



TRAVEL EXPENSES

This policy is intended to establish a basis for budgeting Board member and employee attendance at conferences, training, seminars, or other meetings and provide guidelines for Board members and employees who have been approved to travel on behalf of SANDAG.

It is desirable and beneficial to SANDAG and its constituents to have Board members and employees participate in state and national activities, training, and conferences related to SANDAG's subject matter jurisdiction.

Procedures

1. Budgeting

- 1.1 Each year the Executive Director will survey the Board and committee (Board) members to ascertain their interest in attending upcoming conferences and meetings. These conferences may include legislative and annual meetings for the California Transit Association, the American Public Transit Association, and the National Association of Regional Councils, as well as California Transportation Commission meetings and legislative hearings. The Chair of the Board will make the final decision regarding who should attend all conferences and meetings. Upon return, Board members will be asked to present their experiences to the Board in order to share the knowledge obtained from their attendance.
- 1.2 Employees also may attend conferences related to their respective disciplines. The Executive Director will make the final decision regarding which employees should attend conferences and meetings within the adopted budget. Upon return, employees will submit a report to their director in order to share the knowledge obtained from their attendance.
- 1.3 Board member and employee attendance will be funded in the annual budget subject to the availability of funds and based on the results reported by previous attendees. As part of the budgeting process, the Executive Director or his/her designee will set objectives to ensure minimum representation at key conferences, and to make sure that cumulative attendance by Board members and employees at any one conference is not excessive.
- 1.4 The number of Board members or committee members attending any conference or meeting should not exceed a quorum unless this provision is specifically waived by the Board after seeking advice from legal counsel.
- 1.5 Basic travel arrangements for flights, hotels, and rental cars will be made by the Clerk of the Board or other designated staff. Board members and employees are responsible for contacting the Clerk of the Board or the designated staff if itinerary changes are

needed. Board members or employees desiring different travel arrangements will contact the Clerk of the Board or other designated staff to place her/him on notice and will be financially responsible for any costs over and above those determined by SANDAG's travel agent for the basic trip.

- 1.6 If a Board member or employee initiates a change in travel plans that is not due to a medical/death emergency by the Board member or employee, or his/her immediate family, then the Board member or employee will be responsible for the cost impacts of those changes.
- 1.7 Employees must fill out a travel request form prior to traveling out of San Diego County on SANDAG business. The project code, purpose of travel, and trip budget must be filled in on the form. The form must be approved by the Executive Director or Chief Deputy Executive Director prior to the time of travel. The Clerk of the Board or Executive Assistant will fill out the top portion of the travel request form for Board members and the Executive Director or Chief Deputy Executive Director shall determine whether to approve it. The expense report must document that expenses meet existing SANDAG policy. All documents related to reimbursable expenditures are public records subject to disclosure under state and federal law.
- 1.8 Penalties for falsifying expense reports include, but are not limited to the following:
 - 1.8.1 Loss of reimbursement privileges
 - 1.8.2 Restitution to SANDAG
 - 1.8.3 Civil penalties for misuse of public resources
 - 1.8.4 Prosecution for misuse of public funds
 - 1.8.5 Disciplinary action for employees

2. Out-of-Town Travel Expense Reimbursement

- 2.1 The lower portion of the travel request form must be used by Board members and employees to record actual trip expenses. The report must be completed within one week from the return date. For employees, the actual expenses must be approved by a department director unless a department director is the traveler, in which case the Chief Deputy Executive Director must approve the expenses. For Board members, the actual expenses must be approved by the Chief Deputy Executive Director. The form should then be forwarded to the Finance Department for processing, with a personal check attached for any funds due to SANDAG. Failure to submit expense reports within the required time frame may result in the traveler not being reimbursed or collection action being taken if money is owed to SANDAG. Late expense reports must be approved by the Chief Deputy Executive Director.
- 2.2 All expenses should be itemized, including items SANDAG may have paid for in advance so that that the report provides a complete record of expenses. It is the

traveler's responsibility to submit a completed report in order to receive prompt reimbursement.

- 2.3 Receipts for expenditures must be attached to the expense report for all expenses where a receipt is practicably attainable. A receipt is mandatory for all expenses in excess of \$10 unless a written satisfactory explanation is provided. Such written explanations are subject to approval by the Finance Department.
- 2.4 Travel advances may be requested. Any travel advance shall not exceed the total estimated amount of the trip, minus any items prepaid by SANDAG, such as airfare and registration.
- 2.5 Board members and employees will be reimbursed for reasonable travel expenses up to the reimbursement amounts as stated in IRS Revenue Procedure 2011-47 Section 5. The expenditure guidelines in the current IRS Revenue Procedure Notice should be observed as upper limits unless the circumstances dictate otherwise and the expense is approved by a department director or the Chief Deputy Executive Director. Notwithstanding the foregoing, travel to Sacramento, California will be reimbursed up to a maximum daily rate of \$350 per day for lodging and food expenses and Washington, D.C. will be reimbursed up to a maximum daily rate of \$380 per day for lodging and food expenses, instead of the amounts listed in the current IRS Revenue Procedure Notice.
 - 2.5.1 Air Travel – Air travel is to be coach class for the most direct route. Travelers are encouraged to book at least 21 to 14 days in advance to qualify for the lowest airfares. SANDAG will cover the cost if it is more cost-effective (i.e., difference in airfare as compared to the additional cost for hotel and meals) to include a Saturday stay. Travelers should consider this option, when practical.
 - 2.5.2 Personal Auto Use – In the event that a private auto is used for the trip, mileage shall be paid at the currently established Internal Revenue Service rate. Maximum reimbursement shall not exceed the cost of using a rental car, train, or commercial airline to reach the same destination.
 - 2.5.3 Ground Transportation – In using surface transportation, the least expensive alternative must be utilized where practical. For example, an airport shuttle should be used instead of a taxi. Such transportation should be used for travel to and from the airport and for reasonable business-related trips at the location.
 - 2.5.4 Parking – SANDAG will reimburse the lesser of the parking cost for a personal auto left at the airport or the cost of a shuttle service or cab to and from the airport.
 - 2.5.5 Personal Travel – If a traveler wishes to combine SANDAG travel with personal travel, or to travel with family members, the traveler may do so, provided that it does not exceed the cost equivalent of a single-person trip.

- 2.5.6 Rental Car – Use of rental cars must be pre-approved. SANDAG only will reimburse for the cost of renting the least expensive size vehicle necessary for the number of people traveling, as well as liability insurance.
- 2.5.7 Meals – SANDAG will pay for meals while the traveler is in travel status. The maximum reimbursement amount for meals will be calculated by multiplying the applicable per diem rate in the most recent IRS Notice regarding per diem rates by the number of days of travel.
- 2.5.8 Business Meals – Reasonable business meals involving outside persons or when necessary to conduct SANDAG-related business are permitted. All such meals must be itemized with justification on the Expense Report to determine if eligible for reimbursement.
- 2.5.9 Hotel – Travelers will be reimbursed for the cost of a moderate and reasonably priced single occupancy hotel room. Travelers should request the “government rate” when making hotel reservations. If a hotel stay is needed in connection with a conference or other education activity, lodging costs shall not exceed the maximum group rate published for the conference. If the group rate is not available, the traveler must use comparable lodging.
- 2.5.10 Other Business-Related Expenses – Other business-related expenses that arise when traveling such as supplies, equipment rental, reprographics, facsimiles, and other documented business-related expenses may be reimbursed when traveling on SANDAG business and used for SANDAG purposes.
- 2.5.11 Travel Outside of the U.S. – Reimbursement for travel to a foreign country will be calculated at the average exchange rate during the trip as posted by the Federal Reserve. All reimbursement for any Value Added Taxes (VAT) charged for hotel accommodations must be reimbursed to SANDAG.
- 2.5.12 Telephone Calls – Reimbursement for telephone calls made while traveling are permitted, provided that such calls are directly related to SANDAG business. Personal calls are permitted to a maximum of \$10 per day. Calls charged to personal calling cards or wireless phone accounts may be submitted for reimbursement no later than thirty days for the time that the expense report is submitted.
- 2.5.13 Registration – Travelers requesting to attend a conference or training that requires registration should do so in sufficient time to take advantage of any discounts.
- 2.5.14 Cancellation Penalties – In the event that registration, airfare, hotel deposit, or similar items that require prepayment are paid and nonrefundable and the traveler is unable to attend, then the traveler will be responsible for reimbursing SANDAG for all prepaid amounts, unless the inability to attend is for valid medical reasons or personal emergencies, as approved by the

Executive Director for employees or the Executive Committee for Board members.

2.5.15 Nonallowable Expenses – SANDAG will not provide any reimbursement for personal entertainment expenses, travel expense for family members, movies in hotels, personal items, charitable contributions, alcohol, air travel insurance, or any other expenses not deemed necessary for business purposes. SANDAG also will not provide reimbursement for the purpose of attending political events or for expenses incurred with any private club that discriminates on the basis of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or any other discriminatory criteria in its membership policy.

3. Local Expense Reimbursement

- 3.1 Expense reports must be submitted that record any potentially eligible expenses. The form must be submitted together with all receipts and should be submitted within thirty days of the expense being incurred. The report must describe the item or the destination (if mileage reimbursement is requested) and the purpose. The traveler should indicate which project number each item should be charged to.
- 3.2 Expenses are eligible for reimbursement if they are related to and necessary to carrying out SANDAG business. They may include, but are not limited to: phone calls, business meals or meetings, mileage, parking, and miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses. The Director of Finance or Executive Director may disallow any extraordinary or inappropriate expense. Whenever possible, travel should be by public transportation.
- 3.3 All necessary approvals must be obtained in advance and the form must be submitted to the Finance Department for processing. Reimbursement will ordinarily occur within thirty days.

Adopted June 2003

Amended January 2006

Amended December 2006

Amended December 2008

Amended January 2010

Amended November 2012

Amended November 2015

Amended February 2018