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To: "infolist@uw.edu"
Subject: [Infolist] Clarifying Our Stance on Venmo: Addressing Your Questions and Concerns
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Attachments: [ATT00001.txt](#)

Good afternoon and Happy Wednesday,

Following last Friday's Venmo policy email, we've received your questions and valid concerns, prompting us to offer this quick follow-up. Our aim is to delve a bit deeper and, hopefully, shed more light on the policy.

Our longstanding policy, in effect even before the pandemic, prohibits the reimbursement of expenses paid via Venmo and similar person-to-person payment services. This policy remains unchanged, and its validity is heightened in today's landscape with the emergence and growth of comparable apps like Zelle and Cash App, as well as the person-to-person functionalities of widely used online payment services such as Apple Pay and Google Pay.

When we refer to "Venmo", "services similar to Venmo", and "mobile payment services" we are specifically referring to all applications enabling exchange of funds between users. This is the primary function of apps like Venmo, Zelle, and Cash App. The primary reason why we would like to be clear on our stance of not allowing reimbursement of expenses paid for with apps like this is due to our other policy of not reimbursing payments for others. ([Policy](#)) Specifically, "exchanges of funds between travelers". The reasoning for *this* policy is that all expenses must have a substantial audit to be compliant with state/federal policies and therefore our accountable plan thereby making the expense eligible to be considered a nontaxable reimbursement and not income in the eyes of the IRS. Transferring of money through third-party sites/apps, banks, or handling of cash breaks the audit trail, is not compliant, and falls outside of our accountable plan.

Acknowledging the evolving digital landscape, we recognize that transactions through platforms like Venmo, Zelle, or PayPal are not limited to person-to-person transfers. Businesses like Uber, Lyft, and certain lodging establishments, such as Airbnb, directly accept these forms of payment. So, to provide you all with more clarity on how to face the vast array of different reimbursement scenarios you may encounter, we offer a few exceptions and clarifications to this ban on person-to-person payment services for certain scenarios.

- Car service expenses such as Uber and Lyft paid for by one of these services. We can reimburse on the condition the receipt from Uber or Lyft showing a service like Venmo was used is provided in addition to the traveler's bank/credit card statement showing the funds come directly from their credit/bank accounts.
- For lodging expenses with lodging companies that accept these services such as Airbnb. We can reimburse on the condition the receipt from the lodging (ie. Airbnb receipt) showing a service like Venmo or Paypal was used is provided. Also, in addition to the traveler's bank/credit card statement showing the funds come directly from their credit/bank accounts.
- Scenarios such as a group splitting an Airbnb in which one person pays and the rest "Venmo" that one person. We cannot reimburse anyone but the one person who actually paid for the expense.
- For remote locations where credit cards are not accepted and only cash or possibly services

like Venmo are accepted, the traveler should request a [field advance](#).

Your thoughtful questions help us refine and improve and we're always here for any further questions or clarifications you might need, and we encourage you to direct questions or concerns to travel@uw.edu.

Stay warm out there!



travel@uw.edu

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