

Travel - Reimbursement - General Policies

FIACCT 10-02.00

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These are the basic state travel policies. Detailed explanations of the policies are contained in the remaining sections of this policy.

A. **Definition: Home-Base** – The location the employee leaves from and/or returns to. The traveler may leave from one home-base and return to a different home-base. For example, if the traveler leaves from his residence, then the home-base for departure calculations is his residence. If the traveler returns to the Cannon Health Building, the home-base for arrival calculations is the Cannon Health Building. In some cases, agencies must use judgment to determine a traveler's home-base. The following are some things to consider when determining a traveler's home-base:

- Is the destination less than 50 miles from the traveler's home or normal work location? If the destination is less than 50 miles from either the traveler's home or from their normal work location, then generally the employee should not be reimbursed for lodging.
- Is there a valid business reason for the traveler to go to the office (or to some other location) before driving to the destination?
- Is the traveler required to work at the destination the next day?
- Is the traveler going directly home after the trip, or is there a valid business reason for the traveler to first go to the office (or to some other location)?
- Even if "it is not specifically against policy", would the lodging be considered necessary, reasonable and in the best interest of the State?

B. **Prior Approval** – For insurance purposes, all travel on state business, whether reimbursed by the State or not, must have PRIOR APPROVAL by an appropriate authority. **This also includes non-state employees where the State is paying for the travel expenses.**

♦ **In-State Travel**

Must be approved by the employee's supervisor or higher-level supervisor such as a manager, director or executive director. Approval can be documented one of two ways: (1) using a request for In-State Travel Authorization, form FI5_IS (optional); or (2) approving the applicable in-state travel reimbursement form.

♦ **Out-of-State Travel**

Must be approved by the executive director or designee using a Request for Out-Of-State Travel Authorization, form [FI5](#). Any delegation of this responsibility by the executive director must be in writing and maintained in the agency for audit purposes.

Exceptions – Exceptions to the prior approval must be justified in the comments section of the Request For Out-Of-State Travel Authorization, form [FI5](#), or on an attachment, and must be approved by the executive director or the designee.

More than two travelers to the same function – The executive director or the designee must approve all travel to out-of-state functions where more than two employees from the same department are attending the same function at the same time.

Document the approval in a memo or on the Out-Of-State Travel Authorization, form [FI 5](#), signed by the executive director or designee explaining the reason for more than two persons attending the function and the total costs associated with the trip. Attach the approved memo to the Travel Reimbursement Request, form [FI 51B](#) or [FI 51D](#).

- C. **Reimbursable Costs** – It is the general intent to reimburse travelers for actual costs associated with travel required for state business. Reimbursements described in this policy intend to cover all normal areas of expense. Requests for exceptions shall be made **in writing to the Director of Finance, shall state reasons for the exception, and shall be subject to the written approval of the Director of Finance.**
- D. **Reimbursement** – Requests for reimbursement must be accompanied by **original receipts for all expenses except those for which flat allowance amounts are established (i.e., meals or mileage).** For more information see [FIACCT 10-02.03 Reimbursement – Meals](#), and the [FIACCT 10-02.06 Reimbursement – Transportation](#) sections of this policy.
- E. **Travel Agency** – The State has contracted with an outside travel agency, that has an office in the State Office Building, to provide travel services including but not limited to airline, rental car, hotel, rail and bus service.

All state employees, except legislative officials, are required to use this service. Legislative officials are strongly encouraged to use this service also, so that the maximum benefits of the contract may be realized. **The Division of Finance will not honor any requests for reimbursement for any travel arrangements that are not made in accordance with this policy.** This also includes non-state employees where the state is paying for their travel.

Exceptions to this policy may be granted when the travel is being paid for by a third party other than the State and the third party makes the arrangements and payments directly to their own travel agency.

- F. **Visa Business Travel Cards** – The State recommends that Visa Business Travel Cards be issued to state employees who travel three (3) or more times a year on state business. Visa Business Travel Cards are issued in the names of the employees. Employees must use the cards only for payment of official state business travel expenses. Hotels and rental cars must be charged on the Visa Business Travel Card. Whenever possible, additional business-related travel expenses such as meals, books, fees, and registrations should also be charged on the Visa Business Travel Card.

Use of these cards will significantly reduce the need for cash advances, make payment of travel costs much more convenient for travelers, and will simplify accounting for travel reimbursements, while providing more useful management reports.

These cards are not to be used to pay personal non-official expenses. Misuse of these cards will result in a withdrawal of the privilege and appropriate disciplinary action against the employee. Also, the employee will forfeit rights to receive a travel advance for items normally paid for by the card.

The cards are to be used for paying official travel expenses of the individual named on the card. Paying expenses of another state employee is allowed; however, a separate receipt must be obtained for each employee in order to request reimbursement. Travel costs for a non-state employee traveling with you may be charged on your Visa Business Travel Card; however, the State will **not reimburse that person's costs unless prior approval is obtained from the executive director or designee.**

G. Visa Business Travel Account (BTA) – ALL airline tickets must be purchased using only the Visa Business Travel Account.

Each department may set up one or more Visa Business Travel Accounts for purchasing airline tickets. Tickets charged to the BTA are billed to the account holder (department, division, etc.) each month. A single warrant request will be processed by the Division of Finance to pay the monthly bill for all travelers.

BTA Benefit – The BTA account allows the State to pay for all airline tickets on a monthly basis. If airline tickets have to be purchased early in order to qualify for a discount, the department can easily pay for the tickets before the trip.

In addition, if the traveler purchases the airline ticket on the BTA, he/she is covered by insurance for \$500,000 against death or dismemberment arising from accidents occurring while traveling on a common carrier. A common carrier is described as any scheduled airline, land, or water conveyance licensed for transportation of passengers for hire. This does not include traveling in a private or state vehicle. (See the [FIACCT 10-03.04 Visa – Business Travel Account](#) policy.)

H. Travel Advances – Departments are encouraged to use travel advances only for anticipated incidental expenses (taxi, tips, etc.). Where possible, charge all allowable expenses on the Visa Business Travel Card.

I. Travel Via Neighboring States

♦ **Out-of-State Travel**
Not applicable.

♦ **In-State Travel**

In-state travel requiring travel through neighboring states is authorized as in-state travel when traveling on routine state business and such route is the nearest or most practicable to reach a destination in Utah.

For example, a Natural Resources employee may travel through Wyoming to get to his work area in the Uintas.

J. Personal Time

1. Personal time before traveling on official state business:

The airfare is calculated by pricing what the fare would have been if traveling for business only. Then price out the itinerary with the personal portion added. If the fare is higher by adding the personal portion, the ticket is to be paid using the department's BTA account and the traveler must write a check to the state for the difference at the time the ticket is issued.

Other reimbursable expenses:

- Mileage to/from their home-base to the departing airport.
- Long-term parking for the number of days the traveler would have been traveling on business if not taking personal time before the trip. OR, two round trips from their home-base to the airport if being dropped off and picked up.
- Taxi/Shuttle – calculate what the taxi/shuttle cost would have been from the arrival airport to the hotel the traveler is or would have stayed at for business (up to \$19.99 without receipt).
- Lodging - allowable for the night before the official state business (with receipt) if the traveler would have been required to stay overnight if traveling on official state business only.
- Any other incidentals as allowed per policy.

Per diem for meals will begin at the time the traveler would have departed their home base if traveling for business only.

2. Personal time after traveling on official state business:

The airfare is calculated by pricing what the fare would have been if traveling for business only. Then price out the itinerary with the personal portion added. If the fare is higher by adding the personal portion, the ticket is to be paid using the department's BTA account and the traveler must write a check to the state for the difference at the time the ticket is issued.

Other reimbursable expenses:

- Mileage to/from their home-base to the departing airport.
- Long-term parking for the number of days the traveler would have been traveling on business if not taking personal time after the trip. OR, two round trips from their home-base to the airport if being dropped off and picked up.
- Taxi/Shuttle – calculate what the taxi/shuttle cost would have been from the hotel the traveler is or would have stayed at for business to the airport (up to \$19.99 without receipt).
- Lodging - allowable for the night after the official state business (with receipt) if the traveler would have been required to stay overnight if traveling on official state business only.
- Any other incidentals as allowed per policy.

Per diem for meals will end at the time the traveler would have arrived at their home base if traveling for business only.

Documentation:

A copy of the itinerary as it would have been for business only must be obtained from the State Travel Manager or the State Travel Coordinator. This will be used to determine allowable reimbursement rates for parking, meals, taxi/shuttle and to determine if the traveler owes money to the state for part of the airfare.