

**Public Health and Healthcare Preparedness Academy 2020  
&  
Field Epidemiology Seminar**

***Frequently Asked Travel Questions***

***Q. What resources will be provided to fund attendance at the Academy?***

- A.** Federal Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) funds will be used to reimburse travel costs for up to TWO VEHICLES per district (one round trip each) and sufficient OVERNIGHT STAYS to accommodate the intended audience (UP TO FIVE ROOMS per night).

The targeted district attendees include Health Directors, Local Health Emergency Coordinators, Epidemiologists, Medical Reserve Corps Coordinators and a Nurse Manager. It is the responsibility of the Health District to coordinate travel and attendance for participants to take advantage of the funding being made available.

***Q. Do standard travel policies apply for the Academy?***

- A.** Yes. You must follow all standard travel policies regarding use of state vehicles, rental cars, Travel Authorization Request Forms (including supporting documentation) and reimbursement rates for personal vehicles.

***Q. When and where do travel reimbursement requests need to be submitted?***

- A.** All travel reimbursements need to be keyed by May 1<sup>st</sup> - **no exceptions**. Any travel reimbursements keyed after this deadline will be the responsibility of the District/Office. To expedite the reimbursement process, Districts/Offices should use the PHEP project code 0000111792 under their cost codes to process their attendees' travel reimbursements. Other travel related costs (such as direct bill for lodging or enterprise vehicles) can be reported later.

***Q. Can hotel accommodations be direct billed to the Office of Emergency Preparedness?***

- A.** No. All hotel and vehicle arrangements are the responsibility of the attendee. VDH attendees will be provided with the applicable accounting codes to include on their Travel Reimbursement forms.

***Q. Can hotel accommodations be direct billed to my District?***

The hotel is willing to set up direct bill arrangements with individual Districts/Offices. The District/Office will be responsible for all charges to the account including rooms (even those reserved and not used or cancelled) and other charges (meals, movies, etc.). The account can be set up to prohibit additional charges unless the guest provides their own credit card for charges. Even if the room will be paid by the district on a direct bill account, each room needs to be reserved (via link or phone number provided) and reserved on a credit card.

***Q. Will VDH reimburse for lodging if stay is not at the designated hotel?***

A. Yes, VDH will reimburse at any hotel up to the GSA lodging rate for Harrisonburg of \$96/night. Anything above the per diem rate is the employee's responsibility.

***Q. If I make my reservation late and the rate is higher, will I still be reimbursed?***

A. Yes, VDH will reimburse at any hotel up to the GSA lodging rate of \$96. Anything above the GSA lodging rate for Harrisonburg is the responsibility of the attendee.

***Q. If we use a state or rental vehicle, does that count as one of the two vehicles?***

A. Yes. If you use a state vehicle, we will cover the fuel. If you rent a car, we will cover the rental and the fuel costs. If you use your personal vehicle, we will reimburse at the applicable rate.

***Q. Who can spend the night (and which night(s) can they spend)?***

A. The Academy begins at 1:00 p.m. on March 23<sup>th</sup> so morning travel to Harrisonburg is feasible for many. However, lodging and per diem for March 22<sup>th</sup> will be covered for those travelers whose base office is more than 250 miles from the Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center. Lodging can be at the Founders Inn or another hotel on the way as long as it is at the per diem rate for that area.

Lodging and per diem will be covered for March 23<sup>th</sup> for travelers whose base office is more than 50 miles away from the Hotel Madison. Travelers whose base office is 50 miles or less from the Hotel Madison will be reimbursed for miles traveled above normal commute mileage.

Lodging and per diem is approved for the evening of March 24<sup>th</sup> for staff attending the Field Epidemiology Seminar and for those travelers that are over 100 miles between their base office and Hotel Madison. Lodging can be at a Harrisonburg or another hotel on the way home as long as it is at or below the lodging rate for that area.

Lodging and per diem for March 25<sup>th</sup> will be covered for those travelers attending the Field Epi Seminar Workshop that are over 100 miles between their base office and the Hotel Madison. Lodging can be at a Harrisonburg hotel or another hotel on the way home as long as it is at or below the lodging rate for that area.

***Q. My District has an Epidemiologist/communicable disease nurse that is not funded by Preparedness grant funds. Can this person attend the Academy or the Field Epi Seminar?***

A. Yes. Funding will be provided for the grant-funded Epidemiologist, AND the nurse manager. Any appropriate staff member may attend and benefit from the grant-sponsored training if it is appropriate for their job duties, approved by district leadership and funded by the district. Again, the Health District should plan and determine who is most appropriate to attend each day's events.

***Q. Can only Preparedness funded staff attend the Field Epi Seminar?***

- A. No. The Field Epi Seminar is open to any staff the Health District deems appropriate. Health District staff must have prior approval from their supervisor. The Field Epi Seminar is scheduled from 9:00 to 4:15. If your district has a van and wants to send your entire epi response team for the day, that is okay. There is no limit in attendance to the Field Epi Seminar (up to our maximum room capacity of 450). You may be reimbursed the travel expense for use of this van, but it will count as one of the TWO vehicles eligible for reimbursement.

**Note:** You may extend an invitation to your partners outside VDH to ride with you in a state or rental vehicle if it would help them attend the seminar. Please make sure all attendees register for the event. VDH WILL NOT reimburse travel costs for those outside the Agency.

***Q. Are meals provided?***

- A. Lunch will be provided on March 24<sup>th</sup> and employees will NOT be reimbursed for lunch expenses on that day. Employees approved for overnight travel will be reimbursed for other travel-related expenses in accordance with the Commonwealth Accounting Policies and Procedures (CAPP) Manual. Employees staying in hotels that provide breakfast will not be reimbursed for breakfast expenses. The Hotel Madison has a full service restaurant providing breakfast, lunch and dinner and a Coffee Shop with “grab and go” breakfast and lunch items.

***Q. Are employees traveling to and from the meeting each day eligible for meal per diem reimbursement?***

- A. No. Travel-related expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the Commonwealth Accounting Policies and Procedures (CAPP) Manual.

***Q. Are employees traveling to and from the meeting each day eligible for mileage reimbursement?***

- A. Yes. Employees are eligible for travel reimbursement for mileage greater than their standard commute mileage. All applicable policies and procedures apply.

***Q. How many vehicles will be funded per regional office?***

- A. Carpooling is expected of regional team members attending the same portions of the meeting.

***Q. If I forget to register for the meeting will I still be able to attend?***

- A. Yes, if space is available. If you do not register and we do not have any seats, you will be responsible for your own lodging and travel expenses.

***Q. Which Central Office and regional staff will be reimbursed for travel?***

- A. All Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) grant-funded positions will be reimbursed for travel.