



### **Background/Applicability:**

The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) meets with stakeholders as a regular course of business. Of these meetings, designated members of the following groups may be eligible to receive reimbursement for travel to public meetings, when deemed necessary:

- Family Support Services Committee (FSS)
- Developmental Disability Advisory Council (DDAC)
- New York State Autism Spectrum Disorders Advisory Board (ASDA)

As of January 1, 2024, OPWDD is implementing a statewide and consistent travel reimbursement policy for all designated members of these stakeholder groups who travel to meetings, when necessary. If regional meeting sites are available, OPWDD encourages members to attend the location nearest their home to limit overnight travel, unless there is an extenuating circumstance where in-person attendance is required. In these situations, preapproval by OPWDD to travel is required.

### **Reimbursements:**

The basis of reimbursement is the Office of the State Comptroller's (OSC) Travel Manual located at the link below:

(<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/state-agencies/travel/pdf/agencies-travel-manual-attachment.pdf>)

1. Designated members of FSS, DDAC, and ASDA are defined as "Non-Salaried Public Officers" for purpose of travel reimbursement. Consistent with OSC guidelines, non-salaried public officers are members of boards, commissions, advisory councils, etc., established by law who serve without a salary. OSC also indicates that such persons are entitled to reimbursement of actual expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.
2. While OSC affords such persons a fixed per diem for traveling, OPWDD elects to rely on the receipted method to ensure that any appropriate, necessary and related expenses designated members of FSS, DDAC, and ASDA incur are reimbursed. Per OSC, the fixed per diem covers allowances for lodging (for overnight), meals and incidental expenses, regardless of where lodging is obtained.
3. The receipted method provides the following:
  - a. Overnight: For overnight travel:

- i. Pre-approval: OPWDD preapproval is required.
  - ii. Lodging: Actual lodging costs will be reimbursed – up to the federal maximum amount – and are based on federal reimbursement rates for the county of lodging. Receipts are required to claim reimbursement for lodging expenses of the designated member who is authorized to travel. For daily lodging rates, see <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.
  - iii. Meals and Incidentals: For per diem amounts, which vary by county, see <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. This per diem covers dinner and breakfast the following day. In the event the designated member has to leave at least one hour prior to the start of the business day (the business day is defined as beginning at 9 AM Eastern Time, or ET) that travel is occurring, OPWDD can provide the designated member an allowance for breakfast (for amount, see <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-agencies/gfo/chapter-xiii/xiii4d-meals-and-incidentals-expenses-breakdown>). OPWDD will not reimburse for dinner if the designated member returns home less than two hours after the end of the business day (the business day is defined as ending at 5 PM ET).
  - iv. All designated members must request and receive OPWDD approval before traveling to a location that would require overnight travel. For meetings with satellite (non-Albany) meeting locations, overnight stays should be atypical. However, should overnight travel be required, the designated member must submit justification to OPWDD 30 days prior to incurring any travel expenses and receive approval of such a request.
- b. Day: For day travel only:
- i. Designated members may be reimbursed for breakfast provided they are required to leave at least one hour before the start of the business day (defined as 9 AM ET).
  - ii. Designated members may also be reimbursed for dinner provided the meeting and travel times require that they return at least two hours after the end of the business day (defined as 5 PM ET).

- iii. Reimbursement is based on the appropriate amount attributable to each meal as defined by OSC (see <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-agencies/gfo/chapter-xiii/xiii4d-meals-and-incidentalexpenses-breakdown>);.
- c. Travel: Regardless of whether day or overnight travel is expected, actual travel expenses incurred by designated members are reimbursed, including the cost of travelling to and from the train or bus station from the designated member's home. However, receipts must be provided to receive any reimbursement. This also includes tolls (receipted). If the designated members travel using their own personal vehicle, then the Personal Vehicle Standard Rate will be applied, which is inclusive of gasoline (see <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-agencies/gfo/chapter-xiii/xiii4c-travel-mileage-rates>). Designated members are required to identify the distance driven on both legs of the trip to be eligible to be reimbursed for this expense; no separate payment for gasoline will be considered, nor will the state be in any way liable for any vehicle wear/tear/damage that occurs as a result.