Office of Court Administration

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Administrative Director



Agency Travel Policy

(Revised April 2026)

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General Policy Information

Purpose and Scope

The Agency Travel Policy outlines rules, policies, and procedures that support travel planning and the reimbursement of travel expenses incurred while conducting official state business for the Office of Court Administration (OCA) and the boards supported by the OCA. This policy applies to all employees, prospective employees, and board members whose travel costs are being paid by the agency, unless otherwise clearly noted.

OCA employees are entitled to reimbursement of certain travel expenses incurred while:

- conducting official state business that is consistent with OCA's legal authority; or
- attending a training program, seminar, or conference related to the duties or prospective duties of the employee or OCA while in travel status.

The amount of reimbursement is subject to certain limitations as prescribed by the Texas Government Code, the General Appropriations Act, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website, Textravel, and OCA's internal policies.

Responsibilities

Agency Responsibilities

State law requires state agencies to reimburse their employees for travel expenses no later than 45 days after the employee submits a correct and complete travel expense report in CAPPS (Texas Government Code Section 660.019). However, the OCA's goal is to process expense reports within seven to ten business days after the receipt of a properly completed travel expense report.

OCA may specify a travel reimbursement rate that is less than the maximum rate allowed by notifying the affected individuals in writing (Texas Government Code Section 660.007).

Employee Responsibilities

As State of Texas employees, OCA employees are responsible for understanding and complying with state laws and the rules and regulations governing travel by state employees. Failure to comply with these laws, rules, and regulations could result in non-reimbursement of a travel expense, disciplinary action up to termination, and prosecution in the case of fraudulent misrepresentation of travel expenses.

OCA employees should submit their travel expense report, along with supporting documentation, within ten business days of the last date on which travel occurred.

OCA employees must immediately reimburse the state for an overpayment of a travel expense reimbursement that exceeds the amount the employee may receive under applicable laws and rules (Texas Government Code Section 660.017).

Rules and Regulations

This policy is in accordance with the laws and rules set forth in the Travel Regulations Act (Texas Government Code Chapter 660); the General Appropriations Act (GAA Article IX, Part 5); Texas Administrative Code, Title 34, Part 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Section 5.22; and TexTravel. Although the most common statutes and rules are listed above, it is not a comprehensive list. Employees are expected to stay updated on all travel rules. A good source for these updates is TexTravel.

Glossary and Acronyms

Administrative Director: Agency head of the Office of Court Administration.

Board Members: Active members of the following judicial boards/commissions and their formal advisory committees:

- Texas Judicial Council (TJC) (Govt. Code, Sec. 71.020)
- Voting Members of the Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT) (Govt. Code, Sec. 77.013)
- Judicial Branch Certification Commission (JBCC) (Govt. Code, Sec. 152.057)
- Court Reporters Certification Advisory Board (Govt. Code, Sec. 152.152)
- Guardianship Certification Advisory Board (Govt. Code, Sec. 152.152)
- Process Server Certification Advisory Board (Govt. Code, Sec. 152.152)
- Licensed Court Interpreter Advisory Board (Govt. Code, Sec. 152.152)
- Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) (Govt. Code, Sec.79.019)
- Texas Forensic Science Commission (TFSC) (Code of Criminal Procedure, Art. 38.01, Sec. 5)
- Texas Forensic Science Licensing Advisory Committee (Code of Criminal Procedure, Art. 38.01, Sec. 4-b)
- Texas Commission on Judicial Selection (TCJS) (HB 3040, 86th Reg. Session)

Business Days: Any weekday except holidays and approved non-work days.

Designated Headquarters: The location where the employee works the majority of their time and is approved by management. This information must be documented in the employee's personnel file. Telework locations are not considered designated headquarters unless approved by management.

Direct-Billed: Process in which OCA is billed for a travel expense, such as airfare or rental car fee, and pays for it directly. Employees do not pay for or get reimbursed for direct-billed expenses.

Duty Point(s): Work related destinations not considered to be the employee's designated headquarters, that is (A) the incorporated municipality in which the destination is located; or (b) the area within a five-mile radius of the destination if the destination is located in an unincorporated area.

Employee: A person employed by OCA, including Associate Judges.

GSA Reimbursement Rate: The reimbursement rates, effective October 1 each year, set by the United States General Services Administration (see rates at www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates).

Incidental Expenses: Expenses incurred while conducting official state business, other than meals, lodging, or transportation expenses. Some examples are parking, tolls, local hotel tax, fuel, and WiFi costs.

Judicial Officer: Board members who are judicial officers, a judge, former or retired visiting judge, referee, commissioner, special master, court-appointed arbitrator, or other person exercising adjudicatory powers in the judiciary. A mediator or other provider of non-binding dispute resolution services is not a judicial officer. For purposes of this policy, Associate Judges are not judicial officers.

Lodging: A commercial establishment that provides lodging to the public.

Meals: Food, non-alcoholic drinks, and snacks for the employee while in travel status.

OCA: The Office of Court Administration.

TexTravel: The Texas Comptroller of Public Account's online guide for rules related to travel for state employees.

TxCPA: The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

Policy Statements

Conservation of State Funds

State agencies are required to minimize the amount of travel expenses paid or reimbursed by the agency (Texas Government Code Section 660.007). Therefore, employees should always seek the most cost-effective travel considering all relevant circumstances including safety of the employee and the ability to work while traveling. The following are suggestions for identifying cost-effective travel options; no documentation of comparisons is required:

- Comparing airline fares and seating charges;
- Booking at least 14 days in advance to get lower rate;

- Comparing air vs. ground transportation;
- Comparing rental vs. personal car costs;
- Comparing long term vehicle rental vs. personal mileage reimbursement for high mileage travelers;
- Using technology for offsite meetings instead of incurring a travel expense;
- Comparing the ability to conduct business while flying vs. the loss of productivity while driving; and
- Comparing parking rates.

If the conservation of funds guidelines listed below are not followed, a business justification is required in order to be reimbursed at a higher rate than would have been reimbursed if the guideline had been followed.

While there may be exceptions, conservation of funds guidelines include:

A. When more than one employee is driving to and from the same point with the same itinerary, the employees must coordinate their travel unless the Administrative Director determines before travel that it is not feasible for the employees to travel together in the same motor vehicle. (Texas Government Code Section 660.044).
B. Employees have the option between self-park or valet, or between long-term parking, short-term parking, or off-site parking at the airport. In these cases, the employee should choose the more cost-effective option. If the employee chooses a more expensive option without an allowable exception, then OCA may reimburse at the more cost-effective rate. For example, if an employee chooses short-term parking ($23/per day) over long-term parking ($10/per day), then OCA may reimburse at the long-term rate only.
C. If an employee needs to hire a car service for transportation, such as a shuttle service, a taxi company, or ridesharing service (Uber/Lyft), the employee should consider conservation of funds and personal safety in their selection. Wait time fees may not be reimbursable, if excessive.
D. Employees should return rental cars with the same level of fuel as when rented rather than taking the rental car company's fuel option which charges fuel at a higher rate per gallon.

Travel Authorization

OCA employees are required to notify their supervisor and gain approval prior to travel. Travel without prior approval may result in ineligibility for reimbursement by OCA. This rule does not apply to assigned judges or associate judges traveling to dockets, and the Administrative Director.

Foreign travel must be approved in advance and in writing by the Administrative Director, and the approval must be submitted with the travel expense report.

OCA employees traveling to Washington, D.C. for activities that involve obtaining or spending federal funds or that impact federal policies must inform the Texas Office of State-Federal Relations about the trip in advance. (Article IX, Section 6.12, General Appropriations Act).

Automobile Transportation

OCA employees are entitled to be reimbursed for transportation charges incurred while conducting state business. Additionally, the OCA may reimburse an employee reasonable transportation expenses to and from meal locations within the employee's duty point.

Transportation by Motor Vehicle

OCA employees may be reimbursed for parking or toll expenses incurred while traveling in a personally owned or leased vehicle, rental vehicle, or state-owned or leased vehicle. A state agency may not reimburse a state employee for these expenses if none of the mileage or rental cost is reimbursable.

Mileage in a Personal Vehicle

An OCA employee is entitled to be reimbursed for mileage incurred to conduct state business; however, in no event shall an OCA employee be required to use a personal vehicle to conduct official state business. (See Personal Vehicle vs Rental Car section)

Route Determination:

The number of reimbursable miles may not exceed the number of miles of the most cost-effective, reasonably safe route between two duty points. In determining the most cost-effective, reasonably safe route, a state agency may consider the route that provides the shortest distance, the quickest drive time, or the safest road conditions (Texas Government Code Section 660.043).

Reimbursement rate:

OCA shall specify a mileage reimbursement rate in an amount that is equal to or less than the maximum state mileage reimbursement rate designated by the TxCPA. If the OCA reimbursement rate is less than the designated state maximum rate, OCA shall notify its employees and other affected individuals in writing (including email) before the lower rate is implemented (Texas Government Code Section 660.007). Mileage reimbursement is inclusive of all expenses associated with the employee's operation of a personally-owned or leased motor vehicle, excluding tolls and parking expenses.

Mileage Calculation:

The number of miles traveled by an employee for state business may be determined by point-to-point itemization. This applies to employees traveling to one duty point or multiple duty points in a trip. Mileage to and from meals is reimbursable as long as the mileage is within the employee's duty point. The OCA requires mileage calculations

be determined by address-to-address using Google Maps. ***Note:*** Employees must attach the Google Map(s) to the travel expense report.

Four-per-car Rule:
OCA employees traveling on the same dates with the same itinerary to conduct the same official state business must coordinate travel unless otherwise approved by the Administrative Director prior to travel. When four or fewer employees travel on the same itinerary, only one may be reimbursed for mileage. When more than four employees travel on the same itinerary, only one out of every four may be reimbursed for mileage (Texas Government Code Section 660.044).

Travel to and from the Airport
If outside normal business hours, OCA may reimburse the employee to travel from the airport to their residence or vice versa. If traveling within business hours and the employee travels to the airport from their residence or vice versa, the employee may be reimbursed the shorter distance of either to their residence or place of employment to or from the airport.

Emergency travel to Place of Employment
If necessitated by extraordinary circumstances and occurs outside the employee's work hours, the employee may be reimbursed for traveling in their personal vehicle between their place of residence and place of employment.

Rental Vehicles

OCA employees may be reimbursed for the cost of renting a vehicle to conduct state business or may utilize contracted vendors that are direct-billed to the agency.

General Guidelines:

1. Employees are encouraged to rent cars from state-contracted companies utilizing the direct-billed method. The contracts with these vendors include agreed upon rates and insurance coverage.[1]
2. Employees traveling alone and renting a car should select standard or smaller-sized vehicle rentals.
3. Employees may use the rental car for limited personal use, but personal use is not reimbursable, nor is the fuel associated with personal use.
4. Unless circumstances do not permit, rental cars should be returned with the same fuel level as when reserved. OCA discourages the acceptance of the pre-paid fuel option, as it may be the least cost-effective option.

[1] Employees are responsible for making their rental car reservations; however, the OCA's Travel Coordinators will provide training and assist employees when requested for direct-billed rentals. For reservation assistance, employees must complete the Commercial Travel Form.

5. Reservations are charged on a 24-hour cycle from the original pick-up time. Therefore, employees should attempt to make reservations to reduce the number of days charged or additional hourly rates that may apply.
6. Travelers should not accept pre-paid roadside assistance protection offered by the rental company. Should roadside assistance be needed, OCA will reimburse employees on their travel expense report; however, employees are solely responsible for damage due to negligence.
7. Reimbursement for a rental car may include a charge for a collision damage waiver or a loss damage waiver; however, a charge for liability insurance supplement, personal accident insurance, safe trip insurance or personal effects insurance is not reimbursable to employees.

Personal Vehicle vs. Rental Car

When traveling by car, OCA employees have an option of renting a car or taking their own personal vehicle. An employee is not required to complete an OCA Mileage-Rental Calculator if renting a car for travel for approved state business.

Overnight Travel:

Prior to **overnight travel**, an employee must complete the OCA Mileage-Rental Calculator Form to determine the most cost-effective method of transportation if the employee chooses to take his or her personal vehicle. The employee must complete the form within a month of travel and must submit the form with the travel expense report. If the calculator form shows that it is more cost-effective to rent a car, the employee may still choose to drive a personal car; however, OCA will reimburse no more than the estimated cost of renting a standard-sized car (rental rate, fuel, and other expenses).

Non-Overnight Travel:

If an employee is on **non-overnight travel**, the employee is not required to complete the OCA Mileage-Rental Calculator Form and may receive reimbursement for the use of his or her personal vehicle for approved state business.

Children’s Court Judges and Staff Exception:

When traveling to hear case dockets, Children's Court Judges and Staff are not required to complete the OCA Mileage-Rental Calculator Form and may be reimbursed for mileage in their personal vehicles. The mileage reimbursement amount will not be limited to the cost of renting a car. This exception does not apply to non-docket travel.

Commercial Air Transportation

An employee may be reimbursed for the actual cost of commercial air transportation incurred to conduct state business or have airfare direct-billed. Airfare expenses may not exceed the cost of the lowest available airfare between the employee’s designated

headquarters and the employee's duty point (Texas Government Code Section 660.093). Business class airfare may be direct-billed or reimbursed only if a lower airfare is not available. First class airfare may be direct-billed or reimbursed only if it is the only available airfare.

General Guidelines

1. Airfare should be booked as far in advance as possible to conserve funds.
2. A Commercial Travel Request Form must be completed for all direct-billed air travel.
3. Non-refundable flights may be used if an employee does not anticipate a need to cancel or change his or her flight.
4. Early check-in fees, upgraded seating fees, and non-business-related excess baggage fees are not reimbursable expenses.
5. Additional costs incurred for air transportation for personal reasons are not reimbursable and must be reimbursed to the OCA if the airfare was direct-billed.

Direct-Billed Air Travel

OCA utilizes a Travel Card to direct-bill airfare. OCA employees can book their own airfare to be direct-billed to OCA (set-up required) or request an OCA Travel Coordinator book airfare to be direct-billed. An employee who wishes to have airfare direct-billed must complete and submit a Commercial Travel Request Form regardless if the flight was booked by the employee or a Travel Coordinator.

Reimbursement of Air Travel

Travelers that pay for air travel on their own are required to submit a travel expense report for reimbursement after the travel occurs. Travelers must submit acceptable receipts as specified in the Receipts section. Airfare expenses that were direct-billed to OCA should not be included on a travel expense report.

Exception to Lowest Available Airfare Requirement on Southwest Airlines

Southwest Airlines introduced a new fare structure offering four fare bundles. The lowest cost option is the **Basic** Fare, which includes multiple restrictions, including no seat selection, non-refundable and non-transferable tickets, 6-month credit expiration, final boarding group, and fare upgrade costs for flight changes.

To ensure responsible stewardship of public funds and to support operational needs, the agency may authorize the purchase of the **second-lowest available airfare (Choice)** when the **Basic** fare class includes restrictions that are reasonably expected to increase total travel costs or create barriers for the traveler. When airfare is booked through the agency's SWABIZ account, the **Choice** fare will be selected for travelers, minimizing costs associated with flight changes and ensuring that flight credits can be used or transferred within 12 months.

Travelers self-booking on Southwest, but not using the SWABIZ account, must select the lowest available airfare bundle. Selection of a higher rate fare must be supported by an approved, justifiable business reason.

Mass Transit and Other Transportation Services

Employees are entitled to be reimbursed for the actual cost of transportation by bus, subway, or other mode of mass transit, railroad, bicycle, boat or other motor vehicles if incurred to conduct state business. The cost is only reimbursable if provided by a commercial transportation company.

Meals/Lodging

OCA employees with overnight travel (in-state and out-of-state) are entitled to be reimbursed for lodging, meal, and incidental expenses incurred while conducting state business at a duty point outside of their designated headquarters.

When performing the duties of the individual's office or employment, judicial officers and the Administrative Director may claim actual meal and lodging expenses incurred, up to twice the rate shown in TexTravel for state employees.

Meals

Non-Overnight Travel

The OCA does not generally reimburse meal expenses for non-overnight travel. An exemption may be granted if the travel meets the criteria as defined by the State Comptroller and a written approval is provided by the Administrative Director. Please refer to the Non-Overnight Travel section of TexTravel for more details. If an exemption is granted, the reimbursement maximum is $36.00. Additionally, this would be considered income and will be reported on the employee's or board member's W-2 tax form. Non-overnight meals must be submitted on a separate paper travel voucher to be processed by the payroll officer (General Appropriations Act, Article IX, Part 5, Section 5.05(b)).

Overnight Travel

OCA reimburses employees for meals up to the GSA reimbursement rate for that duty point. Board members may be reimbursed for meals up to the GSA reimbursement rate for that duty point.

The state travel expense reimbursement rate is not a per diem, or a flat amount. Therefore, employees and board members may only be reimbursed for **actual** expenses. The maximum should not be claimed unless the actual expenditures equal or exceed the maximum allowable rate. However, meal receipts are not required unless otherwise stipulated by a contract or grant.

State employees and board members who travel to Alaska, Hawaii, a U.S. territory, or a foreign country will be reimbursed in accordance with the guidelines in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for that travel year.

OCA employees and board members are responsible for accurately reporting meal expenses for reimbursement.

Lodging

A state employee is entitled to be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred on a day that the employee conducts state business outside of his or her designated headquarters. The lodging expense may only be reimbursed if it is incurred at a commercial lodging establishment. The employee may only be reimbursed for his or her actual lodging expense not to exceed the maximum lodging reimbursement rate shown on TexTravel. Original or copies of itemized receipts are required for actual lodging expenses, as outlined in the Receipts section.

Employees are not exempt from city, county, or state hotel occupancy taxes. These taxes are reimbursed in addition to the room rate but listed separately from lodging on the T&E Expense Report.

When two or more state employees share a room, the cost of the room must be divided equally between them. Each employee must submit a T&E Expense Report with a copy of the lodging receipt attached. The T&E Expense Report must include a statement that the traveler shared the room with other employees-- names itemized-- and the reimbursement to each employee cannot exceed the maximum lodging rate for the duty point.

The Administrative Director or the Director's designee may determine if conditions necessitate an increase in travel rates or expenses for both in-state and out-of-state travel. In cases where the travel lodging expense exceeds the allowed maximum rate, the employee must complete an OCA Request To Increase Maximum Lodging Rate Form and include a qualified reason for the request. The excess lodging expense must be approved before travel and must be submitted with the T&E Expense Report.

The following are examples of qualified exceptions:

- Lodging rates are not available due to other events in the city, i.e. festivals, peak tourism, or other economic events.
- Employee is conducting OCA business while attending a conference that necessitates booking at a certain hotel.
- When the safety of the employee necessitates alternate lodging.

If travel necessitates a higher rate hotel, then the difference between the hotel rate and the GSA reimbursement rate can be deducted from the daily meal reimbursement rate on a per day basis to cover the higher hotel cost. For example, if the GSA reimbursement hotel rate

is $110 per night, but the hotel selected charges $130, you may reduce your daily meal reimbursement rate for that day by $20 and apply it towards your lodging reimbursement.

Lodging cancellations must be completed before the hotel's deadline which is stated on the reservation confirmation. OCA will address reimbursement of these fees with the traveler on a case-by-case basis.

Employees must pay for lodging and request reimbursement by submitting a detailed itemized receipt (see Receipts Section) from the hotel with the T&E Expense Report.

Documentation (Forms & Receipt Requirements)

T&E Expense Report

To be reimbursed for eligible travel expenses, an employee must enter and submit a T&E Expense Report in CAPPS. The employee's supervisor is required to approve the T&E Expense Report in CAPPS unless the employee is an associate judge, or the Administrative Director. An employee who files a false or fraudulent travel claim is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

T&E Expense Report Deadlines

Employees should submit their T&E Expense Reports within ten business days of the last date on which travel occurred.

Note: Delayed T&E Expense Report submittals could impact prompt payment of direct-billed car or airline charges, causing late fees assessed against the agency.

The OCA's goal is to process T&E Expense Reports within seven to ten business days after the receipt of a properly completed T&E Expense Report.

Receipts

To qualify for reimbursement, copies of itemized receipts must be submitted within the T&E Expense Report.

All receipts for lodging, airfare, auto rental, and rental car gasoline must also include the following:

- Transaction Date
- Name of Establishment or Company
- Transaction Amount

Note: *Meal receipts are not required. See Meal section above for reimbursement rates. Receipts for travel by bus, subway, other mode of mass transit, taxi, limousine or network*

transportation driver are not required; however, supporting documentation must itemize the date and the fare charged for each trip.

Lodging receipts must also include:

- The employee's name
- The physical address of the lodging location.
- A daily itemization of charges
- Proof of Payment- a "final bill" that shows a zero ($0.00) balance without the phrases, "Effective balance" or "to be settled" or any other similar phrase that indicates the bill has not been paid. For example, a final bill with the last four digits of the credit card is acceptable. If payment is made in cash, receipt must clearly state payment was made in cash.

Note: A lodging receipt provided prior to check-out is not usually considered a "final bill."

Airfare receipts must also include:

- The name of the employee and airline
- The ticket/confirmation number
- The class of transportation
- The travel dates
- The origin and destination of each flight
- Proof of payment

Lost Receipts

If an employee loses a receipt, the employee must attempt to get a replacement copy. The employee may claim the expenditure by submitting an itemized description of the transaction with the above required information in addition to the following:

- Contact Name of person at transaction location, if possible
- Contact Phone number at transaction location
- A signed note stating that receipt was lost and the attempt to acquire a duplicate copy was unsuccessful

Receipts are not required for the following:

- Parking
- Toll road charges

Note: Although receipts are not required for the above, individual expense amounts must be documented on the submitted T&E Expense Report for the dates the expenses were incurred.

OCA reserves the right to deny claims for which the employee does not have a receipt if the charges are deemed unreasonable or the employee has a documented pattern of missing receipts.

Miscellaneous

Reimbursements by a Third-Party

If an employee anticipates travel expenses paid by OCA being reimbursed by a third-party, submit the Third-Party Reimbursement Notification Form to Accounting@txcourts.gov prior to travel. The employee must concurrently submit the travel reimbursement requests to the Finance and Operations Division (Revenue Accountant) and the third-party. OCA accounting staff in turn will confirm that all applicable OCA expenses have been reimbursed or documented appropriately.

Restrictions on Third-Party Reimbursements

The OCA and its employees are not allowed to receive third-party travel reimbursements from organizations that the OCA, Judicial Council, Judicial Committee on Information Technology, Texas Indigent Defense Commission, Judicial Branch Certification Commission, or Forensic Science Commission are, or will be auditing, examining, or investigating.

OCA employees are NOT allowed to receive travel reimbursement from a third-party and from OCA for the same expenses. Failure to meet this requirement may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Reimbursable and Non-Reimbursable Expenses

Examples of reimbursable business expenses are:

- Transportation costs
- Hotel costs
- Incidental business costs
- Parking
- Meal costs
- Mandatory fees (e.g. large-group gratuities, resort fees, room service fees)
    - ***Note:*** Some hotels will remove resort fees when asked by a state employee.

Examples of non-reimbursable expenses are:

- Personal expenses
- Alcoholic beverages
- Rideshare wait time fees may not be reimbursable, if excessive
- Voluntary fees (e.g. tips, donations)
- Expenses not related to state business
- Meals for others
- Expenses while on personal leave

Travel Advance

OCA has a limited Travel Advance fund to assist employees with up-front travel expenses. The fund is available only to OCA employees. OCA employees may request a travel advance by submitting a completed, supervisor-approved OCA Travel Advance Request Form to the Finance and Operations Division (Sr. Accountant). In order to obtain a travel advance:

- The amount requested must not exceed the estimated expenses that would be reimbursable directly to the employee. Incidental expenses related to the employee's direct-billed travel may be included in the request.
- Transportation and lodging estimates must be acquired from the transportation and lodging vendors the traveler will be paying.
    - Direct-billed expenses may NOT be considered for Travel Advance estimates.
- The Travel Advance will be limited to 75% of total approved request and is disbursed by check.
- Employees who have a warrant hold with the TxCPA are ineligible to receive a Travel Advance.
- A completed travel expense report must be submitted within 5 business days after travel ends.
- A indication that a travel advance we received must be included the travel expense report.
- If actual travel expenses are less than the Travel Advance received, the employee must pay back the difference by check or money order within 3 business days from notification of actual amount owed.
- If actual travel expenses are more than the Travel Advance received, the employee will receive a check for the difference within 3 business days after the Travel Advance fund is replenished by the Travel Voucher process.

Since Travel Advance funds are limited, compliance with the above rules will ensure funds are available for other employees. Failure to fully comply with the above rules may further limit an employee's future Travel Advances or disqualify the employee from receiving Travel Advance funds.

Travel Awards

- Air travel awards, such as frequent flyer miles, that are credited directly to the traveler and not to the agency may be used by the employee for business or personal purposes.
- Rental car travel awards, such as frequent car rental points, or rideshare discounts that are credited directly to the traveler and not to the agency may be used by the employee for business or personal purposes.
- Hotel or food discounts offered to an employee during business travel should be used to defer the cost of the current travel. If that is not possible because the discounts are for future use, then the employee may use the discounts for business or personal purposes.
- Employees are responsible for managing their own awards accounts. Employees may not incur additional expenses to the State in making State travel arrangements to accrue personal benefit in their travel awards programs.

Additional Travel Exceptions

In unusual or extenuating circumstances, the Administrative Director may authorize an exception to this policy. More information on the following travel exceptions is found on TexTravel.

- Reimbursable expenses incurred for reasons unrelated to state business
- Weekends
- Travel while on personal leave

Travel Reimbursements of Another State Agency's Employee

OCA may reimburse travel expenses incurred by another agency's employee if the employee incurred the expense while providing services to the reimbursing agency (Texas Government Code 660.013). Rate limitations and documentation requirements should adhere to OCA's Agency Travel Policy.

Travel Expenses of Non-State Employees

OCA may reimburse a non-state employee for travel incurred to participate in an OCA sponsored workgroup or committee if a contract is signed by both the participant and OCA's Administrative Director in advance of the event. Documentation requirements and rate limitations are prescribed within the contract. To be reimbursed, a non-state employee must submit an OCA Travel Expense form (provided as part of the contract document) along with the required receipts and documentation.

This section does not apply to Board Members or vendors providing a service.

Related Documents

- Commercial Travel Request Form
- OCA Mileage-Rental Calculator Form
- OCA Travel Advance Request Form
- OCA Request To Increase Maximum Lodging Rate Form
- Travel Costs at a Glance (Employees)
- Travel Costs at a Glance (Board Members)
- Third-Party Reimbursement Notification

Revision History

This table summarizes the major edits (i.e. edits affecting transition points, process changes, system changes, and/or role changes).

Agency Travel Policy

Version	Date	Revision Summary
0.1	02/07/2019	Original Draft
0.2	08/09/2019	Version Accepted by Finance and Operations
0.3	09/11/2019	Incorporated DS and MR edits
1.0	11/1/2019	Final version issued
2.0	2/15/2022	Edited to change travel voucher to T&E expense report, clarify receipt requirements and to update Third-Party Reimbursement requirements
2.1	5/19/2025	Removed limit to reimburse only 75% of first and last day's overnight travel. The limit applies to federal employees only.
2.2	4/23/26	Added Exception to Lowest Available Airfare Requirement on Southwest Airlines.