

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Internal Accounts Payable
EMPLOYEE TRAVEL, CONFERENCE & MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS

The following is the policy for employee travel, conference, meals, and incidentals reimbursement.

1. TRAVEL

The following rules and regulations regarding conference, workshop, and meeting travel reimbursements apply when using a County Superintendent vehicle, rental or the employee's own vehicle.

A. **In Fresno County/Region VII** (*Fresno, Madera, Merced, Kings, Tulare, and Mariposa Counties*) Staff members who are required or authorized to travel in order to conduct business are governed by the following:

1. Current employment
2. Insurance coverage (\$100,000 liability per person, \$300,000 liability per occurrence, \$25,000 property damage)
3. Daily Log of Miles Traveled – Documentation is to be provided in the form of Google map printouts. The map provided is to include all destinations traveled with the total number of miles being claimed. (For mileage requests not associated with conference travel, see SP#515.)
4. Claims shall be submitted for reimbursement within 45 days after the conclusion of the event.
5. **Effective January 1, 2021**, mileage reimbursement rate for business travel is 56¢ per mile for all employee groups. This decreases the rate by 1.5¢ per mile from the 2020 mileage rate of 57.5¢.
6. Mileage will be reimbursed for roundtrip travel from the County Superintendent worksite or home to the destination, whichever is less. Although reimbursement for commuting to and from work is not allowed, the starting or ending destination can be home, if it is the lesser distance.
CTA Bargaining Unit Members, MSC, and CU will follow the guidelines in the current CTA contract.
7. In Fresno County/Region VII, meals are not an allowable expense unless they are included as part of the registration fee.

B. **Out of Fresno County/Region VII Travel** – Prior approval is required. A "Conference, Workshop, Meeting Request" form with supporting documentation must be obtained by your department as far in advance as possible to obtain the best possible travel fares and rates. A minimum of six weeks in advance is encouraged for all travel requiring Superintendent's approval. All out-of-state travel also requires prior approval by the Superintendent prior to making any travel arrangements. Employees must obtain approval from their authorized designee in advance of registering, making arrangements, and business travel. If travel arrangements must be canceled for any reason, the employee requesting the travel shall cancel them in sufficient time to prevent the County Superintendent from incurring unnecessary costs. An employee shall not approve his or her own business travel or approve his or her own travel documentation. The employee's supervisor is responsible for securing and identifying a capable replacement to ensure coverage of responsibilities as appropriate.

Business travel expenses may be denied unless prior approval has been received.

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Travel Advances: Internal Business Services (IBS) must receive a request for an advance no later than 10 working days before the advance is required in order to have the necessary time to process the request before the date of travel. IBS will not process a request for an advance more than six weeks before the date of travel. The "Accounts Payable Processing Dates Schedule" should be referenced when considering your timeline.

Cancellations: Employees are responsible for canceling any reservations for lodging, travel costs, and registration they will not use. Any charge for an unused reservation shall be considered the employee's personal expense unless failure to cancel the reservation was due to circumstances beyond the employee's control.

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6. Mileage will be reimbursed for roundtrip travel from the County Superintendent worksite or home to the destination, whichever is less. Although reimbursement for commuting to and from work is not allowed, the starting or ending destination can be home, if it is the lesser distance.
CTA Bargaining Unit Members, MSC, and CU will follow the guidelines in the current CTA contract.
7. Meal reimbursement (See Page 5)

Transportation: Employees shall use whatever mode of transportation is the most practical, logical and cost effective. Employees should give consideration to distance, time and total cost to the County Superintendent. By approving an employee's travel request, the approver is acknowledging that the mode of transportation is the most practical, logical and cost effective. Arrangements made by departments with vendors are at the discretion of the respective cabinet member.

- C. **Car Rental** – Vendor car rental within Region VII is not allowed unless authorized by the Superintendent/Deputy Superintendent prior to rental.

Staff members who are required or authorized to travel in order to conduct out of Region VII business that choose to rent a vehicle are governed by the following:

1. Vehicles must be rented through the Enterprise Rent-A-Car, "Car Rental Business Travel Account Rental Program." It can be accessed on the County Superintendent Intranet site under "[FCSS Links](#)." Only County Superintendent employees are authorized to drive the vehicle.
2. A "Conference, Workshop, Meeting Request" form must be completed listing the

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

mode of transportation under "Other" as Enterprise.

3. The estimate for expenditures should include the cost of rental, plus fuel. This request must have prior approval before vehicle is rented.
4. A Purchase Order (PO) must always be used when renting a vehicle for County Superintendent use. Departments may issue open POs for this purpose.
5. The vehicles highlighted in yellow on the "Pick a Vehicle" screen are the County Superintendent-preferred vehicles. The department head will determine the type of vehicle to be selected from this preferred list.
6. When submitting for payment, the pink copy of the contract received at the time of vehicle pickup with an "authorization to pay" and "date" along with the receiving (yellow) copy of the PO or a photocopy for an open PO is to be attached and submitted to Accounts Payable for processing. To ensure timely payments, paperwork should be submitted no later than five working days after travel/conference concludes.
7. Fuel charges are to be included as part of the reimbursement on the "Conference, Workshop, & Mileage Expense Claim" form under "Transportation." Original receipts must be submitted. Lost receipts will not be reimbursed.

D. County Superintendent Vehicle

1. Staff members who choose to use a County Superintendent "corporate" vehicle for travel are to estimate the usage charge on the "Conference, Workshop, Meeting Request" form using the rates specified in SOP #802. Associated costs will be interprogrammed charged.
2. Refer to SOP #802 for additional requirements for the use of County Superintendent "corporate" vehicles.

2. CONFERENCE

- A. **In Fresno County/Region VII** – If a conference/meeting is held within Region VII and only mileage expense is incurred, a "Conference, Workshop, Meeting Request" form does not need to be completed (Reference Standard Operating Procedure #515 for mileage only reimbursement.). If an expense other than mileage is required, such as registration, then a "Conference, Workshop, Meeting Request" form with supporting documentation must be completed.
- B. **Out of Fresno County/Region VII - Prior Approval Required** – Staff members who are authorized or selected to attend assigned conferences, workshops, or meetings out of the county are governed by the following:
 1. Current employment.
 2. Approval granted, in advance, by submission of a "Conference, Workshop, Meeting Request" form.
 - a. "Conference, Workshop, Meeting Request" forms with supporting documentation may be approved by the Senior Director, Administrator, the area Deputy Superintendent (responsible for that program and budget), or the Superintendent. All out-of-state travel is to be pre-approved by the Superintendent.
 - b. If the conference request is initiated because an employee has been assigned to attend, it is the responsibility of the County Office to approve payment for those expenditures that are deemed reasonable and appropriate.
 - c. If the conference request is initiated because an employee wishes to attend for personal or professional growth, the County Office may approve expenditures that are deemed reasonable and appropriate.

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

- C. **45 Day Deadline for Claim Reimbursement** with support data as follows:
1. An approved “**Conference, Workshop, Meeting Request**” form with supporting documentation.
 2. **Travel mode:**
 - a. **Airplane/Train**: Arrangements made by departments with vendors are at the discretion of the respective cabinet member. Departments may use various vendors and resources including the Internet, to make their flight arrangements. County Superintendent purchase orders must be used with the vendor documentation attached and itemized records. If a vendor does not accept purchase orders, a personal credit card may be required. When ordering or making reservations on the Internet, remember to print a confirmation of your order to supply as documentation. Employees shall not limit their air travel options by specifying an airline. Employees shall select the airline offering the lowest fare for a logical route.
 - b. **Automobile**: When more than one person is attending the same conference or meeting, ride sharing should occur. If the employees choose to take their own cars, the County Office will pay travel one way for each person, or any other appropriate combination, as long as there are no additional expenses to the County Superintendent. Determination will be made by the budget manager in that department. Tickets issued for traffic, parking, and/or toll violations are the responsibility of the employee driving and not the responsibility of the County Superintendent, even if driving a County Superintendent vehicle or a rental.
 3. **Registration**: Attach original receipt if employee paid (may include banquet or lunch, if program verifies as integral part of the meeting), the agenda, and a copy of the completed registration form for the conference/workshop. A canceled copy of your check or copy of your statement may be used as proof of payment if there is no itemized receipt for your registration.
 4. **Lodging**: Expenses should be the “best price” and reasonable for the location. If requested, many vendors will give a special rate for government employees and event attendees. It is incumbent on the employee traveling and the department head to use good judgment when securing and approving lodging expenses. Should an employee choose to stay elsewhere at a higher rate than the recommended conference lodging, reimbursement shall be made up to the equivalent of the advertised room rate of the conference. All lodging claims must be accompanied by an itemized receipt. If one is not given, please ask for one. Hotel/Motel Transient Occupancy Tax may be waived if a “Waiver Exemption Claim for Governmental Agencies” form is on file with the hotel/motel. Inquiry should be made at the time reservations are made or registration is done.

3. **MEAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR OVERNIGHT TRAVEL**

To be in compliance with IRS regulations, meals will not be reimbursed for same day travel. County Superintendent will reimburse employees based on a per diem or actual receipt basis for the cost of meals incurred during travel away from the employee’s ordinary place of business for a business purpose. Meal reimbursements will cover the cost of meals for County Superintendent employees only. The employee will bear the cost of the portion of any meal that is related to an employee’s guest, whether professional or personal. Meal reimbursement, as listed below, is for a full 24-hour period. Breakfast is allowed if travel begins before 7:00 a.m., lunch if travel begins before 10:30 a.m. and dinner when travel ends after 7:00 p.m.

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Reimbursement of meals allow all employees the following options:

- **Option 1** - A flat rate of **\$41.00** per Diem with ***No Receipts:**

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Breakfast | \$ 7.00 (if travel begins before 7:00 a.m.) |
| Lunch | 11.00 (if travel begins before 10:30 a.m.) |
| Dinner | 23.00 (if travel ends after 7:00 p.m.) |
| Total | <u>\$41.00</u> |

You will be reimbursed based upon the time travel begins and ends. Meal reimbursements that do not use the per diem method will be based on actual itemized receipts.

- **Option 2** - A maximum rate of **\$46.00** each day **With Itemized Receipts:**

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Breakfast | \$ 9.00 (if travel begins before 7:00 a.m.) |
| Lunch | 13.00 (if travel begins before 10:30 a.m.) |
| Dinner | <u>24.00</u> (if travel ends after 7:00 p.m.) |
| Total | <u>\$46.00</u> |

** Incidental business/travel costs not substantiated with a receipt must be covered within these rates.*

Alcoholic beverages are not an allowable expense.

When requesting reimbursement, only one option is permitted per claim—either all receipts or all flat rates. If any receipts are missing, the claim will be paid based upon the \$41.00 flat rate.

Personal Expenses – County Superintendent will not pay for personal expenses. Examples of personal expenses (this list is not all inclusive) include in-room movies, spas and gyms, optional quasi-social functions or events in connection with a conference, laundry or dry cleaning, miscellaneous sundries, or other items of a personal nature.

County Superintendent will not pay for any expenses of another person who accompanies an employee on business travel.

4. **INCIDENTALS**

- All necessary and actual expenses, such as parking fees, bridge tolls, business baggage handling, and taxis will be reimbursed to the extent allowed by law and supported by an itemized receipt.
- Business Expenses – County Superintendent will pay for goods and/or services deemed necessary for the completion of official business, such as faxes, copier and computer usage, etc. Whenever possible, employees shall anticipate the need for supplies and shall take whatever they will need with them instead of buying supplies at their destination. Actual itemized receipts must substantiate amounts reimbursed.

5. **FORMS – TIME OF SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL**

- The “Conference, Workshop and Meeting Request” form, “Conference, Workshop and Mileage Expense Claim” form must be completed and approved before a reimbursement is processed. Claims for travel reimbursement and requests for advance checks must have an approved “Conference, Workshop and Meeting Request” form attached along with any other supporting documentation that is

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

- required.
- B. All “Conference, Workshop, and Mileage Expense Claim” forms must be approved and signed as follows:
1. All employees that report to a Director (or lower level position) must have their expenses approved and signed by their department head and the area Deputy Superintendent.
 2. All managers holding a position of Senior Director (or higher-level position) will have their expenses approved and signed by the area Deputy Superintendent or the Superintendent.
 3. All expenses of the Deputy Superintendent must be approved and signed by the Superintendent or designee.
 4. All expenses of the Superintendent must be approved and signed by the Deputy Superintendent of Business Services.

To the extent any provision set forth in this SP conflicts with any provision in a Superintendent and County Board Policy, a County Superintendent Policy, or a County Superintendent Administrative Regulation, the provision set forth in the policy or administrative regulation shall govern.

Effective: 01/31/2020