

HOT Travel Policy

If a teacher submits a HOT request for a conference or training that will take place more than 50 miles from Oak Grove Elementary and it is approved, the Foundation will offer a per diem. The per diem will be \$150 for a two day conference or \$300 for a 3 day conference. The per diem is capped at \$300.

If a teacher receives a per diem, they do not need to send receipts for lodging or food. The registration materials submitted for reimbursement must clearly state how many days of the conference the teacher will attend.

A teacher who is asking to attend a conference that is more than 50 miles from Oak Grove Elementary must attest to one of the following as part of their request.

- (1) the teacher conducted research and found that there were no similar conferences for the topic in the metro Atlanta area within 6 months; or
- (2) this conference is for the official national or state association for their subject matter.

There are no per diems or additional reimbursements available beyond the registration fee for conferences within 50 miles of Oak Grove Elementary School.

If there are HOT opportunities that would require air travel or lodging expenses beyond the per diem grant, these requests must be presented in April/May during the Foundation's annual budgeting period. These types of travel requests may be considered for teachers who are traveling only to attend the opportunity and not part of personal travel.

Notes used to create the policy (FYI ONLY)

Problem:

We generally don't offer travel to teachers who apply for HOT, but we have made one-off exceptions. It would be better to have a standard policy. Also, it can be assumed that teachers will not apply for HOT grants if they have to pay too much for travel?

Policy Questions:

- Should it be a per diem for each event? How much and should it be based on mileage or location? Source for averages:
<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/fy-2023-per-diem-highlights>
- Should we instead reimburse for travel up to X with receipts?
- A teacher asked us to reimburse mileage. What should our mileage reimbursement be?

Solutions/Thoughts:

Tracy: I think a per diem per day, up to X days, more than Y miles from Atlanta would be one easy solution. GSA per diem average per day is \$155 to include lodging and meals. This would not include any additional travel, however. It would likely mean each HOT request would be about \$500, so maybe something in between for this year, with broader goals for next year.

We have a lot of unspent money in HOT. Should we do a round of communication to teachers for the fall to get in all requests by a certain date for the best funding opportunity? That may help figure out budgeting questions on travel for this year.

[If we do the above, note that a lot of HOT and BIG go to the early grades, STEM and Gifted. We should make sure outreach is inclusive of upper grades, teachers who serve students with disabilities and all specials, and may even require special outreach.]

Additional thoughts

Perhaps limiting travel only to state association conferences vs private events? For example, with the coast being such a conference hot spot, some associations will only have events outside Atlanta.

Michele: I agree with Tracy. I think a per diem is a good idea and would allow teachers to think more broadly about training possibilities. Honestly many conferences/trainings will be in metro Atlanta so I don't know that we'll need per diem for every opportunity (i.e. perhaps only ones more than 50 miles one way). But I also think there should be a cap, perhaps only two days? Similarly I would say the per diem includes mileage. If it's metro Atlanta, I don't think we need to do mileage.

