

**THREE RIVERS COLLEGE
FINANCIAL REGULATION**

Section: 3000 Financial	
Sub Section: 3500 Travel	
Title: FR 3510 Travel Authorization and Reimbursement	Page 1 of 14
Primary Policy: FP 3510 Travel	
Associated Regulations: PR 4506 Overtime and Compensatory Leave	
References: Department of Labor Guidelines; Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)	
Supersedes: NA	
Responsible Administrator: Chief Financial Officer	
Initial Approval: 04-13-2010	Last Revision: 05-02-2018

The following regulation applies to the travel of all employees of Three Rivers College in the performance of their official duties. Provisions of this regulation also may apply to individuals other than employees who are authorized to travel at College expense. Please note that authorization for travel will not be granted, and expenses will not be reimbursed unless the travel is made, and reimbursement is claimed in accordance with this regulation and any approved exceptions hereto.

In order to fulfill its mission, it is expected that employees of Three Rivers College may need to travel. The College will pay reasonable travel expenses for those who travel on College business and whose trip has been approved in advance. This College regulation and specific reimbursement rates for allowable travel expenses shall be consistent with all federal, state, and local law.

General Provisions

Reimbursement for approved College travel expenses shall be based on the IRS Guidelines for an “accountable plan”, which allows for reimbursement of authorized business expenses without creating a taxable event for the employee. If federal funds are used to reimburse the trip, a note must be included indicating why the participation in the trip is necessary to the federal award. Reference PR 4506 Overtime and Compensatory Leave, and the Department of Labor Guidelines for non-Exempt employee travel as well as Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

No authorization for travel by any employee shall be granted, and no reimbursement for travel expenses shall be made, except in accordance with the provisions of this regulation. Reimbursement for travel expenses shall be limited to expenses incurred upon travel authorized in advance, and in accordance with the requirements set forth herein.

Authorized persons to travel at the expense of the College include: members of the board of trustees, the College President, employees of the College, prospective employees, consultants or advisors and students participating in approved student activities.

Travel which may be authorized, and pursuant to which expenses may be reimbursed, shall be limited to the following:

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- a) Travel which is necessary for the proper execution of official College business, or in justifiable pursuit of the College's educational objectives; or
- b) Travel to meetings and conferences of a professional nature that have the potential to increase the attending employee's usefulness to the College.

Travel shall not include, and no reimbursement for expenses shall be made for, transportation in connection with an employee's official station of employment. The employee's "official station" is his or her regular area of employment activity, e.g., office headquarters, campus, or designated location of an employee established in the field.

The official station of an employee shall be designated by the President. It is normally expected that the official station is that location at which the employee spends the major portion of his/her working time.

The employee is considered to be on approved and "official travel status", and as such, eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses, at the time of departure from the employee's official station or residence, whichever is applicable, for the purpose of traveling on College business. Expenses for meals and lodging will be allowed when overnight travel or occasional excessive hours of work are required for the convenience of the College.

There are limitations on travel expenses contained herein, which are considered the maximum amounts above which reimbursement shall not be made. Employees are expected to be as conservative as possible in incurring travel expenses. Please know that only necessary and reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

All expenses not covered as meal per diem require itemized receipts and shall be reimbursed at the actual amount of the expense subject to the limitations herein.

Authorization of Travel

Approving Authorities – The College President or his/her designees shall have authority to approve travel by employees of the College. All travel must be approved by the supervisor and appropriate cabinet member.

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Non-Exempt Employees – overtime and compensatory leave may be impacted depending on the travel time. Supervisors need to be aware of the hours worked to approve the travel request. Supervisors must approve and submit the overtime work request form and approve the web-time entry. Reference PR 4506, Overtime and Compensatory Leave.

Travel inside the Contiguous United States – All employees must obtain prior authorization for travel in the contiguous United States by the employee’s appropriate approving supervisor and appropriate cabinet member. Such authorization must be submitted in writing (on a **Request for Travel Authorization** form) before a claim for reimbursement will be processed. .

Travel outside the Contiguous United States – In addition to the normal approvals for out-of-state travel, authorization for travel by an employee to Alaska, Hawaii, and all out-of-country travel shall be subject to the recommendation by the College President and written advance approval by the board of trustees. Authorizations shall be routed to the College President by the appropriate cabinet member. Requests for authorization must reach the College President a minimum of (60-90) days in advance of the date the travel will commence.

Travel authorization forms will be prepared by the originator, approved by the appropriate officials as outlined above, and forwarded to business office for processing at least two (2) weeks prior to commencing travel. Administrative approval by the business office is contingent upon available travel funds in the budget for the account number against which the reimbursement will be charged. Authorizations administratively disapproved by the business office because of insufficient funds will be returned to the requester. The authorization must show the purpose of the trip, destination(s), date of departure and return, mode of transportation, and estimated expenses. Claims for reimbursement for travel expenses which exceed the amount approved on the appropriate travel authorization form will not be honored unless there are unusual circumstances and the amount is approved in advance by the appropriate cabinet member.

For a particular employee, one official should usually approve all travel authorizations, claims for expenses, and requests for College vehicles. This approving official should maintain adequate records to ensure that no duplication of travel expenses occurs. Where frequent official travel is required, the approving official may maintain a log of the employee’s travel.

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Table I – Summary of Required Travel Authorization Approval

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Required Approval</u>
Local Travel	Supervisor and Appropriate Cabinet Member
In-State Travel	Supervisor and Appropriate Cabinet Member
Out-of-State Travel	Supervisor and Appropriate Cabinet Member
Travel Outside Contiguous United States	Supervisor, Appropriate Cabinet Member, College President, and Board of Trustees
Travel Advance	Chief Financial Officer

Transportation

General – All travel must be by the most direct route possible, and any employee who travels by an indirect route must bear any extra expense occasioned thereby. When work will be performed by an employee in-route to or from the official duty station, reimbursable mileage is computed by deducting the employee’s normal commuting mileage from the actual mileage driven in performing the work in-route to or from the official duty station. For example, if an employee normally commutes 10 miles (20 miles round trip), and performs work on the way home from the official station which results in 12 miles driven, the mileage reimbursement would be for two (2) miles only, as that is the amount of mileage in excess of the employee’s normal commute. In no instance shall mileage claimed for reimbursement exceed actual miles traveled.

Mode of Transportation – Transportation of employees traveling singly should be by common carrier (air, train, or bus) whenever practical. The use of air travel is recommended when time is an important factor or when the trip is so long that other methods of travel would increase the subsistence expense. Automobile transportation may be used to save time when common carrier transportation cannot be satisfactorily scheduled, or to reduce expenses when two or more

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employees are making the trip. Reimbursement for personal vehicle shall not exceed the cost of travel via common carrier or rental car.

Common Carrier Travel – When travel is by common carrier, the fare must not exceed the regular tourist fare charged the general public, and advantage must be taken of round trip rates when available. A copy of the employee’s travel ticket and (1 bag) baggage receipt, or acceptable proof of payment, must be submitted for reimbursement of common carrier expenses. If travel is by common carrier, the employee will be reimbursed for expenses in traveling to and from the common carrier. Reimbursement shall be made at the rate of least expense (personal auto round trip mileage plus parking at the location of the common carrier, one-way rental car to the location of the common carrier, or round trip rental car plus parking at the location of the common carrier.).

Automobile Travel – When travel by automobile is appropriate, employees should use College-owned automobiles whenever available and feasible. When a College owned vehicle is unavailable, use the Trip Optimizer to compare mileage to rental car rates.

- a) **College-owned Vehicles** – When transportation is in a College-owned vehicle, all necessary repair bills, tolls, parking, gasoline, and storage expenses are allowable. When using these vehicles, employees will be furnished with credit cards for the purchase of necessary gasoline, oil, and other automobile services. Such expenses should not be claimed by the employee as travel expenses.
- b) All authorized travelers must complete a Request for Travel Authorization Form in advance of their travel. Any driver authorized to operate a College vehicle must possess a valid state driver’s license of the proper class. Any driver of College vehicles who is paid to take passengers to a destination or to operate a bus or van transporting fifteen (15) or more people, including the driver, must possess a valid commercial driver’s license. All driver information such as, copies of valid driver’s license, car insurance, and appropriate identification for validation, must be held in the office from which the College owned vehicle is checked out prior to travel.
- c) **Personally Owned Automobiles** – The use of a personally owned automobile is allowed

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for trips of less than 125 miles per day. Mileage reimbursement rates will be set each fiscal year at the IRS established rate and effective July 1. When the IRS rate decreases during the fiscal year, the College's reimbursement rate will decrease to match the lowered rate. The authorized mileage allowance covers all operating expenses such as gasoline, oil, and repairs precluding any separate claim for such items. The travel claim must indicate the employee's itinerary, and must show the official business mileage. Mileage as indicated by the mileage chart contained herein or Google Map shortest distance for those destinations not included on the mileage chart. Only mileage on official business may be claimed. For local travel, the mileage for each trip must be listed separately. **NOTE: All employees electing to use their personal vehicle for business travel over 125 miles per day will be reimbursed at the lowest rate according to the Trip Optimizer.**

- d) **Car Rental** – The College currently receives state contract rates through Enterprise Rent-A-Car. When a College fleet vehicle is unavailable, employees should plan to rent a vehicle when travel exceeds 125 miles per day. Standard size vehicles should be requested when reserving the vehicle. Larger vehicles may be rented for group travel only. When renting a car, employees should not request the damage waiver or personal accident insurance. The College carries insurance for this purpose. Gasoline purchases may be made in cash or personal credit card and will be reimbursed by the College with an original itemized receipt. Alternatively, a College gas card for use with a rental vehicle can be requested from the business office. Employees should use the Trip Optimizer to determine the most economical method.

NOTE: employees electing to use their personal vehicle for business travel over 125 miles will be reimbursed at the rental rate of a standard size vehicle.

- a) **Parking** – Necessary charges for hotel and airport parking will be allowed provided that airport parking fees do not exceed the cost of two round trips in the employee's personal car. Receipts must be furnished for airport and hotel parking. When traveling to the airport, employees should consider car rental and drop off at the airport as an alternative to parking fees for personal or College vehicles.

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Taxi Service – When travel is by common carrier, reasonable taxi fares will be allowed for necessary transportation. Bus or shuttle service to and from airports will be used when available and practical. After arrival at destination, necessary taxi fares for traveling between hotel or lodging and meeting or conference will be allowed; taxi fares to and from restaurants are not reimbursable. Each trip must be explained on claim for reimbursement.

Car Rentals at Destination – Charges for automobile rental shall be allowed whenever it is more economical than alternative methods of transportation, or it is the only practical means of transportation. Charges for insurance for rented automobiles are not reimbursable. A receipt is always required for reimbursement. While the College’s state rate is not available in all locations, many Enterprise locations will offer discounted rates and bill to the College’s account.

Toll and Ferry Fees – Reasonable tolls and ferry fees will be allowed when necessary. A receipt is always required for reimbursement.

NOTE: Unnecessary meals and lodging expenses which are occasioned by the use of an automobile for reasons of the employee’s personal convenience, or which cause travel by an indirect route, will not be reimbursed.

I. Lodging

In-State and Out-of-State Lodging – Lodging expenses incurred while on authorized travel will be reimbursable at the actual rate when accompanied by an itemized receipt. No lodging expenses are to be authorized for local lodging costs of College personnel unless the expenses are incurred for the convenience of the College. In-route lodging will be allowed for only one day each way on trips where one way travel to or from the intended destination is impracticable (i.e. more than ten (10) hours of travel time is required to arrive or return from the intended destination). Exceptions to the maximum lodging rate contained herein require the written approval of the appropriate cabinet member.

Additional Lodging Expenses – Sales and occupancy taxes, with the exception of Missouri and Florida state sales taxes, on lodging costs will be reimbursable. Higher rates for lodging at the location of a convention or conference will be allowed, without special approval, up to the amount indicated in the convention or conference brochure. If more than one rate is indicated,

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the lowest rate is the amount which will be reimbursed. However, the employee must attempt to receive a government rate for the lodging. If the lowest rate indicated in the convention or conference brochure is unavailable, advance approval of the higher rate must be obtained from the appropriate cabinet member. The convention or conference brochure which indicates the lodging rates must be included with the travel claim. Otherwise, reimbursement will be limited to the applicable lodging rate as provided in this regulation.

When written approval is required, a memorandum should be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer with the same approvals as required for the travel involved. The approved memorandum should be attached to the claim for reimbursement, or reimbursement will be limited to the applicable lodging rate as provided in this procedure.

Shared Lodging – When employees share a hotel room, each employee should claim a proportional share of the room cost, and include an explanation with his or her travel claim detailing dates and other employees with whom the room was shared. If the room is shared with someone other than a College employee, only single room rates subject to the maximum amount will be allowed. The receipt for the entire amount should be submitted with the expense claim.

II. Meals

In-State and Out-of-State Meals – Employees may claim the applicable per diem rate for each eligible meal while on authorized travel. Meal per diem rates will be set each fiscal year at the U.S. General Services Administration CONUS per diem rates which are effective July 1. When the U.S. General Services Administration CONUS per diem rate decreases during the fiscal year, the College's reimbursement rate will decrease to match the lowered rate. Tips on meals are part of the per diem and may not be claimed separately. To qualify for meal per diem when no overnight lodging is indicated, you must document on your expense report that you were in travel status for twelve (12) hours or more. When meals are provided as part of a conference the value of said meal shall be deducted from the reimbursement request as outlined in the U.S. General Services Administration CONUS per diem rates breakdown for Meals & Incidental Expenses.

NOTE: Employees on overnight travel status not claiming lodging must include a written explanation to claim meal per diem (e.g. staying with friends).

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Official Banquets – When the expenses for an official banquet of a meeting or conference are in excess of the maximum rates, the excess may be allowed provided that a receipt or proper documentation of the charge is submitted.

III. Miscellaneous Expenses

Personal Expenses –Personal expenses are not eligible for reimbursement.

Communication Expenses – Charges for communication expenses (long distance telephone, internet access, etc.) on official business will be allowed provided a statement is furnished showing the date, the name and location called, and the nature of the business. Charges for necessary local phone calls on official business will be allowed; personal calls will not be allowed.

Registration Fees – Registration fees for approved conferences, conventions, seminars, meetings, etc., will be allowed including the cost of official banquets and/or luncheons, if authorized in advance by the appropriate approving authority, and provided receipts are submitted with the travel claim. However, no separate claim for the corresponding meal will be allowed when a banquet or luncheon is claimed. A copy of the announcement brochure showing expenses covered by the registration fee must accompany the travel request.

Payment of registration fees may be included with the travel request provided the approved travel authorization specifies a registration fee. The completed registration form must be submitted with the Request for Authorization.

IV. Claims

A **Travel Expense Claim** form for claims for travel expenses shall be used for reimbursement of expenses. The form must show movement and detail of expenses on a daily basis. Receipts for appropriate expenses must be attached to the form. Expenses for books, supplies, postage, and other items that do not constitute travel expenses should not be included in the claim form. Claims for reimbursement of travel expenses, must be completed no later than thirty (30) days after completion of the travel, with the exception of travel completed at the end of the fiscal year (June), which must have completed claims for reimbursement by the end of the fifth (5th) day of the new fiscal year (see paragraph 5 of this section for further details). Claims submitted after

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this period must provide written explanation for the delay and may not be honored.

A separate claim for reimbursement of expenses must be filed by each claimant. No employee is authorized to have expenses billed to the College without prior approval.

NOTE: claims for reimbursement of mileage-only of multiple local trips are to be completed on a monthly basis on a **Mileage Reimbursement Request** form and must specify each trip individually.

The claim must be approved by the appropriate approving authority prior to reimbursement. All claims must be signed by a higher authority than the claimant. Approving officials, as previously outlined herein, are responsible for the reasonableness of the claim.

Travel which begins in one fiscal year and ends in another fiscal year will be considered an expense of the year in which the travel ends. The travel authorization for such trips should be clearly noted as applicable to the appropriate fiscal year. Travel expenses paid in advance directly by the College may be applied to the fiscal year in which the expenses were paid. Claims for travel expenses must be at the business office by the last work day of the fiscal year or immediately upon return from a trip in progress at fiscal year-end. The claim for any trip which ends on the last day of the fiscal year must be at the business office by the end of the fifth (5th) day of the new fiscal year. Claims not submitted on time will be an expense of the following fiscal year and must include a written explanation for the delay.

V. Travel Advances

General – Normally, travel expenses should be paid when incurred by an employee, with the reimbursement made to the employee for actual expenses upon proper submission of a claim for travel expenses. Advances to employees for anticipated travel expenses may be made under the circumstances hereinafter described as temporary travel advances except as provided in Section X-3. All travel advances must be approved by the Chief Financial Officer.

Temporary Travel Advances – When temporary travel is authorized for an employee, the employee may receive an advance, provided a request for the advance, including estimated expenses, is submitted to the appropriate approving authority with the request for written

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authorization for the travel, and is approved. An amount equal to the estimated expenditures will be allowed as an advance; however, no advance for less than \$100.00 shall be made. Students traveling under individual authorizations or an employee traveling with a student or students who is responsible for disbursing all funds for a trip may be advanced 100% of the amount of the authorization. Advances will not include expenses paid directly by the College.

Requesting a Temporary Travel Advance – The request for a temporary advance is made with the Request for Travel Authorization form. This request should be received by the business office no less than ten (10) working days prior to departure. The advance check will be prepared by the business office, and must be picked up by the requester approximately three (3) days before the travel is to begin. If an advance is needed earlier than three (3) days before the trip is to begin, an explanation of why the advance is needed earlier as well as the date needed should be attached.

Payroll Deduction Authorization – Each employee receiving any travel advance must sign a Travel Advance Agreement form; which will allow the College to recover the advance from any salary owed the employee in the event of termination of employment, or failure to submit a travel claim with itemized receipts for purchases other than meals.

Expense Claim – Upon return, the employee should submit a Travel Expense Claim form detailing the actual expenditures, and showing the total expenses incurred. The advanced amount should be subtracted from this total. No advance should exceed actual expenses. If this does happen, the expense account claim should be forwarded to the business office after repayment of the remaining part of the advance is made to a cashier at the business office, and the receipt is attached to the travel claim. If an advance is received and the travel is canceled, the advance must be returned within one (1) day of the cancellation.

Limitation of the Number of Pending Travel Advances – A second travel advance can be made only if the employee has submitted a Travel Expense Claim form for the expenses covering the first advance, or can justify why the claim has not been submitted. No more than two (2) travel advances can be outstanding.

VI. Local Travel

General – Persons traveling from their home to the campus designated as their official duty

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station are not eligible to receive reimbursement of travel expenses. The official duty station is defined as that location where the majority of time is spent in teaching or the performance of assigned duties. In accordance with section IV of this regulation, compensation for travel between campuses, as well as other necessary local travel, will be made at the current rate as listed herein when teaching or work assignments must be performed at two or more locations on the same day.

All claims for reimbursement for local travel must be submitted on a monthly basis for all employees, except for faculty which may file their travel claims on a semester basis, provided that all claims are filed within thirty (30) days from the end of the semester. All claims must be submitted within the fiscal year in which travel occurs, with the exception of the month of June, which must be submitted to the business office by the end of the fifth (5th) day of the new fiscal year, in order to be considered for reimbursement.

Intercampus Travel – Each employee will have designated as his/her official duty station one of several locations where College operations occur. When the College requires an employee to move from the official duty station to another location, the employee will be reimbursed for the mileage traveled between the official duty station and the secondary location. If an employee is required to report to a location that is farther from his/her residence than the official duty station, the employee may claim reimbursement for the additional mileage. For example, if an employee normally has to drive ten (10) miles to work, but must drive fifteen (15), the reimbursement will be for five (5) miles (15 miles minus 10 miles).

Standard mileage between College locations has been established and is considered official. These mileages should be used when claiming reimbursement. For those destinations not included in the official mileage chart, a Google map must be attached to the request for travel. A chart of these mileages is available on the Employee Gateway. Claims for reimbursement should be made on a Travel Expense Claim form, a copy of which is available on the Employee Gateway. The Request for Travel Authorization form can also be found on the Employee Gateway.

Other Local Travel – Other local travel is defined as travel which takes place within the service area of the College, and is not between Three Rivers College locations. Employees required to leave their official duty station on official College business will be compensated for actual mileage

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traveled. Additional charges for parking will be allowed, provided that a receipt is submitted with the claim for reimbursement.

Standard mileages between the College and some other locations have been established and are considered official. For all other trips, mileage must be measured by Google map. All travel must be by the most direct route possible. Any employee who travels by an indirect route must bear the added expense.

XII. Exceptions

Unless specifically authorized herein, exceptions will generally not be approved. Requests for exceptions or interpretations must be made in-writing and forwarded to the office of the College President for approval/disapproval.

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DOCUMENT HISTORY:

- 04-13-2010:** Initial approval of regulation FR 3510 Travel Authorization and Reimbursement.
- 12-09-2015:** Minor revisions for clarification and the addition of State of Florida Tax Exemption during authorized out of state employee travel. Revision to required approval of Out-of-State Travel from Division Chair, Appropriate Cabinet Member, and College President to Supervisor and Appropriate Cabinet Member.
- 06-22-2016:** Addition of Federal Funds Disclosure.
- 09-09-2016:** Reference PR 4506 Overtime and Compensatory Leave and the Department of Labor Guidelines for Non-Exempt employee travel as well as FLSA.
- 09-21-2016:** The College Board of Trustees approved the name change of the College from Three Rivers Community College to Three Rivers College.
- 05-02-2018:** Blanket travel authorizations were eliminated.