Illinois. Grantees that live outside of Illinois that have more than a 90-minute commute from the border of the State of Illinois may be eligible to use airfare; however, all such applicable grantees should have travel plans pre-approved by their Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement no later than two (2) weeks prior to travel.

Grantees should also use the mode of transportation most economical when determining to drive or fly. Conferences within a reasonable distance of the grantee's official station should plan to drive to the location. To ensure the most economical mode of transportation is used, grantees should seek pre-approval from their assigned Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement.

All grantees eligible to attend a pre-approved conference or other travel should ensure the expenditures are allowable with their agency prior to submitting the application package in Amplifund. Additionally, all grantees should have travel plans pre-approved by their Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement no later than two (2) weeks prior to travel unless otherwise approved in the agreement budget or explicitly stated within this memo.

General Travel Information

- Grantees must operate any vehicle in compliance with both state and federal laws, as well as the policies of the Grantee's organization and/or the terms of the rental agreement- whichever are more stringent.
- Travel mileage at the current state travel mileage reimbursement rate of 72.5 cents per mile (effective January 1, 2026). This amount may change prior to the end of the NOFO posting period, in which case, the rate approved during the NOFO posting period will be used in the final budget as part of the agreement.
- Conference registration fees are allowable for non-agency employees but must be pre-approved by the Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement or be in the approved agreement budget.
- Public transportation, Uber, Lyft, and taxi costs may be reimbursed when solely required for work-purposes (e.g., going from airport to hotel). All receipts and invoices must be submitted with the claim for reimbursement form. All such transportation should be pre-approved by the grantee's Safety Grant Administrator or as it appears in the approved agreement budget.
- Other transportation methods such as trains, buses, and commuter rail services (e.g., Metra) are also eligible for reimbursement.
- The grantee shall not be reimbursed for travel mileage incurred driving to/from, or other such transportation methods (e.g., public transportation, Lyft, Uber), the car rental location. (See also Parking/Valet).

- Airplane tickets are reimbursable so long as the grantee looks at a minimum of three (3) airfare costs before selecting the cheapest option available (include proof of three (3) comparable costs with claim). Additional costs incurred such as early bird boarding, voluntary upgraded seating or rental vehicle size resulting in higher costs, vehicle rental parking for out-of-state conferences that require airfare, or additional baggage fees will not be reimbursed.
- All out-of-state travel must be pre-approved by the Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement or be in the approved agreement budget. Requests for out-of-state travel not in the approved agreement budget, must be submitted a minimum of forty-five (45) days from the first day of travel. No out-of-state travel expenses incurred without prior approval will be reimbursed.
- Any tips paid to service workers, drivers, etc. while on travel status will not be reimbursed.
- Any additional fees incurred in travel such as cell phone roaming charges or paying for hotel internet connection are not allowable and will not be reimbursed.
- A grantee is determined to be on travel status when they work for twelve (12) or more hours in a day away from their official station. Grantees eligible for travel status need to show proof of start and end of workday and location(s) of off-site work. A twelve (12) or more hour day without an overnight stay may be eligible for the daily first/last day of travel per diem rate. The grantee should also seek pre-approval from the assigned Grantor Contact in Exhibit C of the Agreement to ensure the planned travel is deemed eligible for reimbursement. (See also Per Diem).
- Tolls accrued on the most direct route are eligible for reimbursement.
- All claims for reimbursement must include all travel invoices and/or receipts.

Parking/Valet

- Only non-valet parking will be reimbursed. Valet parking is not allowed except in very limited circumstances. All grantees must obtain pre-approval from their Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to travel in the event that valet parking is the only option.
- Grantees may be reimbursed for parking at airports for the duration in which they are traveling to/from or attending the conference. If parking at airport is not included within the agreement budget, then grantees should communicate with their Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement to determine maximum allowable costs for parking and get full approval a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to travel. Parking location and costs may be determined on a case-by-case basis. No short-term parking will be reimbursed (e.g., a spouse picking up the grantee at the airport).

Lodging

- Lodging will be reimbursed based on the date and location-specific information. Lodging rates will appear on the same page as the calculated per diem rates. US General Services Administration (GSA) website: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.
- Grantees who book a hotel room and then cancel that result in a cancellation fee or incur the full cost, will not be reimbursed for the hotel stay. Grantees may contact their Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement should there be a reasonable explanation for not staying in the hotel room. Some explanations may allow for retro-active approval and reimbursement for the hotel room.
- Grantees seeking non-conference lodging should obtain the lodging costs for a minimum of three (3) hotels at the destination location and select the hotel with the cheapest rate.
- Grantees staying at the designated conference hotel may stay at the hotel at the conference rate even if the rate exceeds the lodging rates on the US General Services Administration website. Grantees must be able to prove the conference hotel location and cost. Grantees staying at the conference hotel but not using the conference rate will be reimbursed up to the lodging rate on the US General Services Administration website.

Per Diem

- Per diem will be reimbursed based on the date and location-specific information. Per diem must be calculated using the GSA website: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.
- First and last day of travel for per diem rates must use the generated amount for first and last day of travel.
- Per diem for non-travel days will be reimbursed in full unless meals are provided. If meals are provided, the meal amounts listed in the calculation should be subtracted from the total per diem for the day.
- Only grantees determined to be on travel status may seek per diem reimbursement. Travel status includes travel requiring overnight lodging or someone traveling more than twelve (12) hours away from their official station.
- If leaving conference early and meals are provided, the necessary per diem must be removed from the daily per diem rate due to registration fees covering all meals provided.

Vehicle Rentals

- Vehicle rentals are not required but may be used in lieu of personal vehicles.
- Only the cost of the rental and gas used for the trip are reimbursable. No additional fees will be allowed (e.g., optional insurance, mileage to facility, rental taxes/fees and share ride costs).
- Any vehicle rental company eligible to do business with the grantee's agency may be used. However, if multiple rental locations are within a reasonable distance to the grantee, the cheapest location should be selected.
- The grantee may only rent a compact car unless they meet the requirements in the next bullet point.
- A minivan or larger vehicle size will only be reimbursed if a minimum of three (3) grantees are traveling together and receive prior approval from their Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement. No other rentals will be reimbursed unless certain requirements are met (e.g., haul a trailer required to haul large quantities or sizes) and must be pre-approved by the Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement or the company provided a no-cost upgrade for the pre-booked vehicle.
- Any costs incurred during the car rental such as damage to the vehicle are not reimbursable.
- Vehicle rentals and parking at conference locations will only be considered on a case-by-case basis. Grantees seeking vehicle rentals at conference locations must obtain approval from their Grantor Contact listed in Exhibit C of the Agreement a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the first day of travel or as it otherwise appears in the approved budget. Grantees are not guaranteed approval for vehicle rentals. Any unapproved vehicle rentals and subsequent parking costs will not be reimbursed by the grantor.

Note:

BSPE cannot guarantee funding for conferences in the event that the state and/or federal budgets are not approved by the grant starting date. BSPE also cannot guarantee funding in the event of state and/or federal budget cuts or other such determinations that would require disallowing grantee travel, regardless of the destination being a conference.

Also, BSPE will use the approved State of Illinois mileage reimbursement rate in effect during the grant agreement document issuance. BSPE cannot guarantee if this rate will remain at 72.5 cents per mile or whether it may increase or decrease. This 72.5 cents per mile is to be used by applicants to ensure all non-enforcement FFY2027 local agency grant applicants use a uniform dollar amount when determining mileage reimbursement rates in the application budget.