

**NC DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Section: D
Title: Driver Services
Current Effective Date: 12/22
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The mission of the NC Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) is to enable people who are visually impaired, blind or deaf-blind to reach their goals of independence and employment. In fulfilling that mission, the division employs many staff members who are visually impaired. These individuals are responsible for providing services to eligible individuals in various locations, urban and rural. Often it is necessary for the DSB employee to travel extensively from their office to meet with applicants or eligible individuals, other service providers, or prospective employers.

As an accommodation, reimbursement is made available so that staff with visual impairments may employ a driver to enable them to perform the functions of their job for which travel is required. This “reasonable accommodation” is mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 as amended (ADA) which promotes the independence and employment of people who are blind, and demonstrates that DSB presents a model for other employers.

Visually impaired and blind employees are expected to recruit, hire, and manage their driver while maintaining a high level of standards, ensuring confidentiality of applicant or eligible individual’s information, and following guidelines as set forth in this policy as well as relevant rules related to use of state vehicles and filing for reimbursement of monthly expenses.

Employees should make clear to their driver that the driver is not an employee of the State of North Carolina. The employer/employee relationship is between the DSB employee and the driver.

DSB employees should engage drivers for a reasonable number of hours required for completing necessary job duties such as visiting applicants or eligible individuals, making employer contacts, and other such necessary travel. The State will not reimburse an employee for driver costs associated with travel from home to work or work to home. These costs are the responsibility of the employee. Similarly, driver service should not be used for personal errands such as shopping during work hours. Travel times should be at the discretion of blind employees, just as with employees who have normal driving vision, and every effort should be made to organize work in a manner which would promote efficient use of funds. In accordance with routine expenditure reporting practices, visually impaired employees will submit monthly reports which include the expenses for driver services which will be reviewed by the individual’s supervisor and submitted for reimbursement, as approved.

Potential drivers will be required to have a criminal background check, a drug screen and a Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) record check. If there are identified issues in any of these areas, feedback will be provided to the DSB employee so that an informed decision can be made regarding the prospective driver.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

When an employee of the NC Division of Services for the Blind needs to utilize driver service, these steps should be followed:

1. It is the responsibility of the DSB employee to discuss the terms of the employment and an understanding that the driver is not an employee of DSB. The driver will be considered a self-employed contractor and will be responsible for paying their own State and Federal taxes and

social security withholding fees, etc. When a vendor provides a service to a DSB employee, a 1099 is to be provided to the vendor by the DSB employee. If the vendor provides a product, then a 1099 is not necessary. It is the responsibility of the DSB employee to provide their driver a 1099 annually by January 31st of the following year. (example: for calendar year 2017 the driver should receive the 1099 dated 2017 by January 31, 2018.)

2. The employee of DSB will have their driver complete a [DHHS-DSB Driving Record Status Form](#) and a [Criminal Record Check Consent Form](#) and submit them to the Human Resources Office.
3. The employee will discuss with their driver the need for confidentiality and have them read and sign Confidentiality Statement for Drivers ([On-Line DSB 7405 Confidentiality Statement for Drivers](#)).
4. It will be the responsibility of the employee to maintain records tracking the number of hours and days worked by their driver. At the end of each month, a Guide Service Billing Form ([On-Line DSB-0503 Driver Service Billing Form](#)) will be completed and signed by the driver and the DSB employee, then submitted to that employee's supervisor for approval.
5. The employee will be responsible for paying the driver accurately based on the hourly rate and time submitted. The employee will retain verification of payment in the form of a receipt signed by the driver or cancelled check in the amount of which will be consistent with the reimbursement form filed by the employee.
6. When the vehicle being used for transportation is owned by the driver, it is not covered by the state for insurance purposes.
7. This policy should be reviewed by each individual who is employed as a driver, signed by that individual, and a copy retained with the DSB employee and the driver.

REIMBURSEMENT:

The maximum hourly DSB reimbursement rate for driver service will be communicated by a memo at the beginning of each state fiscal year. Effective December 1, 2022, the maximum reimbursement rate is \$13.00/hour.

A maximum number of hours per month is established based on territory covered by the employee who is visually impaired.

- Staff members whose territory is less than district wide may be reimbursed up to 96 hours per month. This includes vocational rehabilitation counselors, independent living rehabilitation counselors and social workers for the blind.
- For persons who have district wide, area wide or state wide responsibilities, a maximum of 120 hours per month driver service is reimbursable. This includes employment consultants, area supervisors, and state office personnel.

After this document has been reviewed by the employee with the driver it should be signed by the driver and a copy given to that individual and the DSB employee should retain a signed copy.

I, _____ (name of driver) have reviewed this document and agree to work under and abide by these guidelines.

Signature of Driver

Date