Overview

NSSC will reimburse PA WAP agencies for tuition/course fees, training material fees, conference fees, certification exam fees, and/or travel for PA WAP workers and subcontractors for approved continuing education (CE) opportunities during the July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 timeframe.

What types of continuing education (CE) opportunities are eligible for reimbursement?

- National and regional HPC Conferences
- National Community Action Partnership’s 2020 Virtual Annual Conference
- Energy OutWest Virtual Experience
- BPI Building Analyst I training and certification testing
- BPI Healthy Home Evaluator (HHE) training and certification testing
- BPI Building Science Principles Certificate of Knowledge reference materials and exam
- General computer training to improve staff/worker skill level with computer programs/software
- Leadership-type courses for office staff, supervisors, and those working toward becoming a supervisor
- Training that is specific to improving teambuilding and effectiveness of communication

Pre-Approval Requirements

For all CE opportunities, individuals must request pre-approval by completing a Pre-approval Report in Chrome River with information regarding anticipated events/trainings and estimated expenses (give your best guess based on mileage, per diem for the destination location, and other known costs).

All worker and subcontractor Pre-approval Reports must be approved by the agency Wx Director/Coordinator in Chrome River. If an agency Wx Director/Coordinator submits his/her own Pre-approval Report, it will be sent to the agency Executive Director for approval.

PA DCED will review the request and provide a decision on whether the request is an approved use of continuing education funds. Individuals can track the approval of a request in Chrome River.

Reimbursement for CE events will only be issued after receiving DCED’s approval and after expenses have been incurred.

How much will be reimbursed?

Each PA WAP agency has been provided with an initial allocation (based on historical Continuing Education expenditures) to spend this fiscal year on direct-hire workers as well as subcontractors. There is no limit on reimbursement per individual or per continuing education opportunity, as long as the total for each agency does not exceed the allocation (unless additional funds are approved).

Only amounts actually expended may be claimed. Detailed receipts that show payment are required for all continuing education opportunity reimbursement requests.

NSSC will process and track reimbursements by agency, and maintain a centralized record in Chrome River of the total amount reimbursed per agency.

Re-allocating Continuing Education Funds

In order to encourage annual planning of Continuing Education and timely spend down of these funds, and to provide the maximum amount of flexibility for agencies, there is a timeline in place to re-allocate Continuing Education funds based on network needs.
Timeline for Re-allocating Continuing Education Funds

**July 1, 2020 – January 31, 2021:** Each agency can be reimbursed up to their initial allocation for pre-approved continuing education opportunities. Agencies are strongly encouraged to submit all Pre-Approval Reports in Chrome River no later than January 31st in order to encumber CE funds into the future.

**February 1, 2021:** All *unencumbered (unapproved)* continuing education funds will be placed in a general pot of money that will be reimbursed to agencies first come, first served. All requests must be pre-approved with a Pre-Approval Report in Chrome River.

**March 31, 2021:** Last date for all agencies to submit Pre-approval Reports in Chrome River to encumber funds.

**April 1, 2021:** All *unencumbered (unapproved)* funds will be removed from the Continuing Education budget in order to ensure spend down and to cover other PA WAP network needs approved by DCED.

Eligible Expenses for Continuing Education

- Reimbursable expenses include tuition/course fees, training material fees, conference fees, certification exam fees
- Attach detailed receipts that show full payment. All receipts must include the following:
  - Name of vendor
  - Name of PA WAP student
  - Date of service
  - Amount paid
  - Credit card slips and statements are not acceptable in lieu of detailed receipts
- **Agency staff wages should not be submitted through Chrome River.** Staff wages are handled separately through PA DCED. Please contact PA DCED for further guidance on wage reimbursement.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

**Mileage**

- Students should use their WAP agency’s vehicle to travel, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- If a government-owned vehicle is used, no mileage reimbursement will be provided.
- If a personal vehicle is used, the rate per mile follows IRS guidelines for business rates: [https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates](https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates) (updated annually January 1st).
- Mileage reimbursement requests must be calculated using the mapping feature in Chrome River. Mileage will only be reimbursed for the main roundtrip. (For example, local mileage to/from hotel to the training site are not reimbursable.)

**Out of State Travel**

- Traveler must take the cheapest method of transportation that is reasonable.
- Economy flights only. Upgraded tickets will not be reimbursed.
- Flights must align with the business days of the continuing education opportunity. If you add personal time to your trip, you MUST acquire a comparison quote to show that the additional days amount to LESS or EQUAL than what it would have been for the standard business days.
- One airline baggage fee, each way, will be reimbursed.
- Car rentals must be the economy rate. Upgraded rentals will not be reimbursed.
Per Diem Reimbursement Eligibility:

Per diem travel reimbursement will only be provided if you are in a travel status for more than 12 hours. Eligibility starts when you depart your home, office, or other authorized point and ends when you return to your home, office, or other authorized point.

Reimbursement will follow GSA Per Diem rates for the training location (updated annually October 1st):

www.gsa.gov/perdiem

- Allowances for subsistence are not flat rates -- **Only amounts actually expended may be claimed.**
- **Detailed receipts are required for all travel expenditures.**
- When it is impossible to secure a required receipt (these instances should be rare), a complete explanation is required. Use a **Declaration of Missing Receipt Form.** Examples:
  - Vending machines, parking meter, or unmanned toll booth.
- If the city or county you are looking for is not listed on the GSA per diem rate page, then the standard continental U.S. rate applies.

Lodging

- Follows the GSA max allowable per diem, excluding taxes
- Expenses are reimbursed at actual cost
  - Detailed receipts from lodging are required
  - Upgraded accommodations at an additional cost are not allowed
- Hotel Taxes:
  - Taxes are reimbursable as a miscellaneous expense (outside of the per diem lodging rate)

Subsistence (Meals and Incidentals)

- Follows the GSA max allowable per diem. **This is not a flat rate - Only amounts actually expended may be claimed. Detailed (itemized) receipts are required for meals.**
- The first and last calendar day of travel is calculated at 75% the per diem rate.
- **Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is prohibited**
- What is included in incidental expenses?
  - Baggage handling and gratuities (limited to reimbursement of $1.50 per piece)
  - Gratuity on meal expenses (limited to 20% of meal)

Miscellaneous

- Miscellaneous expenses are **excluded** from the per diem allowance. Examples of miscellaneous expenses include:
  - Hotel taxes
  - Parking fees
  - Ground transportation to/from the common carrier terminal, and to/from the place of lodging and the conference/seminar/meeting
  - Highway tolls
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- EZ Pass tolls: Attach a copy of the EZ Pass account statement with the relevant tolls circled
- When claiming miscellaneous expenses without a detailed receipt, a full explanation is required

For more information on the travel policy, please refer to GSA’S Per Diem webpage (www.gsa.gov/perdiem) and the PA DCED Directive 2011-1 Federal Travel and Subsistence Allowance, dated August 30, 2011.

Receiving Reimbursement

- All Pre-approval Reports and Expense Reports must be submitted via Chrome River. Paper forms are no longer accepted as of 4/28/2020.
- Only CE events that have been approved via a Pre-Approval Report will be reimbursed.
- Use of personal or agency funds to pay such expenses as conference registration fees and airline tickets will not be reimbursed until after the completion of the travel, with the exception of the HPC National Conference registration fee, which may be reimbursed separately (earlier) from the travel expenses.
- For each continuing education event, submit all expenses (i.e. course fees, conference fees, exam fees, travel expenses) in one Expense Report via Chrome River.
- Reimbursement checks will only be made out to the individual that paid for the educational opportunity (no reimbursement to agencies). All expenses related to the educational opportunity must be reimbursed to the same entity.
- Timeframe: Expense reports should be submitted within 10 business days after the CE event.
- Year-end Deadline: All end-of-the-fiscal-year reimbursement requests (Chrome River Expense Reports) must be submitted by June 15, 2021, due to end of the year budget close-out. Reimbursement requests received after this date cannot be processed.

Chrome River

Chrome River log-in site: https://app.ca1.chromeriver.com/login

If you have not received a welcome email from Chrome River with your log-in information, please check your email spam folder, and then contact your agency Director/Coordinator to make sure you are listed on their annual Training Plan.

Chrome River accounts can only be created for individuals listed on a PA WAP agency’s Training Plan and you must provide a valid email address that is not shared with others in the PA WAP.

For other CE questions and Chrome River support, please contact NSSC at nssc@pct.edu.