

# HIGHLINE COLLEGE TRAVEL PROCEDURES

## PURPOSE

I.

As required by the Washington State Legislature, Highline College Travel Regulations and Procedures are established to be in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), General Services Administration (GSA) and of the State Administrative and Accounting Manual. The travel regulations and procedures are intended to protect public funds from waste, abuse, and fraud. All travel by College employees, students, and contractors are to be conducted in manners/methods that are the **most economical and/or most advantageous to the State.**

## AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL

II.

All travelers, including employees, students, and contractors, traveling on state/college business **MUST** have the travel **pre-approved** before the travel begins. This pre-approval authorizes for the traveler to be away from the official workstation and authorizes the appropriate travel expenditures. Pre-approval is defined as a Travel Authorization that is fully approved prior to the first date of travel. Please note that it is the traveler's responsibility to submit for pre-approval on time and to make sure all proper authorization steps are taken prior to the first day of travel.

- For general travel requests, please create and submit a Travel Authorization in ctclink.
- For travel using faculty Professional Development Funds, please complete a PD Funds Request Form
- For student travel, please complete a Student Travel Authorization Form
- For international student recruitment trips, a trip proposal along with a completed Travel Authorization in ctclink is required at least 60 days in advance

III.

## TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION FORM

The Travel Authorization (TA) is the official document that provides pre-approval for travel. All travelers **MUST** complete the TA and obtain necessary approvals **PRIOR** to traveling. Highline College may **NOT** reimburse or pay for travel-related expenses that have not been pre-approved.

**EXCEPTION:** A TA is **NOT** required for reimbursement on mileage, parking, and/or ferry tickets or virtual conferences, IF the traveler is not requesting reimbursement for any other travel expenses for the same trip.

Please be sure to complete and provide ALL information as required on the TA, including travel itinerary, agenda and estimated expenses. Please note the following information in preparing the TA:

### Travel Itinerary

- **MUST** include destination/event/workshop/conference name
- Indicate expected departure and return dates. **NOTE:** A traveler is in travel status beginning from the time he/she leaves his/her residence, up to a maximum of three (3) hours prior to the departure time of the plane or train.
- Explain the purpose of the trip relating to work assignment and expected benefits.
- The agenda for the Event/Workshop/Conference **MUST** be included as an attachment.

**ESTIMATED EXPENSES:** Please include ALL anticipated travel expenses. Only pre-approved travel expenses, per OFM, GSA and SAM State Guidelines, are eligible for reimbursement. However, excessive or unnecessary expenses will not be approved or reimbursed. Travelers are responsible for any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.

### **Registration Fee**

- Registration may either be pre-paid by the College or be paid by the traveler on his/her own and then seek reimbursement.
- The traveler is encouraged to submit the TA far in advance to allow ample time for the college to generate registration payments.
- **NOTE:** Traveler is responsible for the actual registration process. The College is only responsible for generating a payment to pay for the registration fee.

### **Lodging**

- Lodging allowances are determined by established allowable rates. Please check the following websites for the most updated allowable lodging rates:
  - In-State: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>
  - Out-of-State: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>
  - Out-of-Country/Alaska/Hawaii: <http://www.defensetravel.dodo.mil/site/perdiemCalc.cfm>
- All maximum lodging allowance rates are excluding taxes.
- The traveler is responsible for lodging costs in excess of the allowance.
- **In-State Lodging Exception (The 50-mile Rule):** Lodging reimbursement may be approved for the traveler when the temporary duty station (meeting, conference, event, etc.) is located within fifty (50) miles of the closer of either the traveler's residence or official workstation, if one of the following conditions is applied:
  - When the meeting/conference/event, etc. ends after 8 PM and the next day schedule convenes by 8 AM (to avoid having the traveler drive back and forth for back-to-back late night/early morning).
  - When the health and safety of travelers is of concern pertaining to inclement weather or sudden on-set of an unexpected emergency (illness, etc.)
  - When an agency can demonstrate that staying overnight is more economical to the state

### **High-Cost Lodging**

- **Exceptions to the max allowable lodging rate (The 150% Rule):** Lodging expenses in excess of the maximum lodging allowance, up to 150% of the maximum allowable per diem, may be approved if ONE of the following conditions is applied:
  - When the traveler is assigned to accompany an elected official, a foreign dignitary, or others as authorized by law, and is required to stay in the same lodging facility.
  - When lodging costs in the area have escalated for a brief period of time either during special events or disasters.
  - When lodging accommodations in the area are not available at or below the maximum lodging amount, and the savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodging at a more distant site are consumed by an increase in transportation and other costs.
  - When the traveler attends a meeting, conference, convention, or training session where the traveler is expected to have business interaction with other participants in addition to scheduled events. Maximum benefit will be achieved by the traveler staying at the lodging facilities where the meeting, conference, etc. is held.

- When necessary to comply with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (SAAM 10.10.40) or when the health and safety of the traveler is at risk (SAAM 10.10.35).
- When necessary to have meeting facilities, and it is more economical to acquire special lodging accommodations, such as a suite, instead of acquiring a meeting room and a lodging room.
- **Exceptions to the 150% Rule:** The agency may approve lodging in excess of The 150% Rule if the following criteria is met:
  - The traveler is required to attend a meeting, conference, convention or training session where the traveler is expected to have in-person interactions with other participants in addition to scheduled events AND
  - It is anticipated that maximum benefit will be achieved by authorizing the traveler to stay at the lodging facility AND
  - The lowest available lodging rate at the facility exceed The 150% Rule

### **Privately-Owned Vehicle (Mileage Reimbursement)**

- The mileage reimbursement rate is determined by the State and may be adjusted periodically.
- Only one mileage reimbursement shall be payable to all individuals traveling in the same motor vehicle.
- An employee may be eligible for mileages reimbursement between their official residence and official station only when the travel is in addition to their daily commute.
- Mileage reimbursement is allowable for routes that do **not** include the employee's commute between their official residence and official work station (OFM 10.50.25a)
- **NOTE:** A TA is NOT required for mileage reimbursement IF the traveler is not requesting reimbursement for any other expenses for the same trip.

### **Rental Vehicle**

- Vehicle rental expenses are reimbursable at the lower of actual costs or the rate of the state contract vendor. The current state vendor is Enterprise Rent-A-Car.
- In an effort to promote sustainability, the College will reimburse up to \$50 per day/per passenger(including taxes and fees) for a rental vehicle
- The College will reimburse gas expenses when a rental car is used for official state business.
- Once the TA is approved, the Travel Coordinator will provide the traveler with a State Contract number.
- The traveler may also rent cars on his/her own and seek reimbursement, as long as the car rental cost is equal or lesser than the state contract rate. Car rental insurance purchased by the traveler is not reimbursable.
- Include an estimate or quote of the car rental with the TA.
- **NOTE:** Car rental expenses may not be fully reimbursable, especially when factoring in parking expenses if any, are considerably more expensive than other modes of transportation that are available to the traveler. The traveler may only be reimbursed for the lower of the actual costs.

### **Parking**

- Parking expenses are reimbursable at the most economical rates for the comparable area.
- The traveler is responsible for parking expenses that are beyond reasonable and comparable rates.
- The maximum airport parking reimbursement is \$100 . Likewise, the maximum parking reimbursement rate while in the destination is \$100 total.
- Parking expenses are not reimbursable for trips that are NOT of the official agenda, including trips

to restaurants and sightseeing destinations.

- Include an estimate of the parking expenses with the TA
- **NOTE:** Parking expenses may not be fully reimbursable when other more affordable modes of transportation are available to the traveler, especially when factoring in the car rental expenses. The traveler may only be reimbursed for the lower of the actual costs.

### Taxi/Shuttle

- Taxi and shuttle expenses are reimbursable at the most economical rates for the comparable area. Please do not include tips or gratuity with reimbursement requests.
- The traveler is responsible for taxi/shuttle expenses that are beyond reasonable and comparable rates.
- The current maximum taxi/shuttle reimbursement rate is \$100 for one-way trip to and from the Airport.
- Taxi and shuttle expenses are not reimbursable for trips that are NOT of the official agenda, including trips to restaurants and sightseeing destinations.
- Include an estimate of the taxi/shuttle expenses with the TA

### Airfare

- Airline tickets may either be pre-paid by the College or be paid by the traveler on his/her own and then seek reimbursement.
- For College pre-pay, the traveler will fill out the Advanced Airfare Purchase Form and submit to The Travel Coordinator along with the TA. The Travel Coordinator will purchase airfare on behalf of the traveler and provide a confirmation code for the itinerary.
- Include an estimate or quote of the airfare with the TA.
- The traveler is encouraged to submit the TAF at least 30 days in advance for travel requiring airfare.
- Once the TA is approved, the traveler **MUST book** an airline ticket at least **30 days** prior to the start of the trip to obtain the more economical airfare (if purchasing their own airfare)
- The traveler may also purchase airline tickets on his/her own by any reasonable means (Expedia, Orbitz, Travelocity, etc.) and seek reimbursement, as long as it is equal or lesser than the state contract rate, AND only after the TA has been approved by the travel coordinator.
- A traveler traveling via airplane may be considered in travel status up to four (4) hours prior to departure
- **NOTE:** Excessive airline ticket prices, due to late booking or personal travel preferences, may not be fully reimbursable. The traveler may only be reimbursed for the equivalent of a typical air fare to the destination. If airfare is purchased within 30 days, the traveler must provide approval from their VP along with an explanation as to why the travel is outside of policy in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

### International Travel

#### Insurance

- All travelers traveling outside the US must have International Insurance purchased by the Travel Coordinator (EXCEPT for faculty traveling on PD funds)
- The estimated cost of international travel insurance will be \$5 per day for the duration of official Highline College Travel

## Meals

- Meal reimbursement rate is set by the State for each meal period: breakfast, lunch, and dinner
- Employees are eligible for meal per diems when in "travel status," defined as being away from their official work station on official business for more than 11 hours as per an agenda
- A traveler is eligible for meal reimbursement once he/she is in "travel status" during the FULL BLOCK of times listed below :
  - Breakfast: 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM
  - Lunch: 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
  - Dinner: 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- The meal reimbursement rate is the rate in effect for the area where the travel stops for the night.
- The meal reimbursement rate for the last day of travel (return day) is the rate for the location where the traveler last stopped for the night. (SAAM 10.40.55).
- Meal reimbursement during flights will be based on the rate of the destination. On the returning trip home, the meal rate during the flight will be the location where the traveler last spent the night
- Include estimate of all meal reimbursements with the TA
- **Note:** Do not include meals provided as part of the registration fee
- Please check the following websites for up-to-date meal reimbursement rates
- For the first and last day of travel, regardless of when travel ends and begins, the traveler will ONLY be eligible for a maximum of two meals.

### **Other Miscellaneous Expenses**

- Include all other miscellaneous expenses on the TAF.
- Reimbursement for other miscellaneous expenses will be determined by the Travel Coordinator.

### **Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

- Travel expenses that are non-essential to the official business or considered personal are not reimbursable by the College. These include the following but not limited to:
  - Alcoholic beverages
  - Personal telephone calls
  - Laundry services
  - Valet service (unless no other options are provided by the venue)
  - Taxi and other transportation costs to and from places of entertainment and other similar facilities
  - Entertainment expenses, including movie and media device rentals
  - Any and all expenses, including lodging and meals, for the convenience of the traveler, either before or following an official meeting/conference/event. For example, traveling to the destination far in advance of the necessary and reasonable time for arrival.
- The Vice President for Administration has the discretion to deny and adjust reimbursement for any requests considered not the most economical and advantageous to the State.

### **Cash Advances**

- It is Highline College's policy to issue travel advances in exceptional cases only.
- All travel advance requests will be considered on a case by case basis
- The Cash Advance (CA) must be submitted at least 21 days prior to the actual start date of the travel.

### **Form Routing/Signature**

- The TA will automatically be submitted to the appropriate supervisor/budget manager for approval.
- All out-of-state travel MUST also be pre-approved by the respective Vice President
- All travel to Hawaii, Alaska, and international destinations MUST also be pre-approved by the President of the College.

#### **IV. TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT**

Upon returning from the trip, the traveler should complete and submit an Expense Report (ER) within thirty (30) days after the date of travel, except at year end where all travel reimbursement requests must be submitted as soon as possible prior to the close of the fiscal year (June 30<sup>th</sup>).

All travel reimbursement claimed on the Travel Authorization (TA) must be approved by the respective Budget Manager, AND the Director of Financial Services or designee, in accordance with established rules and regulations. A pre-approval received for travel does not necessarily guarantee full reimbursement for all travel expenses.

##### **Pre-Approved Travel Expenses**

- Only pre-approved travel expenses (included on the TA) may be reimbursed.
- All reimbursements exceeding estimated expenses by ten (10) percent or more require written justification from the traveler as well as written approval from the VP Administration (VPA)

##### **Expense Receipts**

- Actual detailed expense receipts are required for ALL reimbursement requests, except for meals and mileage.
- Specifically, receipts are required for the following expenses AND must be in the traveler's name:
  - Lodging
  - Airfare and checked baggage, if any, for the first two bags
  - Registration, if paid by the traveler
  - Car rental
- Detailed credit card statements may be accepted as expense receipts upon verification.

##### **Reimbursement without Expense Receipts**

- Traveler may be eligible for reimbursements of up to \$25 per day WITHOUT receipts for the following expenses: taxi, shuttle, train, public transit, parking, and ferry, with the approval of the Director of Finance or the Vice President for Administration.
- Incidental expenses such service tips, room service, and laundry are included as part of the per diem allowance and are not reimbursable separately.

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