

BLINN COLLEGE ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS MANUAL

SUBJECT: *Travel Procedures*

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 27, 2004; amended June 29, 2010, October 6, 2010, February 3, 2011, May 1, 2012, February 12, 2013, August 6, 2013, September 10, 2013, July 14, 2015, August 25, 2015, November 28, 2017, October 23, 2018, August 1, 2019, and September 17, 2019.

BOARD POLICY REFERENCE: DEE and BBG

PURPOSE

The purpose of this travel regulation is to inform all College District employees of the procedures for work-related travel. The Chancellor or designee may approve exceptions to this Administrative Regulation on a case-by-case basis.

OBJECTIVES

- The College District will pay expenses for approved travel only. All employees must plan work-related travel to keep expenses at the lowest practical level. When traveling to the same out-of-town function, employees will utilize as many cost-saving strategies as possible. Examples of these strategies may include coordination of travel when two or more employees are traveling to the same destination at the same time and/or sharing a hotel room when possible.
- Employees faced with an option to fly or drive, should base transportation decisions on what is in the best interest of the College District.
- Employees faced with an option of choosing conferences, seminars, or training offered in multiple locations, should attend the one that is the most cost effective for the College District.
- In an effort to manage institutional expenses, the College District may limit the number of employees attending the same conference, seminar, or training and/or the overall number of these events attended by any given employee.

APPROVAL

All employees must plan work-related travel in advance through Chrome River, including pre-approval. The employee's department or division supervisor, budget manager, and Vice Chancellor must sign off on any overnight travel. With the exception of the personal mileage reimbursement, only full-time employees are eligible for work-related travel reimbursements.

Vice Chancellors have the same approval and delegation authority for travel as they do for other expenditures. This authority includes the approval of adjustments within the travel budget. Approvers have the ability to designate a delegate to approve a pre-approval.

The Chrome River pre-approval request must detail all estimated trip expenses including per diem, hotel, airfare, car rental, tolls, baggage fees, registration fees, and parking. The College District requires each employee to complete the form, unless the employee has assigned a delegate to complete the task. For travel that includes students, the originator of the Chrome River pre-approval request must include the names and student identification numbers of all who are traveling.

The Chancellor and the appropriate Vice Chancellor must approve all out-of-country travel in advance prior to making any travel arrangements on behalf of the College District.

Failure to follow the College District's travel procedure may lead to loss of travel privileges and may be grounds for employee disciplinary action.

PAYMENT/REIMBURSEMENT

Upon approval of the employee's Chrome River pre-approval request, the Purchasing Department will issue a JP Morgan Chase travel card to the employee, for that specific approved trip only. The employee is responsible for using the travel card for all travel arrangements such as airfare, hotel reservations, conference registrations, and other travel expenditures, except for per diem. The employee must use the travel card for car rental, parking, or other travel expenses while on that particular approved trip only. Employees should not use the travel card for expenses included in the per diem [*see* **MEALS AND INCIDENTALS (Per Diem)**, below]. The Purchasing Department may issue travel cards annually to employees, with the approval of the Chancellor. The Chancellor will consider requests for an annual travel card throughout the fiscal year.

The College District does not allow employees with p-cards to make travel purchases unless use of the p-card, for this purpose, has been approved in advance.

The College District will reimburse travel and/or travel-related expenses up to the allowable and budgeted amounts approved by the College District or funding source. If an employee fails to adhere to these procurement procedures, the employee will be liable personally for the incurred travel costs.

PERSONAL MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

The College District will consider reimbursement of an employee's personal mileage expenses only if the employee's supervisor has justified and approved the business purpose in advance, and if the reimbursement does not include commuting travel from/to an employee's home to any of the College District's campuses, satellite offices, or regular work stations.

The College District will reimburse an employee for one-way or round-trip mileage if the employee has more than one assignment in the College District's service area on the same day. The College District discourages supervisors from scheduling travel to more than one campus on any given day. If an employee has a secondary work location for an entire day and travels from/to the employee's home to the secondary location, he/she cannot claim any mileage.

The College District applies the standard rate established by the Internal Revenue Code to reimburse mileage for an employee's use of their private vehicle. The College District requires an employee to have a valid driver's license and to carry personal liability insurance if they use their private vehicle for business purposes. Aside from the mileage reimbursement, parking, and tollway charges, the College District assumes no liability that the employee may incur because of the employee's use of a privately owned vehicle.

The College District will reimburse mileage expenses that the employee incurs for travel between the employee's home and a temporary, non-College District work location (business trip) outside of the

College District's service area, as defined in Tex. Educ. Code § 130.168.¹ This includes travel from an employee's home to/from the airport for an extended trip.

Non-commuting work-related mileage within the College District's service area² is reimbursable. The employee should obtain prior written authorization from the Chancellor or appropriate Vice Chancellor. A copy of this authorization must accompany corresponding expense reimbursement requests. Employees should claim and submit local travel no later than the 15th day of the month following the month in which the work-related travel occurred. Reimbursement requests must include the date, itinerary, purpose, and mileage for each individual trip.

REGISTRATION FEES

The employee should process all registration fees with the travel card issued by the Purchasing Department. For registration needing payment by check, the employee must complete a purchase requisition. The Accounting Department will process the requisition and payment.

TRAVEL BY PUBLIC CONVEYANCE

The employee should process all airline reservations with the travel card issued by the Purchasing Department. The employee should consider booking airline reservations that are in the best interest of the College District.

Charter Bus reservations must be made by the Purchasing Department and, in most instances, require a minimum of four weeks advance notice/approval to insure the requested dates of travel.

AUTOMOBILES, SUBURBANS, AND BLINN BUS

The College District encourages all employees to use College District vehicles for approved business travel, when available. The College District will charge the use of a college vehicle to the employee's budget code at the following rate:

- Automobile - \$60/day
- Suburban - \$95/day
- Blinn Bus - \$250/day (\$125/day if less than 4 hours)

Employees may reserve a college vehicle by completing the Vehicle/Transportation Request form found on the Transportation page on the College District website.

An employee may opt to use a personal vehicle for approved College District business travel. (*See **PERSONAL MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT**, above*)

An employee may not use a College District vehicle for personal business. (*See [Vehicle Usage](#), Blinn College Administrative Regulations*)

The College District may authorize an employee to rent a vehicle during out-of-town travel. An employee may secure advanced authorization to rent a vehicle, using the Chrome River Pre-Approval request. The College District only pays for physical damage insurance on rental cars. The College District will not reimburse the employee for additional insurance purchased at the time of rental.

The Purchasing and Transportation Department may secure local rental vehicles on behalf of the College District. Employees who need to rent vehicles locally for College District purposes must contact the Purchasing and Transportation Department.

STUDENT TRAVEL

A complete list of all students traveling must accompany the Chrome River pre-approval request. Students should complete and file liability waivers within one week prior to travel. The appropriate Vice Chancellor must approve any student travel that will occur in a non-College District vehicle.

Employees should include student travel money on College District travel cards whenever possible. The Vice Chancellor may approve cash advances for student meals and only for the meals specified on the cash advance form (\$10 breakfast, \$15 lunch, or \$20 dinner) for a maximum of \$45 per student, per day. Cash advances should not be submitted on Chrome River pre-approval requests.

The Chancellor may approve employee meals for faculty/staff traveling with students for a one-day or same-day trip.

MEALS AND INCIDENTALS (Per Diem)

The College District provides a per diem meals and incidentals (M&IE) allowance for overnight work travel. Per IRS regulations, the College District may reimburse employee meals for same-day trips if the trip exceeds 12 hours, and the reimbursement does not exceed 75% of the applicable per diem (*see* Federal Travel Regulation § 301-11.101)..

The College District follows [U.S. General Services Administration Guidelines](#)³ (GSA Guidelines) for M&IE per diem rates in the continental United States, which vary by domestic destination. For international destinations, the College District follows the M&IE per diem rates set by the [U.S. Department of State](#).⁴ To assist employees with submitting travel expense reports, the Chrome River system contains the GSA and Department of State rates for most destination cities. When claiming the per diem allowance, employees should not provide meal or incidental receipts.

What does the per diem rate cover?

1. All meals, taxes, and gratuities for each full day of travel.
2. Seventy-five percent of meals, taxes, and gratuities for the first and last day of travel.

Example: 3 days/2 nights of travel to Dallas, TX

Full day per diem for Dallas, Texas, as of June 2019	\$66
First and last day of travel, per GSA	\$49.50

Total per diem M&IE reimbursement for this trip = \$49.50 + \$66 + \$49.50 = \$165

Similar to mileage reimbursements on personal vehicles, employees will receive the M&IE per diem allowance after the employee completes the approved work-related overnight travel.

In lieu of the per diem reimbursement, the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor in the employee's chain of command may approve actual meal expenses. Any reimbursement request for actual meal expenses

must include the appropriate receipts and business purpose for the meal. Whenever possible, employees should request approval for actual meal expenses in advance of travel.

Work-related group meals (two or more persons, employees or non-employees) while traveling for College District business are reimbursable. Employees must use the Chrome River pre-approval request to authorize reimbursement for such group meals. The expense form must include the names of those in the group and the business purpose of the meal.

Alcoholic beverage purchases are not reimbursable. The Chancellor may grant an exception to an employee reimbursement of alcoholic beverages out of alternate, non-College District funds if requested and approved in advance.

LODGING

Employees must book the most economical housing appropriate to the nature and location of the meeting or event. The College District will pay the single occupant rate for hotel rooms unless more than one employee shares a room. The College District will not pay for amounts above the single occupant rate for family or friends travelling with the employee. An employee may not charge, or temporarily charge, personal travel expenses to the College District.

If an employee is concerned about hotel room availability, the employee may use a College District p-card or personal credit card to hold a reservation during the approval process. The employee must pay for the hotel room at checkout with a College District-issued travel card.

The College District will pay for the room rate approved on the Chrome River Pre-Approval request, plus appropriate taxes. Blinn College District is exempt from Texas state sales tax, and employees must provide proper documentation to the hotel to waive such charges. Employees may obtain a hotel occupancy exemption certificate from the College District website prior to the trip. Some hotels also may have this form. The employee should give the form to the hotel at the time of check-in so the hotel will not add state sales tax to the bill. Other taxes are acceptable College District expenses.

Employees are responsible for all additional room charges such as, but not limited to, in-room movies, personal phone calls, and internet, unless the employee requires internet services for College District business.

The College District does not pay for lodging in private homes. Employees must submit an original hotel receipt. The College District will not accept credit card statements as receipts.

OTHER INCIDENTAL EXPENSES

Parking: Employees should seek the most reasonable and practical parking rates available. The College District will not reimburse employee for valet and premium-parking services unless there is no other parking available.

Employees must submit original receipts for overnight hotel and airport parking charges. The College District does not require receipts for self-pay parking lots. However, employees should submit an explanation of the charges with their expense report.

Personal: The College District does not reimburse personal expenses. Any charges for extending a trip for personal reasons are the responsibility of the employee.

Vehicle Repairs: The College District will cover charges for emergency repairs to College District vehicles. If practical, the employee should contact the Purchasing and Transportation Department or the Vice Chancellor, Business and Finance/CFO before authorizing major repairs. In any case, the employee should notify the Purchasing and Transportation Department as soon as possible. The employee should charge the repairs to the College District. If this is not possible, the employee should pay for the repairs and submit the receipt with their expense report for reimbursement.

¹ Blinn College District's service area includes the territory within:

- (1) Washington, Burleson, Brazos, Madison, Grimes, and Waller counties;
- (2) the Mumford, Hearne, and Franklin independent school districts located in Robertson County;
- (3) Austin County, other than the territory within the Wallis-Orchard Independent School District;
- (4) the Milano and Gause independent school districts located in Milam County;
- (5) the part of the Richards Independent School District that is located in Walker and Montgomery counties;
- (6) the part of the Bryan Independent School District that is located in Robertson County;
- (7) Fayette County, other than the territory within the Smithville Independent School District;
- (8) Lee County, other than the territory within the Elgin Independent School District; and
- (9) the part of the Lexington Independent School District that is located in Bastrop, Milam, and Williamson counties.

See Tex. Educ. Code § 130.168.

² *Id.*

³ The hyperlink to the GSA website provides a tool for determining the per diem rate by destination cities in the continental U.S.

⁴ The Department of State website provides a tool for determining the per diem rate by international destination cities.