

Travel - Professional Improvement Funds

I. Policy

- a. Professional Improvement Funds County Extension budgets may include identifiable funds for Extension agents' professional improvement. Funds thus identified may be established only if all other needs of the county Extension program are met in the budgeting process (travel, rent, support staff salary and additional agent salary, etc). Professional improvement funds may be up to but not more than \$3,000 per agent per year. Support staff or program assistants may also receive professional improvement funds (up to \$1,000 is suggested). Use of such funds will be restricted to dues for Extension Professional Associations, expenditures for state and national Extension Professional Associations of agents, state Extension Professional Associations of support staff and program assistants associations, Epsilon Sigma Phi, other professional associations, and other professional improvement expenditures as approved by the District Director. Funds budgeted for one year cannot be carried over to the next year to increase the agent's total amount over the annual guideline. Funds expended must follow the current state expenses reimbursement guidelines for travel, meals, lodging, etc. Accounting Procedures A line item account for each agent, support staff, and program assistant is to be established in the county Extension Budget for professional improvement funds. An electronic request should be submitted to the District Director for use of professional improvement funds prior to participation in the event. Agents and staff are responsible for keeping their account accurate and balanced. Any over-spending of professional improvement funds must be repaid by the agent or other staff involved. This cannot be accomplished by transfer of funds from travel, etc. A paper trail must prove the repayment. Attendance At Professional Meetings All staff members are encouraged to participate in professional associations relating to their fields of training or position of assignment. Agent attendance at one national professional meeting per year will be approved, pending availability of funds and acceptable job performance. Travel time of up to one day to and from the meeting will be allowed, depending on distance to meeting location. Time at this meeting will be on official time. Agent attendance at other professional meetings will be reviewed on the merits of each case. Additional approval to attend, allowed time, possible reimbursement, etc. will be based on the agent's role at the meeting, participation at other meetings, and the effect on the county program. Agents are allowed time without expenses for district professional improvement meetings, before or after district staff meetings, or at regularly scheduled times not to exceed one-half day per month or six days per year. Support Staff are encouraged to join and attend Chi Epsilon Sigma's Annual Meetings. There may be other professional development opportunities available through UK Human Resources. Here are some points to remember: Requests to attend this and other professional development opportunities should be submitted in writing at least 30 days in advance to the supervising agent/s for consideration. Support staff must stay within the budgeted Professional Improvement amount within each year (no carryover of account balances). Unless your work station is more than 4 hours away from the conference site, all non-exempt staff will be expected to report to your normal work station and work until noon the day prior to the conference. Pre-conference attendance to

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CHIES Board of Director's meeting or Conference Planning Committee meeting is allowable; however, this must be discussed with the supervising agent. Agents should make arrangements to keep the office open during the support staff absence.

Travel – County Travel Funds

I. Policy

- a. Travel Funding Guidelines – originally introduced 6/15 Updated 01/04/2018 Extension Agents are required to develop county plans of work to prioritize and accomplish an educational mission within their county. Out-of-county travel is often required to become educated in specific knowledge areas and to develop personal skills. Travel planned by agents should be intentional to make the best use of resources available and provide the training and development needed to conduct a county program. The agent's primary focus should be on the development of an educational program for their area of work with the needs of the county being the primary consideration. Travel Requests Currently agents have 5 five sources of financial support to accomplish the development of the program and personal professional goals. The five sources of financial support are: County Travel State Supported Travel Funds County Professional Development Funds Program Support Funds Official Travel – No County Financial Support (travel expenses may be paid by other sources including grants and other organizations.) County Travel is defined as that travel which occurs on a day to day basis. Examples include: Travel to a local event, program, collaborative meeting or home/farm visit, Homemaker leader trainings and district wide 4-H events. This travel is primarily within the county but can also be out-of-county within Kentucky to present programs, support committee meetings or attend District Staff. These funds may occasionally be used for out-of-state travel if programmatically connected and approved by the District Director. State Supported Travel Funds are those funds which support statewide Extension programs and activities. Examples include: State Fair, statewide committee work or task forces, new agent orientation and core training. These are usually led by a specialist or administrator. Use of state supported travel funds is to be approved by the District Director. Professional Improvement Funds are intended for travel, subsistence and registration fees for approved professional meetings and activities. Currently there is a \$3000 per year limit on these funds. An additional \$1000 can be allocated for National ESP meetings. Starting July 1st, 2017 Professional Improvement funds can be used to pay Extension Association dues (but cannot be used for educational courses that are offered for credit (VAA is the exception). Professional improvement funds should clearly enhance the agent's abilities to lead, facilitate or conduct programs within a county. Professional improvement opportunities outside of Kentucky and/or outside of the country should be carefully considered and limited in number (See guidelines below). Program Support Funds are funds designated for program expansion and generally involve purchase of tangible materials. Program support funds should not pay for expenses normally supported by program councils such as ribbons, awards, etc. These funds should not be used to pay for expenses which benefit an individual. Program support funds should not be used for salaries, payments, bonuses, gifts or trips for individuals whether an employee, volunteer or client. Agents must develop a budget for use of program support funds and present it to the County Extension Council and District Director as part of the county budget. In addition, an annual financial report is required to be submitted to CEC and District Director. Out of State/ Country Trips – requiring overnight travel 1. Extension Agent professional development trips should be limited to 2 out-of-state "program area" trips and the National ESP Conference

- per year and no more than 1 out-of-country (Out of Country professional development trips count as an out of state trip) every 3 years regardless of the source of funds, with the approval of the District Director. (Any professional development trips not associated with Extension professional associations must be approved by the District Director and the Extension Director.)
2. All overnight trips, agent retreats, trips involving clientele participation or professional development trips not associated with Extension organizations which are out of state /country trips must be approved by the District Director, and the Extension Director. Requests for the trip must include:
- a. Clear educational objectives with easy to understand benefits to the county program.
 - b. A descriptive itinerary that clearly links to educational objectives.
 - c. Explanation of why the venue or location of the opportunity is the most desirable to meet the educational objectives.
 - d. Evidence that the outcomes and county benefits have been described and shared with county District Board members (Litmus test is: How would this look as headlines in the local paper?)
 - e. Evidence of approval of the local District Board (only for out-of-country trips)
 - f. If agent is traveling with clientele, a risk management plan must be provided. For out-of-state/country requests, agents need to request permission using the: the myUK system, and provide additional information and justification. If traveling on State Funds provide the UK Official Travel Form.
- Out of State travel – not requiring overnight stays
1. Out of State/ Travel with Clientele- no overnight stays
- a. Request authorization from the District Director through myUK system.
 - b. Provide a risk management plan.
 - c. Provide clear educational objectives for the trip plus an itinerary.
 - d. Explanation of why the venue or location of the opportunity is the most desirable to meet the educational objectives.
2. Out of State travel agent only – no overnight stays
- a. Request approval from District Director using myUK.
3. Out of State travel multiple agents only – no overnight stays (Examples: Diversity Conference when out of Kentucky, field days in neighboring states, daylong programming retreats(Nashville), etc.)
- a. Request approval from District Director using myUK.
 - b. Provide itinerary with educational objectives for the day.
 - c. Evidence that program will provide benefit to local programs.
- Youth – Out of County and / or Overnight Travel (02/14/2017)
1. Any Extension event/program involving youth and travel outside the county or overnight lodging requires a risk management plan.
- a. No travel pre-approval necessary
- Official Travel – no reimbursement from County Agents who wish to travel overnight Out-of-State or Out-of-Country on official travel- with no county expenses must:
- 1. Request authorization from District Director thru myUK – must make clear who is sponsoring trip.
 - 2. Adhere to same guidelines as Out- of-State/ Country Trips listed above. (Including justification for professional development trips not associated with Extension professional development organizations).
 - 3. Seek approval from Director of Extension. Agents serving in Leadership roles of Professional Associations and Multistate educational projects/ programs will receive special consideration for exceptions to these rules as determined by the District Director, Program Leader and Director of Extension. NOTE: for those attending State or National Association Conferences: Any Optional/ Preconference Tours that offer NO education benefit to the county program are considered a PERSONAL benefit and are not eligible for reimbursement or payment from Professional Development Funds.
- b. Reimbursement on regular county travel funds will be allowed for academic credit classes which are also offered as in-service training opportunities. Costs associated

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with an academic credit class will be treated in the same manner as reimbursement for expenses for the in-service training.

University of Kentucky
REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION OF OUT-OF-STATE/COUNTRY TRAVEL
County Extension Agents and Support Staff
Send to District Director's Office

NAME OF PERSON TRAVELING	UK PERSON ID	POSITION

Source of Funds: (Travel, Professional Improvement...)_____

County:_____

Dates of Travel:_____

ESTIMATED EXPENSES	Estimated Amount To Be Paid by County Credit Card	Estimated Amount To Be Paid by Employee
Employee Leave Request in MYUK Must Also Be Completed		
Total		

From (Origin)_____ To (Destination)_____

Date(s) trip to be taken (Include travel time) _____

Does the trip include personal time? YES NO If yes, state business travel dates _____

Purpose of trip (Cite benefit to Kentucky Cooperative Extension. (Do not abbreviate organizational names))

If more than two employees of the University are going to this event, how many and why? _____

Will a registration fee be prepaid by County Business Credit Card? _____

Travel Method: _____ Air _____ Personal Vehicle _____ County Owned Vehicle

I hereby certify that all UK Employee and Extension Travel policies have been followed in planning for this trip.

Signature of Traveler

Date

I hereby certify that it is necessary for the person named above to make this trip on official business connected with the duties of his/her position and that all UK Employee Travel policies have been followed.

Signature of District Director

Date