

Considerations for Overnight Travel with Youth and Young Adults

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HUD developed this guide to support communities in advising Youth and Young Adults (YYA) about overnight travel as part of their work on a Youth Action Board and other work-related travel. Business travel might be new to some YYA and, like any new experience, certain norms and assumptions might be unfamiliar. Older adults should provide as much information and support as possible and communicate expectations so that YYA feel included, comfortable, and welcomed into what might be new spaces or environments. Best practices, important considerations, and anecdotal lessons learned are included below. This document does not address funding specifics.

Supporting YYA

- When planning, have conversations with YYA about their level of comfort and experience traveling. Some YYA might be totally self-sufficient in navigating travel on their own, while for others it might be helpful to be accompanied by older adults or program staff they are already familiar with, especially if work-related travel is new to them. Some YYA may choose to travel more independently over time. Talk with YYA about what works best for them and be open to making adjustments.
- Have conversations with YYA about what they might expect in all-day meetings and conference settings they will likely encounter. Discuss the agenda and schedule, as the days can be long and a lot of sitting in one place!
- Talk about attire and how others in the room may present themselves, as a way to give YYA information about the business meeting environment to help inform how they decide to prepare themselves.
- Have conversations with YYA about their role in such convenings, encourage YYA to feel comfortable asking questions and voicing opinions, and most importantly, make every effort to create a collaborative, open environment within the convening itself.
- If multiple YYA are attending a given event, it can be helpful to carve out specific time and space for the YYA to meet with each other in formal/informal contexts to build relationships and community. Consider allotting time for this early in the schedule.
- Do not assume YYA own or can access travel essentials. Check in with them prior to travel about what they might need, e.g., clothes, travel items such as luggage, etc. One YYA used per diem (in the form of a Visa Card) to purchase luggage to travel, because they did not own any. Consequently, the YYA was \$70 short of per diem funds and ran out of money for food.

Travel Logistics

- Endeavor to pay all expenses in advance, so YYA are not asked to pay on-the-spot pay for any expense out of pocket, even if the expense is reimbursable.
- Standard travel expenses to cover in full:
 - **Airfare/Train** (or gas/mileage when using personal vehicle)
 - **Local ground transportation** (e.g., taxi (Uber, Lyft) or public transportation to/from airport, train station, meeting location, hotel, and home)
 - **Hotel**
 - **Per diem**
 - **Conference registration fee** (if applicable)

- **Childcare** (for parenting YYA)
- **Compensation:** YYA should be paid for time spent traveling to and on-the-ground at a convening, in *addition* to the above expense categories. Your organization should confirm and finalize a funding source and mechanism to deliver payment prior YYA travel.
- Tips & Lessons Learned:
 - Flight/Train
 - Discuss potential timing of flights and schedule with YYA. Everyone has preferences around time of day, layovers, and regional airports (if in metropolitan area with multiple options). Youth choice applies!
 - Discuss potential baggage fees with YYA prior to travel. If the itinerary or personal preference necessitate checked baggage, make every effort to pay upfront for anticipated fees when booking ticket.
 - Because not all YYA have flown before, discuss considerations around TSA allowable items, check-in times, and appropriate times to arrive at airports. One YYA missed a return flight because he was unaware of the return flight time or what time he needed to leave for the airport to catch the flight. Check in with YYA both on the departing and return trips to ensure all parties know the schedules.
 - Local ground transportation (e.g., taxi (Uber, Lyft) or public transportation to/from airport, train station, meeting location, hotel, and/or home)
 - If using a car-sharing service such as Uber/Lyft, consider opening a corporate account to schedule and pay for rides on behalf of YYA.
 - For public transportation, purchase ticket/transit card in advance for YYA, or provide Visa/AmEx gift card (see per diem below) in the anticipated amount.
 - Hotel
 - When booking for YYA, request that incidentals be “turned off” and that the YYA not be asked for a credit card on file at check-in. This may also mean requesting that alcohol be removed from an in-room refrigerator. If the hotel needs to have a credit card on file, provide that information at booking.
 - Be clear with YYA that if they would like to order room service, they will use their per diem funds (see below) to pay.
 - Whenever possible, each YYA should have their own room. If financial circumstances necessitate a roommate, allow the YYA to have choice in the pairing decision.
 - Always check with YYA about what name they would like the hotel to have on file for them. In some cases, this might not match the name on the YYA’s government-issued ID, and can present an issue at check-in. Give the hotel both names, with explicit instructions on how the YYA should be addressed.
 - Per diem
 - Calculate the full amount of the allowable per diem for the length of the trip and provide this via check, direct deposit, or a Visa/AmEx gift card prior to travel. Discuss with YYA what works best for them.
 - When possible, provide YYA with this money before or at the moment they leave home so that they are not required to cover any out-of-pocket expenses.
 - Youth choice applies here. Set expectations that this is the full amount of money they will receive for the duration of travel to cover food and other (non-transportation) related expenses. If they do not spend the full amount,

the balance is theirs to use at their own discretion. Similarly, if YYA choose to spend all of their per diem the first day, inform them they will be responsible for meal costs for the remainder of the trip.

- Conference registration fee (if applicable)
 - Conferences often offer a special registration rate for attendees with lived experience. If the YYA is presenting on or moderating a panel, the registration fee may be waived. If YYA will incur the fee, your organization should pay the fee in advance.
- Childcare
 - Access to childcare is often a barrier to ensuring the full participation of parenting YYA. While this cost is not a federally reimbursable travel expense, providing quality childcare can allow for a more diverse range of experiences (i.e., pregnant and parenting youth) to be a part of planning processes and other community activities involving youth collaboration.

Planning for the Unexpected

- Planning for the unanticipated is key, as well as frank conversations before traveling with YYA about potential scenarios. It is also important to take into consideration a person's past trauma history. For example, for a YYA with a history of being involved in sex trafficking, staying in a hotel could present a real potential for re-traumatization. Any conversations that can happen before anticipated travel can help mitigate such circumstances and allow organizations to arrange safer and more comfortable accommodations.
- Situations can arise, such as overspending per diem funds or missing flights, which require flexibility of communities and adult partners to adapt to circumstances, sometimes in real-time, while on-site.
- Ensuring access to flexible funds to cover emergency expenses beyond certain standard, allowable costs is essential to make purchases or cover expenses in the moment and not put the burden on YYA for unanticipated costs.