

The MiraCosta Community College District policy is to reimburse employees for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in connection with approved travel on behalf of the district. Travel will normally be limited to meetings held within the United States.

Travelers should verify that planned travel is eligible for reimbursement or a travel expense claim before making travel arrangements. The district strongly encourages use of travel discounts when making travel arrangements. Travelers seeking reimbursement should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Reimbursement is allowed only when reimbursement has not been, and will not be, received from other sources (e.g. State Chancellor's Office, accrediting commission, etc.). If circumstances arise that are not specifically covered in this travel policy, the most conservative course of action should be taken. Travel expense requests must comply with district expenditure policies and appropriate grant/other restricted funding requirements.

Authorization for Travel Expenditures

An individual may not approve his or her own travel or reimbursement. Travel and reimbursement for employees must be approved by a director or dean for travel under \$3,000 and by a vice president or the superintendent/president for travel over \$3,000. Travel and reimbursement outside of California must be approved by a vice president and the superintendent/president.

Travel and reimbursement for deans or directors must be approved by a vice president or the superintendent/president.

Travel and reimbursement for a vice president must be approved by the superintendent/president.

Travel and reimbursement for the superintendent/president must be approved by the vice president of business and administrative services.

For prepaid travel or travel advances, employee travel must be authorized at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the travel. Unauthorized absence from work is not covered by liability insurance policies.

Designated approval authorities are required to review expenditures and withhold reimbursement if there is reason to believe the expenditures are inappropriate, extravagant, or do not comply with state and federal laws.

Personal Funds

Travelers should review reimbursement guidelines before spending personal funds for business travel to determine if such expenses are reimbursable. The district reserves the right to deny reimbursement of travel-related expenses for failure to comply with policies and procedures.

Travelers who use personal funds to facilitate travel arrangements will not be reimbursed until after the trip occurs and proper documentation is submitted.

Permissible Travel Expenses

Before travel begins, the district may issue prepayments for expenses where prepayment is permissible.

The following items associated with district travel will be reimbursed by the district.

- **Conference Registration Fees**

Prepaid permissible. Conference registration fees may be prepaid with a submission of the registration confirmation document. Business-related banquets or meals that are part of the conference can be paid with the registration fees; however, such meals must be deducted from the traveler's per-diem allowance. See Meals (per diem) for more detail.

Receipts are required for reimbursement, if not prepaid.

- **Airfare**

Prepaid permissible. Travelers may contact the district-contracted travel agency for their airfare ticket to be prepaid by the Fiscal Services office. Changes must be promptly notified to the travel agency and Fiscal Services. Unused tickets may not be used for personal purposes.

Travelers are expected to obtain the lowest available airfare in coach or economy class tickets that reasonably meets district travel needs for domestic and international flights. Travelers are encouraged to book flights at least fourteen (14) days in advance to avoid premium pricing. A higher-priced coach ticket for a subsequent upgrade in seating will not be reimbursed. Additional costs from the change of the original ticket for the convenience of the employee will not be reimbursed.

Receipts are required, if not prepaid. An itemized airline receipt, an e-ticket receipt/statement, or an Internet receipt/statement is required. The receipt must show the method of payment and indicate that payment was made.

- **Rail Transportation**

Prepaid permissible. The cost of the rail fare must not exceed the least expensive airfare. Travelers are expected to obtain the lowest available rail fare that reasonably meets district travel needs. Travelers are encouraged to book rail transportation at least fourteen (14) days in advance to avoid premium pricing. A higher-priced coach ticket for a subsequent upgrade in seating will not be reimbursed. Additional costs from the change of the original ticket for the convenience of the employee will not be reimbursed.

Receipts are required, if not prepaid. An itemized receipt, an e-ticket receipt/statement, or an Internet receipt/statement is required. The receipt must show the method of payment and indicate that payment was made

- **Lodging**

Reimbursable for room and tax rate only when authorized travel is greater than forty (40) miles from the traveler's home and primary worksite. Reasonable, single occupancy, standard business room rates, or limited to conference room rate when the conference provides hotel rates. Hotel reservations that require prepayment may be prepaid by the Fiscal Services Office.

Receipts are required. If the lodging receipt shows more than a single occupancy, the single room rate must be noted. If reimbursement for more than the single room rate is requested, the name of the second person must be included.

- **Meals**

A meal per diem is provided for travel that is greater than forty (40) miles from the traveler's home and primary worksite, and there is an overnight stay. Meal per diem is per the [US General Services Administration \(USGA\) Meals and Incidental Expense \(M&IE\)](#) rates. Note that the first and last calendar day of travel is at seventy-five (75) percent of the daily meal per diem as per the [USGA's M&IE](#) rates.

Receipts are not required for meal per diem.

Meals provided as part of the conference fee must be deducted from the traveler's daily per diem. If a free meal is served on the plane, included in a conference registration fee, built in to the standard, single hotel room rate or replaced by a legitimate business meal, the allowance for that meal may not be claimed and the amount will be deducted from the daily per diem as per the [USGA's M&IE](#) rates .

- **Meals for Student**

Meals for students on athletic or other field trips is provided at \$10 per meal, up to \$30 per day, per student, from general funds. See Administrative Procedure 6304 for other student meal policies.

- **Automobile Rental**

If a rental vehicle is more economical than any other type of public transportation, or if the destination is not otherwise accessible.

Travelers are strongly encouraged to fill the gas tank before returning the vehicle to the rental agency to avoid service fees and more expensive fuel rates.

The district authorizes reimbursement for economy or compact vehicles. The district provides the state-rate contract through [Enterprise](#) (click to view reservation link). In certain circumstances, larger vehicles may be rented with supervisory approval. The rental agreement must clearly show the date and the points of departure/arrival, as well as the total cost. Drivers must adhere to the rental requirements, and restrictions must be followed.

When vehicle rentals are necessary, travelers are required to purchase collision damage waiver (CDW) or loss damage waiver (LDW) coverage. The district will reimburse the cost of CDW or LDW coverage; all other insurance reimbursements will be denied. The authorized district driver (renter) renting the vehicle should verify that it is rented in both the employee's and the district's names to tie the rental to the district in a claim situation, per insurance carrier requirements (i.e., John Doe for MiraCosta College).

Receipts are required.

- **Automobile Mileage**

If the personal vehicle is more economical than any other type of public transportation, or if the destination is not otherwise accessible.

A valid driver's license issued within the United States and personal automobile insurance at least meeting the district's minimum insurance limits are required for expenses to be reimbursed. "Authorization for Use of Privately Owned Vehicles for District Business" and "Motor Vehicle Driver Authorization Request" forms ([Mileage Reimbursement Authorization Steps](#)) must be approved and on file per [Administrative Procedure 6530](#), Vehicle Use/Driver Authorization.

Reimbursement mileage rate for use of a personal automobile is based on the current Internal Revenue Service rate.

Mileage shall be computed to and from the traveler's normal work location and the destination. When a traveler is authorized to drive a private vehicle to and from a public carrier terminal (i.e., an airport, train station, bus station, etc.), mileage may be reimbursed as follows:

- One round trip, including parking for the duration of the trip
- Two round trips, including short-term parking expenses, when an employee is driven to a public carrier.

Mileage expenses are allowed to and from the traveler's residence and the public carrier or destination if the college business travel occurs during the traveler's nonworking hours or during a regularly scheduled day off.

If an employee has a temporary assignment away from their home campus, reimbursement shall be made for mileage expenses incurred to and from their home campus and the assignment location, or to and from their residence and the assignment location, whichever is less.

Employees who have assignments at different district locations in the course of a single work day as a part of their contractual obligation will be reimbursed at the district mileage rate for necessary travel between these locations. Contractual obligation is defined as meeting classes, discharging counseling/library/supervisory duties, attending department meetings or meetings of Academic Senate, Classified Senate Council, or other district/Academic Senate/Classified Senate committees. No mileage will be paid for travel from home to the first work station of the day or to home from the last work station of the day, nor will the district pay mileage to locations for any overload assignment.

- **Miscellaneous Transportation**

Taxi, shuttle, bus, subway, metro, ferry, and other modes of transportation.

Receipts are required for taxi, bus, subway, metro, ferry and other modes of transportation. Receipts are not required for tips up to fifteen (15) percent for taxi/shuttle service.

- **Parking: Self-Parking and Valet**

Self-parking: *Receipts are required. The lodging bill can be used as a receipt when charges are included as part of the overnight stay.*

Valet parking—restricted only for hotels/conference locations where self-parking is not available: *Receipts are required for valet parking fees. Receipts are not required for tips up to fifteen (15) percent.*

- **Tolls**

Tolls are restricted for only when required for reasonable path of travel.

Receipts are required.

- **Business Expenses**

Gasoline, faxes, photocopies, internet charges, data ports, and district phone calls incurred while on travel status.

Itemized receipts are required for business expenses.

Travel Advances

Cash advances are authorized for specific situations that might cause undue financial hardship for district travelers. A minimum of \$200 and a maximum of ninety (90) percent of the estimated travel reimbursement amount up to \$2,000 can be advanced.

Requests for cash advances are made through the travel-request process and approved by the designated approval authority. Actual allowable expenses are applied to the travel advance, any excess cash advance must be returned to the Cashier's Office, and the receipt must be included on the expense report. Excess cash advances not returned within fourteen (14) days after the end of the trip will go through an escalation process, and future cash-advance requests will be on hold or denied until the issue is resolved.

Vacation in Conjunction with District Travel

In cases in which vacation time is added to district-related travel, any cost variance in airfare, car rental, or lodging must be clearly identified on the travel request. The district will not prepay any personal expenses with the intention of being "repaid" at a later time, nor will any personal expenses be prepaid or reimbursed.

Travel for Nonemployees

Additional costs for travel, lodging, meals, or other travel expenses for spouses or other family members will not be prepaid or reimbursed.

Reimbursements

A travel expense reimbursement request and supporting documentation (receipts) must be submitted within fourteen (14) days after the trip is completed to obtain reimbursement of expenses. Travel reimbursement not submitted within this timeframe requires an exception approval from a vice president or the superintendent/president.

Receipts are required for all expenses except meal per diem, mileage, and tips for taxi/shuttle service/valet parking. Expenses not supported by receipts will not be reimbursed.

If the requested reimbursement exceeds ten (10) percent of the total pre-trip estimate, the travel reimbursement request will be routed for approval through the same approval levels as the original request.

District employees who receive a monthly automobile allowance may submit mileage claims for mileage related to approved travel (e.g., mileage to and from the airport and as allowed by individual employment contracts).

Travel claim expenses will be reviewed by Fiscal Services and any amount due the employee will be reimbursed within fifteen (15) business days following submittal and approval of the travel claim.

Nonpermissible Travel Expenses

The following items that may be associated with district travel will not be prepaid or reimbursed by the district:

- Airline club memberships
- Airline upgrades
- Alcohol
- Business class or first class for domestic and international flights

- Child care, babysitting, house sitting, or pet sitting/kennel charges
- Commuting between home and the primary work location
- Costs incurred by traveler's failure to cancel travel or hotel reservations in a timely fashion
- Evening or formal wear expenses
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Laundry and dry cleaning
- Passports, vaccinations, and visas when not required as a specific and necessary condition of the travel assignment
- Personal entertainment expenses, including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theater movies, golf outings, sightseeing tours, other entertainment or social activities, and related incidental costs
- Personal phone calls
- Travel accident insurance premiums or purchase of additional travel insurance
- Hotel bell staff/porter service
- Sundries and other expenses not directly related to district travel