

Public Health Preparedness Summit 2023 & Virginia Epidemiology Seminar

Frequently Asked Travel Questions

1. 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 THREE VEHICLES per district (one round trip each) and sufficient OVERNIGHT STAYS to accommodate the intended audience (UP TO 10 (TEN) ROOMS per night).

- a. The targeted district attendees include Health Directors, Local Health Emergency Coordinators, Epidemiologists, Medical Reserve Corps Coordinators, Nurse Manager, Public Information Officer, and three Positions of District Choice (Total of Ten Per District). It is the responsibility of the Health District to coordinate travel and attendance for participants to take advantage of the funding being made available.
- b. As of 9/19/2023-Additional funding has allowed the original number from each district to be increased from seven (7) to ten (10) personnel.

2. 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. Everyone should complete a travel estimate and follow procedures for TARS completion if more than \$1000.

- a. Travel Pre-Approval must be submitted at the work unit level to your supervisor, then to your District Director for signature.
- b. Any district with four or more personnel travelling must complete a TAR and submit it to your District Director for approval and signature.

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

A. After the Summit-All TERVS, TAR (if needed) and Travel Workbook's must be submitted to epctraining@vdh.virginia.gov No Later Than November 26, 2023. Travel exceptions will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Those exceptions should be directed to suzi.silverstein@vdh.virginia.gov

- a. A sample Travel Workbook can be found here: [Summit Travel Workbook Sample](#)

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 0000117513** 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.

4. 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.
- B. Districts/Offices should use the **PHEP project code 0000117513** under their cost codes to charge their attendees' hotel and vehicle charges.

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

A: 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.

For districts that are submitting reimbursement for Direct Bill please charge it to 619 P then OEP will journal the amount off P to AS, Then send the journal and journal # with the charges highlighted to eptraining@vdh.virginia.gov.

6. 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 Virginia Beach of \$120/night. Anything above the per diem rate is the employee's responsibility.

7. Q: 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 \$120. Anything above the GSA lodging rate for Virginia Beach is the responsibility of the attendee.

8. Q: If we use a state or rental vehicle, does that count as one of the three 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.

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

A. The Summit begins at 1:00 p.m. on October 23, 2023, so morning travel to Virginia Beach is feasible for many. However, lodging and per diem for October 22, 2023, will be covered for those travelers whose base office is more than 250 miles from the Virginia Beach. 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 October 23, 2023, for travelers whose base office is more than 50 miles away from the Founders Inn. Travelers whose

base office is 50 miles or less from the Hotel will be reimbursed for miles traveled above normal commute mileage.

Lodging and per diem is approved for the evening of October 24, 2023, for staff attending the Virginia Epidemiology Seminar and for those travelers that are over 100 miles between their base office and Virginia Beach. Lodging can be at the Founders Inn 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 October 25th will be covered for those travelers attending the Field Epi Seminar Workshop that are over 100 miles between their base office and the Founders Inn can be at the Founders Inn 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 October 22 will be covered for those travelers attending the Epidemiology Workshop or Spokesperson Training on the morning of October 23.

10. Q: My District has Additional staff that would like to attend. Can they attend the Summit or the VirginiaEpi Seminar?

- A. Yes. Funding will only be provided for those designated. Any appropriate staff member may attend and benefit from the Virginia Epidemiology Seminar 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 and utilize travel funding provided.

11. Q: Can only Preparedness funded staff attend the Virginia Epi Seminar?

- A. No. The Virginia Epi Seminar is open to any staff the Health District deems appropriate. Health District staff must have prior approval from their supervisor. The Virginia 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 550). You may be reimbursed the travel expense for use of this van, but it will count as one of the THREE 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.

12. Q. Are meals provided?

- A. Breakfast and Lunch will be served on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, along with an afternoon break. Breakfast and Lunch will be served on Wednesday, October 25, 2023. and employees will NOT be reimbursed for breakfast and 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.

13. 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.

14. 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. Updated VDH Travel guidance and applicable policies and procedures apply.

15. 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.

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

A. No, if you do not register and we do not have any seats, you will be responsible for your own lodging and travel expenses.

17. 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.