

NDOT AND NATP OUT OF STATE TRAVEL PROCEDURES

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) and Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers (NATP) have jointly developed policies and procedures for out of state travel to conferences and events. This document outlines requirements and provides instructions for requesting approval for out of state travel and submitting expense reimbursements.

National transit-related organizations and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sponsor events across the country for state DOT and local transit employees. NDOT receives Federal funds through the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) and the regular Section 5311 program to support attendance at workshops, conferences, and the National Rodeo. NATP also has a budget to fund scholarships for members attending out of state events.

All out of state travel must be pre-approved. Employees must submit an out of state travel application to NDOT prior to making any travel arrangements. NDOT and NATP will review and approve or deny the request. Priority for approval is based on the following:

1. Transit employee has not attended an out of state event within the last 18 months.
2. Justification narrative for travel to be included on the out of state travel application.

Out of State Travel Application

The out of state travel application is available at nebraskatransit.com. Complete the application and return to Kari Ruse at kari.ruse@nebraska.gov with a cc to Jennifer Eurek at NATP, jennifer@youraam.com. Include the following information:

1. Name of person(s) to attend.
2. Event, dates and location.
3. Estimate of allowable travel expenses.
4. Justification for travel (1-2 paragraphs). The justification will be considered when awarding scholarships.
5. Attend Annual Transit Manager's Workshop (Yes or No). Out of state travel applications may be denied if the attendee indicates they will not also attend the annual workshop.
6. List of all out of state events attended in the last 18 months.
7. Check one of the following:
 - a. NATP 100% scholarship (NATP members only may apply).
 - b. NDOT 100% scholarship (NATP and non-NATP members may apply).
 - c. 90% reimbursement to be requested as a non-operating expense on the monthly online invoice.

100% Scholarships and Eligible Out of State Events

Annually, NDOT and NATP will award a minimum of fourteen (14) scholarships for 100% reimbursement of travel expenses. The following is a list of events eligible for out of state travel scholarships:

1. Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) EXPO and Roadeo-Annual (8 scholarships)
2. National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation-Biennial (6 scholarships)
3. National RTAP Technical Assistance Conference- Biennial (6 scholarships)
4. Additional events to be determined (scholarships TBD)

Requirements for the CTAA EXPO and Roadeo are outlined below. For other events, when dates and locations are announced, NDOT and NATP will release the information and encourage eligible transit employees to apply for scholarships by submitting an out of state travel application.

National Community Transportation Roadeo and CTAA EXPO

Up to eight (8) scholarships for 100% reimbursement may be awarded to attend this annual event (dates and locations TBD). Scholarships will be awarded to a maximum of four (4) drivers and four (4) transit managers.

One scholarship each will be awarded to the Nebraska Roadeo first and second place drivers in each of the two (2) driving divisions to attend and participate in the National Roadeo.

One scholarship each will be awarded for the CTAA EXPO to the managers or direct supervisors of the transit systems represented by the four (4) winning drivers. The scholarship may be extended to include the National Roadeo at the request of the manager. No manager scholarship will be awarded to attend the Roadeo only.

If a transit system has more than one (1) driver that wins a scholarship, only one (1) manager/direct supervisor scholarship will be awarded to that system. Each driver will receive a scholarship, but only one scholarship will be awarded for the manager/direct supervisor.

If a driver who places first or second in a driving division decides they do not want to accept the scholarship to attend the CTAA Roadeo, the manager/direct supervisor of the system the driver represents will not receive a scholarship. The scholarships will be offered to the third place driver and their manager.

If a manager/direct supervisor of a driver who places first or second in any driving division chooses not to accept the scholarship to attend the CTAA Roadeo and EXPO, the scholarship will be made available to an eligible manager through the application process previously described.

Drivers, managers and direct supervisors may not receive scholarships for more than two consecutive years. After receiving scholarships for two consecutive years, individuals may be required to sit out a year before being eligible to receive a scholarship.

The following is the schedule for scholarships awarded to the Roadeo and CTAA EXPO:

- a. Driver's scholarships will be for five (5) days/four (4) nights to attend the Roadeo and EXPO.
- b. Driver's attending the Roadeo only will receive a scholarship for three (3) days/two (2) nights.
- c. For a manager with a driver competing in the Roadeo the scholarship will be for seven (7) days/six (6) nights, providing the manager attends the Roadeo and CTAA EXPO.
- d. For a manager attending the CTAA EXPO only (without a driver competing in the Roadeo) the scholarship will be for four (4) days/three (3) nights to attend the CTAA EXPO.

Transit managers may also request to attend the CTAA Expo through the option to request reimbursement at 90% (80% Federal and 10% State funds) through the monthly invoice. See reimbursement process below. Prior approval is required.

Please note: The schedule above is flexible and contingent on the location of the CTAA Roadeo and EXPO. Check with NATP and/or NDOT to confirm allowable lodging.

Request Reimbursement

Follow the processes outlined below to request reimbursement for travel expenses.

Out of state travel approved 100% scholarship through NDOT:

1. After the event, submit an RTAP reimbursement form through your online dashboard.
2. Submit detailed receipts for all expenses.
3. Submit the approved and signed out of state travel application signed by NDOT.

Out of state travel approved for 90% reimbursement (regular 5311 funds) through the monthly invoice:

1. Include the travel expenses as a non-operating expense on the monthly invoice immediately following the event.
2. Submit detailed receipts for all expenses.
3. Submit the approved and signed out of state travel application signed by NDOT.

Out of state travel approved 100% scholarship through NATP:

1. Request an expense reimbursement form from Jennifer Eurek at NATP, jennifer@youraam.com.
2. Submit the completed form with detailed receipts to Jennifer.

Allowable Expenses

Allowable expenses include but are not limited to the following:

1. Airfare
2. Meals (not included in event registration)
3. Registration
4. Lodging (not direct billed)
5. Airport parking
6. Transportation from hotel to venue

Please note: Expenses for meals cannot exceed the Federal per diem rate for the state/city in which the out of state event is located. Reimbursement for tips will not exceed 20%.

Reporting Requirements

Transit managers approved to attend out of state events are expected to provide a brief synopsis at the transit managers' workshop. You may also be asked to write a brief article for the NATP newsletter.