

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

SENATE BILL 719

By: Paxton

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to the State Travel Reimbursement Act; amending 74 O.S. 2021, Sections 500.2 and 500.9, as amended by Sections 1 and 5, Chapter 63, O.S.L. 2022, and 500.14 (74 O.S. Supp. 2024, Sections 500.2 and 500.9), which relate to reimbursable expenses, overnight lodgings, and rejection of travel claims; modifying verification requirements for direct airline purchases; modifying approving official for certain claims for reimbursement; providing discretion to the Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for certain rejections; updating statutory language; updating statutory reference; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 74 O.S. 2021, Section 500.2, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 63, O.S.L. 2022 (74 O.S. Supp. 2024, Section 500.2), is amended to read as follows:

Section 500.2. A. Officials and employees of the state, traveling on authorized state business, may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in such travel in accordance with the provisions of the State Travel Reimbursement Act and existing statutes relating to state travel. Persons who are not state employees, but who are

1 performing substantial and necessary services to the state which
2 have been directed or approved by the appropriate department
3 official, shall enjoy the protection of the sovereign immunity of
4 the state to the same extent as a paid employee. Such persons may
5 be reimbursed for expenses incurred during authorized official
6 travel under these same statutory provisions; provided, it is
7 indicated on the claim the person is not a state employee, a
8 description of services performed is entered, and the agency head by
9 approval of the claim certifies such services were substantial and
10 necessary, and germane to the duties and functions of the
11 reimbursing agency. Travel expenses incurred by a person during the
12 course of seeking employment with a state agency, unless such travel
13 is performed at the request of the employing agency, shall not be
14 considered expenses incurred in performing substantial and necessary
15 services to the state and shall not be reimbursed under the
16 provisions of the State Travel Reimbursement Act.

17 B. The chief administrative officer of the Department of Public
18 Safety, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, the Oklahoma
19 State Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control, the Military
20 Department of the State of Oklahoma, the Department of Corrections,
21 the Office of Management and Enterprise Services, the Alcoholic
22 Beverage Laws Enforcement Commission, the Oklahoma Department of
23 Agriculture, Food, and Forestry, the Oklahoma Department of
24 Emergency Management, the State Fire Marshal, and the State

1 Department of Health may arrange for and charge meals and lodging
2 for a contingent of state personnel moved into an area for the
3 purpose of preserving the public health, safety, or welfare or for
4 the protection of life or property. The cost for meals or lodging
5 so charged shall not exceed the amount authorized in the State
6 Travel Reimbursement Act. The chief administrative officer of each
7 agency involved in such an operation shall require the vendor
8 furnishing meals, lodging, or both meals and lodging to submit an
9 itemized statement for payment. When a claim for lodging is made
10 for a contingent of state personnel, individual members of the
11 contingent may not submit a claim for lodging. When a claim for
12 meals is made for a contingent of state personnel, individual
13 members of the contingent may not submit a claim for meals.

14 C. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce, the Oklahoma Center for
15 the Advancement of Science and Technology, and the Oklahoma
16 Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry are hereby authorized
17 to enter into contracts and agreements for the payment of food,
18 lodging, meeting facility and beverage expenses as may be necessary
19 for sponsoring seminars and receptions relating to economic
20 development and science and technology issues. Such expenses may be
21 paid directly to the contracting agency or business establishment.
22 The ~~Director~~ Chief Executive Officer of the Oklahoma Department of
23 Commerce, the President of the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement
24 of Science and Technology, and the Commissioner of Agriculture shall

1 each provide a quarterly report of such expenditures to the
2 Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the
3 President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

4 D. The Native American Cultural and Educational Authority is
5 hereby authorized to enter into contracts and agreements for the
6 payment of food, lodging, and meeting facility as may be necessary
7 to pursue the promotion of fundraising, marketing, and development
8 of Native American educational programs and cultural projects, or to
9 sponsor luncheons, seminars, and receptions relating to Native
10 American educational, cultural, museum, and economic development
11 issues. Such expenses may be paid directly to the contracting
12 agency or business establishment. The Executive Director of the
13 Native American Cultural and Educational Authority shall provide a
14 monthly report of expenditures to the Native American Cultural and
15 Educational Authority Board.

16 E. For purposes of this section:

17 1. "State agency" means any constitutionally or statutorily
18 created state board, commission, or department, including the
19 Legislature and the Courts;

20 2. State agencies are authorized to enter into contracts and
21 agreements for the payment of food and lodging expenses as may be
22 necessary for employees or other persons who are performing
23 substantial and necessary services to the state by attending
24 official conferences, meetings, seminars, workshops, or training
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1 sessions or in the performance of their duties. Such expenses may
2 be paid directly to the contracting agency or business
3 establishment, provided the meeting qualifies for overnight travel
4 for the employees and the cost for food and lodging for each
5 employee shall not exceed the total daily rate as provided in the
6 State Travel Reimbursement Act;

7 3. State agencies are authorized to enter into contracts and
8 agreements for the payment of conference registration expenses as
9 may be necessary for employees or other persons who are performing
10 substantial and necessary services to the state by attending
11 official conferences, meetings, seminars, workshops, or training
12 sessions. Such expenses may be paid directly to the contracting
13 agency or business establishment; and

14 4. State agencies are authorized to enter into contracts and
15 agreements for the payment of food and lodging expenses as may be
16 necessary for employees attending an official course of instruction
17 or training conducted or sponsored by any state agency. Expenses
18 may be paid directly to the contracting agency or business
19 establishment. The cost for food and lodging for each employee
20 shall not exceed the total daily rate as provided in the State
21 Travel Reimbursement Act.

22 F. State agencies are authorized to make direct purchases of
23 commercial airline tickets for use by employees in approved out-of-
24 state travel. Each claim or invoice submitted to the Director of
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1 the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for the payment of
2 the purchase shall bear the airline identifying ticket number, the
3 name of the airline, total cost of each ticket purchased, class of
4 accommodation, and name of the employee for whom the ticket was
5 purchased and shall be filed on claim forms as prescribed by the
6 Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services. ~~The~~
7 ~~employee shall sign an affidavit stating that the employee used a~~
8 ~~direct purchase commercial airline ticket received for his or her~~
9 ~~approved out of state travel, or in lieu of the affidavit, the~~
10 ~~employee may file a travel claim in connection with said airline~~
11 ~~flight.~~

12 G. 1. The Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise
13 Services is hereby authorized to enter into contracts and agreements
14 for the payment of food, lodging, and other authorized expenses as
15 may be necessary to host, conduct, sponsor, or participate in
16 conferences, meetings, or training sessions. The Director may
17 establish accounts as necessary for the collection and distribution
18 of funds, including funds of sponsors and registration fees, related
19 to such conferences, meetings, and training sessions. Expenses
20 incurred may be paid directly to the contracting agency or business
21 establishment.

22 2. The cost of food for persons attending any conferences,
23 meetings, and training sessions that do not require overnight travel
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1 shall not exceed the total daily rate as provided in the State
2 Travel Reimbursement Act.

3 H. 1. The Commissioner of ~~the Department of~~ Mental Health and
4 Substance Abuse Services is hereby authorized to enter into
5 contracts and agreements for the payment of food, lodging, and other
6 authorized expenses as may be necessary to host, conduct, sponsor,
7 or participate in conferences, meetings, or training sessions. The
8 Commissioner may establish accounts as necessary for the collection
9 and distribution of funds, including funds of sponsors and
10 registration fees, related to such conferences, meetings, and
11 training sessions. Any expenses incurred may be paid directly to
12 the contracting agency or business establishment.

13 2. The cost of food for persons attending any conferences,
14 meetings, and training sessions that do not require overnight travel
15 shall not exceed the total daily rate as provided in the State
16 Travel Reimbursement Act.

17 I. The Oklahoma Indigent Defense System is hereby authorized to
18 enter into contracts and agreements for the payment of lodging as
19 necessary for employees to carry out their duties in representing
20 any client whom the System has been properly appointed to represent.
21 Such expenses may be paid directly to the contracting agency or
22 business establishment. The cost for lodging for each employee
23 shall not exceed the daily rate as provided in the State Travel
24 Reimbursement Act.

1 J. The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department is hereby
2 authorized to enter into contracts and agreements for the payment of
3 food, lodging, and meeting facility and beverage expenses as may be
4 necessary for seminars and receptions relating to familiarization
5 tours and tourism development. The expenses may be paid directly to
6 the contracting agency or business establishment. The Executive
7 Director of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department shall
8 provide a monthly report of any such expenditures to the Oklahoma
9 Tourism and Recreation Commission.

10 K. The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department is hereby
11 authorized to enter into contracts and agreements for the payment of
12 exhibitor fees and display space charges at expositions to promote
13 the Department's recreational facilities and the tourism and
14 recreation industry. The expenses may be paid directly to the
15 contracting agency or business establishment; provided, that no
16 payment shall be made prior to the event unless it conveys a
17 property right to the state for future availability and use.

18 L. 1. The Oklahoma Highway Safety Office of the Department of
19 Public Safety is hereby authorized to enter into contracts and
20 agreements for the payment of food, lodging, and other authorized
21 expenses as may be necessary to host, conduct, sponsor, or
22 participate in highway-safety-related conferences, workshops,
23 seminars, meetings, or training sessions. The payments shall be for
24 all persons in attendance, including, but not limited to, employees

1 of political subdivisions or employees of the state or federal
2 government. For purposes specified in this paragraph, only federal
3 highway safety funds may be used in accordance with federal
4 guidelines and regulations, and no appropriated state funds shall be
5 used.

6 2. The cost of food for persons attending any highway safety
7 conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings, and training sessions
8 that do not require overnight travel shall not exceed the total
9 daily rate as provided in the State Travel Reimbursement Act.

10 M. 1. The Director of the Oklahoma State Bureau of
11 Investigation is hereby authorized to enter into contracts and
12 agreements for the payment of food, lodging and other authorized
13 expenses as may be necessary to host, conduct, sponsor or
14 participate in any conference, meeting, training session or
15 initiative to promote the mission and purposes of the Bureau. The
16 payments may be for all persons in attendance, including, but not
17 limited to, employees of political subdivisions or employees of the
18 state or federal government.

19 2. The cost of food for persons that do not require overnight
20 travel shall not exceed the total daily rate as provided in the
21 State Travel Reimbursement Act.

22 N. The Oklahoma Homeland Security Director is hereby authorized
23 to enter into contracts and agreements for the payment of food,
24 lodging and other authorized expenses as may be necessary to host,

1 conduct, sponsor, or participate in homeland-security-related
2 conferences, meetings, workshops, seminars, exercises or training
3 sessions. The expenses may be paid directly to the contracting
4 agency or business establishment.

5 O. The State Department of Education is hereby authorized to
6 enter into contracts and agreements for the payment of food, lodging
7 and other authorized expenses as may be necessary to host, conduct,
8 sponsor or participate in conferences, meetings or training
9 sessions. The State Department of Education may establish accounts
10 as necessary for the collection and distribution of funds, including
11 funds of sponsors and registration fees, related to such
12 conferences, meetings and training sessions. Any expenses incurred
13 may be paid directly to the contracting agency or business
14 establishment.

15 P. 1. The Insurance Commissioner of the Insurance Department
16 ~~of the State of Oklahoma~~ is hereby authorized to enter into
17 contracts and agreements for the payment of food, lodging, and other
18 authorized expenses as may be necessary to host, conduct, sponsor,
19 or participate in conferences, meetings, or training sessions. The
20 Commissioner may establish accounts as necessary for the collection
21 and distribution of funds, including funds of sponsors and
22 registration fees, related to such conferences, meetings, and
23 training sessions. Any expenses incurred may be paid directly to
24 the contracting agency or business establishment.

1 2. The cost of food for persons attending any conferences,
2 meetings, and training sessions that do not require overnight travel
3 shall not exceed the total daily rate as provided in the State
4 Travel Reimbursement Act.

5 Q. 1. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education ~~is~~ are
6 hereby authorized to enter into contracts and agreements for the
7 payment of food, lodging, and other authorized expenses as may be
8 necessary to host, conduct, sponsor, or participate in conferences,
9 meetings, or training sessions. The Oklahoma State Regents for
10 Higher Education may establish accounts as necessary for the
11 collection and distribution of funds, including funds of sponsors
12 and registration fees, related to such conferences, meetings, and
13 training sessions. Any expenses incurred may be paid directly to
14 the contracting agency or business establishment.

15 2. The cost of food for persons attending any conferences,
16 meetings, and training sessions that do not require overnight travel
17 shall not exceed the total daily rate as provided in the State
18 Travel Reimbursement Act.

19 R. 1. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability is
20 hereby authorized to enter into contracts and agreements for the
21 payment of food, lodging, and other authorized expenses as may be
22 necessary to host, conduct, sponsor, or participate in conferences,
23 meetings, or training sessions. The Office of Educational Quality
24 and Accountability may establish accounts as necessary for the

1 collection and distribution of funds, including funds of sponsors
2 and registration fees, related to such conferences, meetings, and
3 training sessions. Any expenses incurred may be paid directly to
4 the contracting agency or business establishment.

5 2. The cost of food for persons attending any conferences,
6 meetings, and training sessions that do not require overnight travel
7 shall not exceed the total daily rate as provided in the State
8 Travel Reimbursement Act.

9 S. 1. The Oklahoma Department of Securities is hereby
10 authorized to enter into contracts and agreements for the payment of
11 food, lodging, meeting facility, facilitator fees and travel
12 expenses, exhibitor fees and other authorized expenses as may be
13 necessary to host, conduct, sponsor or participate in conferences,
14 meetings, training sessions or initiatives promoting or otherwise
15 relating to investor education. The Oklahoma Department of
16 Securities may establish accounts as necessary for the collection
17 and distribution of funds, including funds of sponsors and
18 registration fees, related to such conferences, meetings, training
19 sessions or initiatives. The payments may be for all persons in
20 attendance, including, but not limited to, employees of the state or
21 federal government or employees of political subdivisions of the
22 state, including employees of boards of public education. Expenses
23 incurred may be paid directly to the contracting agency or business
24 establishment.

1 2. The cost of food for persons attending any conferences,
2 meetings and training sessions that do not require overnight travel
3 shall not exceed the total daily rate as provided in the State
4 Travel Reimbursement Act.

5 3. The Oklahoma Department of Securities is hereby authorized
6 to pay stipends to teachers participating in the investor education
7 program and monetary achievement awards to select participating
8 students. No appropriated state funds shall be used.

9 T. 1. The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs is hereby
10 authorized to enter into contracts and agreements for the payment of
11 food, lodging, meeting facility, beverage and other authorized
12 expenses as may be necessary to host, conduct, sponsor or
13 participate in seminars, receptions, conferences, meetings or
14 training sessions related to the support of veterans and the
15 development of veterans' services. Expenses incurred may be paid
16 directly to the contracting agency or business establishment. The
17 Executive Director of the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs
18 shall provide a monthly report of any such expenditures to the
19 Oklahoma Veterans Commission.

20 2. The cost of food for persons attending any conferences,
21 meetings and training sessions that do not require overnight travel
22 shall not exceed the total daily rate as provided in the State
23 Travel Reimbursement Act.
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1 U. Whenever possible it shall be the policy of each state
2 agency to prepay airline fares and lodging expenses using a purchase
3 card issued to the agency. This policy shall apply to instances
4 where employees of the agency are traveling on behalf of state
5 government.

6 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 74 O.S. 2021, Section 500.9, as
7 amended by Section 5, Chapter 63, O.S.L. 2022 (74 O.S. Supp. 2024,
8 Section 500.9), is amended to read as follows:

9 Section 500.9. A. Reimbursement for overnight lodging~~7~~ while
10 in official travel status~~7~~ may be made at an amount authorized by
11 the provisions of the federal Government Services Administration
12 (GSA) in its Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), 42 C.F.R. Section
13 300-1.1 et seq., and as updated in its FTR ~~Bulletins~~ bulletins for
14 travel while away from home without additional documentation or the
15 actual cost, if lower, per night except as provided in subsections
16 B, C, E, and G of this section and Section 500.9A of this title.
17 Receipts issued by the hotel, motel or other public lodging place
18 shall accompany claims for reimbursement.

19 B. State officers or employees attending meetings, workshops,
20 conferences or other objectives of trips which are conducted at a
21 designated hotel, motel or other public lodging place or where
22 lodging has been arranged for by the blocking of rooms or by rate
23 reductions for the participants by the sponsor as evidenced by the
24 announcement or notice of the meeting, workshop, conference or other

1 objective shall be reimbursed the actual lodging expense not to
2 exceed the single occupancy room rate charged by the designated
3 hotel, motel or other public lodging place; provided, that the
4 officials or employees are in official travel status approved by the
5 agency head or designee. Provided further, those state officers or
6 employees attending meetings, workshops, conferences or other
7 objectives of trips, which are conducted at a designated hotel,
8 motel or other public lodging place as provided by this subsection,
9 who choose to acquire less expensive lodging at another hotel, motel
10 or other public lodging place shall be reimbursed the actual lodging
11 expense not to exceed the single occupancy room rate charged by the
12 designated hotel, motel or other public lodging place. Provided
13 further, those state officers or employees so choosing this option
14 shall be reimbursed for local transportation costs incurred
15 traveling between such optional lodging and the designated hotel,
16 motel or other public lodging place not to exceed the difference
17 between the cost of the designated lodging and the cost of the
18 optional lodging. Receipts issued by the hotel, motel or other
19 public lodging place shall accompany claims for reimbursement.

20 C. State officers and employees who have been required to
21 attend hearings or meetings of any congressional committee or
22 subcommittee or any federal agency, board or commission shall be
23 reimbursed for their actual and necessary travel and lodging
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1 expenses; however, the agency head must approve any claims in
2 connection with such expenses.

3 D. Reimbursement for meals and lodging on out-of-state trips
4 shall not begin more than one (1) calendar day before the meeting,
5 workshop, conference or other objective of trip begins and shall not
6 continue more than one (1) calendar day after ~~said~~ the meeting,
7 workshop, conference or other objective of trip ends. This twenty-
8 four-hour limit shall also apply for in-state travel when the agency
9 determines that travel is of a duration where overnight travel prior
10 to or after the trip objective would be necessary.

11 E. Reimbursement for meals and lodging incurred in official
12 travel in areas outside of the United States to implement the
13 objectives of contracts, grants, agreements or gifts for which funds
14 from these sources are furnished shall be reimbursed from ~~said~~ such
15 funds at actual cost not to exceed the amount authorized for United
16 States ~~Government~~ government employees in its periodical publication
17 entitled "Standard Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign
18 Areas), Department of State, Washington, DC". Provided, however,
19 reimbursement for travel to points outside of the United States,
20 whether performed under authority of contract, grant, agreement or
21 otherwise, shall not begin more than two (2) calendar days before or
22 end more than two (2) calendar days after the objective of the trip.

23 F. Claims submitted to the Director of the Office of Management
24 and Enterprise Services for payment under the provisions of this

1 section shall be certified to by the ~~principal fiscal officer or~~
2 ~~contract and grant administrator of each agency~~ approving officer as
3 prescribed by Section 34.68 of Title 62 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

4 Such officer shall certify that such claim complies with and is
5 authorized under this section.

6 G. ~~The Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise~~
7 ~~Services~~ agency approving officer may authorize reimbursement for
8 overnight lodging while in official travel status within ~~the State~~
9 ~~of Oklahoma~~ this state at a rate of up to one hundred fifty percent
10 (150%) of the amount authorized in subsection A of this section if
11 it is determined that no lodging was available at the maximum rate
12 set out in subsection A of this section. Prior to authorizing such
13 payment, the ~~state~~ agency approving officer or employee shall
14 ~~certify~~ receive in writing a verification by the employee of the
15 efforts made to obtain lodging at the rate set out in subsection A
16 of this section and the reasons why such lodging was not available
17 within a reasonable distance from the state officer's or employee's
18 work location.

19 SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 74 O.S. 2021, Section 500.14, is
20 amended to read as follows:

21 Section 500.14. The Director of the Office of Management and
22 Enterprise Services ~~shall~~ may reject any travel claim or voucher not
23 in conformity with the provisions of ~~this act~~ the State Travel
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1 Reimbursement Act or existing statutes relating to reimbursement for
2 travel expenses.

3 SECTION 4. This act shall become effective November 1, 2025.
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