

ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRAVEL POLICY

Overview

The objective of the college travel policy is to support reasonable and necessary staff travel expenditures for conducting college business or other related matters while away from the employee's assigned campus a distance of 50 miles or more.

The requirement for prior written travel approval is emphasized! Prior approval establishes the work status of a staff member when away from the college campus, authorizes necessary travel, maintains proper control to ensure that employees are not in a travel status any longer than an assignment requires and assures the method of transportation and accommodations utilized are the most expedient and economical under the particular circumstances.

Circumstances warranting possible exception to the policy must be directed to the Associate Vice President of Finance.

General Requirements

- Travel status must be requested by the traveler, **in advance**, by submitting a Request To Travel Form (RTTF) to the employee's supervisor.
- Budgeted travel funds are centralized at the Executive Vice President (EVP) level rather than loaded at the department level. To ensure that travel gets charged to the appropriate department, a Budget Transfer Request Form (BTRF) must accompany the RTTF. The BTRF is completed for date, department, and the account number the travel is to be charged to, along with the justification for the travel. The BTRF and RTTF are then forwarded to the supervisor, who approves and forwards to the EVP or AVP. The Associate or Executive Vice President will complete the account number the travel will be allotted from and sign the form signifying approval of the travel. The completed BTRF will then be forwarded to the Chief Administrative and Financial Officer (CAFO) such that the budget transfer can occur. The RTTF is returned to the requestor.
- Upon receipt of the approved RTTF, the traveler will complete a requisition with the department travel codes. The requisition will include all expenses expected to be paid by the traveler (registration fee; airfare; hotel; meals; taxi, etc.).
- Department Heads are responsible to ensure that travel is reasonable and that sufficient funds exist to support travel expenditures prior to incurring travel costs. Expenses in excess of previously authorized amounts will require additional justification prior to reimbursement. Expenses incurred prior to approval may be deemed unauthorized and thus, not reimbursed.

- Only expenditures incurred in accordance with the rules established by this policy will qualify for reimbursement.
- The AVP of Finance or his designee shall approve payment of all travel claims. Actual payment of claims will reflect necessary adjustments for travel not allowed or which exceed college policy. Only **original** receipt documentation supporting an actual expense will be reimbursed. Photocopied receipts are not authorized and cannot be reimbursed. Credit card slips, signed by the cardholder at the time of a credit card purchase, and credit card monthly statements are not acceptable documentation for college reimbursement purposes. **Receipt information should include a description of the items or services provided, transaction date, vendor name, address, and amount paid.**
- Travel reimbursements for individuals, including spouses, not employed by the college shall not be authorized or reimbursed.
- Reimbursement for New York State taxes is not generally authorized. Tax exempt certificates (ST-119.1 sales tax and/or ST-129, room occupancy tax) are available to travelers before departing on approved trips and can be printed from the Purchasing/Payable quick link on the ECC website. A completed certificate must be presented at the time of purchase or hotel check-in to avoid tax. Sales taxes may be reimbursed for meal, gasoline and other incidental expenses where the use of a tax exempt certificate is not practical or reasonable.
- Only the actual and necessary expenses essential to the ordinary comforts of a traveler in the performance of official college duties will be reimbursed. A specific statement of the official business for which the expenses will be incurred is to be made part of the RTTF.
- Travel shall, in general, be made by the most direct route possible avoiding circuitous routes.
- Expenses for maid, laundry, valet service, entertainment, newspapers/magazines, personal items, etc. are personal in nature and are not reimbursable travel expenses. ECC expects its travelers to exercise good judgment with respect to excess costs, luxury accommodations and circuitous routes, while realizing it may be necessary to stay over a Saturday night to take advantage of reduced airfare, the savings from which are sufficient to cover the additional cost of the hotel and meals. All general department staff travel (mileage and conference) is budgeted under the Travel object code 45476. In certain cases a special travel code may be assigned to travel costs budgeted for a specific project or activity.
- The traveler(s) should determine which mode of travel is most economical. A college vehicle should be used, when available, when vehicular travel is determined to be the most economical mode of transportation. To schedule use of a college automobile please contact the Business Office at 851-1855.

- Car pooling to the same location is strongly advised. Should a traveler elect to drive rather than fly, reimbursement will be based on the lesser of coach airfare or actual mileage at the prescribed rate.
- Blanket travel requisitions, to be used for multiple trips detailing an entire itinerary over a specific period of time, are available. Offices (travelers) that routinely schedule a travel itinerary as part of their normal duties are eligible for the blanket requisition. The purpose of the blanket requisition is to eliminate the necessity for multiple travel requisitions requiring additional approvals and recordkeeping.

Transportation

Travelers arrange their own travel. Ticket pricing and an agents' willingness to search for the best available pricing vary, such that travelers are required to document at least two printed quotations with their RTTF (internet; travel agency; other).

Air/Train Travel

The traveler is expected to book the best available fare in coach, discounted coach or an equivalent fare whenever possible and available so long as this does not require travel at unreasonable hours or result in added direct expense to the college. The traveler should consider cost saving measures when booking fares, such as special or promotional fares, which may require advance booking or less convenient departure and arrival times. First class travel will not be reimbursed. These rules apply to all travel in the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The traveler may book business class for travel outside the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, and Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

The traveler will not be reimbursed for airline club membership fees.

The traveler may accrue and utilize frequent flyer miles for their personal use that have accumulated through travel in the conduct of college business. However, when traveling on college business, the traveler may not insist upon a specific airline in order to accumulate frequent flyer miles, if a lower cost alternative is available.

The traveler may combine business with vacation travel, however, all additional costs incurred during the specific vacation period will be paid by the traveler, including higher fare costs. The traveler is also responsible for any penalties incurred due to a change or cancellation of a trip for personal, non-emergency reasons.

In all cases of travel by air/train, a receipt shall accompany the traveler's timely completed Travel Voucher.

When a traveler cancels a flight, the traveler will notify the Accounts Payable Department such that the travel funds may be unencumbered.

The traveler is responsible to report any lost portion of an unused ticket to the travel agency or airline/carrier immediately. The traveler is responsible for the lost ticket fee.

Limousine or bus service is generally more economical than taxicab service to and from airports and should be utilized if practical and available. Receipts will be required for reimbursement.

Vehicle Travel

Simple mileage reimbursement at the rate suggested by the Internal Revenue Service (current rate is available on Purchasing web page) is available to staff when the use of their privately owned vehicle is necessary for college related travel. Mileage reimbursement will be calculated on the distance between the travelers destination and their home or work site, whichever is closest to the destination. The Mileage Claim Form is used to request reimbursement of mileage, which is summarized on the accompanying Travel Voucher. Travel Vouchers are expected to be filed on no less than a quarterly basis. Failure to submit accordingly may result in non-reimbursement.

Necessary tolls and parking are reimbursable expenditures providing the receipt documentation is included with the Mileage Claim Form.

Local transportation is reimbursed per mile traveled, with the employee's permanent work site (defined as the specific ECC campus to which the employee is regularly assigned) used as the departure point. Where an employee is dispatched from home, or travels from a travel destination to home, reimbursement will be made on the basis of the shortest route to (from) the travel site.

Rental Vehicles

The Business Office arranges all in state rental vehicles. A traveler must include a satisfactory explanation for the need to rent a vehicle, the dates of travel and location of the vehicle pickup on a Department Head approved requisition. Prior to doing so, the traveler must check the availability of college owned vehicles with the Business Office. Out of state travelers arrange their own rental using the most cost effective alternative available.

Travelers attending the same business meeting/conference should make every effort to coordinate itineraries to minimize the number of vehicles rented.

The traveler will decline all insurance offered by the rental car company as the college's insurance includes this coverage.

The traveler must return the rental car with the amount of gas required by contract as a cost saving measure.

Public Transportation

Only reimbursement for coach or economy rates for the most direct route of travel are authorized on any means of public transportation. Indirect travel or circuitous routes will be the responsibility of the traveler.

Mileage Reimbursement (Local transportation)

Reimbursement for approved local mileage when a privately owned vehicle is used for college business is provided by the college at the then in effect Internal Revenue Service rate on a per mile basis. Mileage reimbursement is calculated from the traveler's assigned campus to the traveler's destination. Repairs to personally owned vehicles used for college travel are non-reimbursable.

Meals

Meals taken locally (less than or equal to 50 miles from home or your assigned campus) are not reimbursable unless special event attendance outside of normal assignments, or hours of work, are approved in advance by the Department Head.

Meal expenses during travel status are authorized when approved in advance by the Department Head and the meals were not included in a conference or meeting registration fee.

Meal allowances (excluding alcoholic beverages, tips, delivery and service fees) will be allowed up to a maximum of \$40.00 per day. All requests for meal reimbursement must be supported by receipts.

The per diem reimbursement is made for meals taken within a twenty four (24) hour period during overnight stays.

The \$40.00 maximum per-diem will be reduced as follows when travel is for less than all day:

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| Breakfast | \$ 7.00 |
| Lunch | \$10.00 |
| Dinner | \$23.00 |

The following guideline is used to determine eligible meal reimbursement:

Departure from home or campus:

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| Breakfast | Departure before 7:00 am |
| Lunch | Departure before 11:00 am |
| Dinner | Departure before 4:00 pm |

Return from destination:

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|-----------|--------------------------|
| Breakfast | Return is after 10:00 am |
| Lunch | Return is after 2:00 pm |
| Dinner | Return is after 7:00 pm |

ECC recognizes meal costs tend to be higher in certain areas of the country. To allow for these additional costs, those high cost localities identified in Table 2 of IRS Publication 1542 (Localities Eligible for High Cost Per Diem Amount ...) will be eligible for meal reimbursement at \$46.00 per day, reduced as follows for less than all day travel:

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| Breakfast | \$ 8.00 |
| Lunch | \$11.50 |
| Dinner | \$26.50 |

Some of the more popular high cost localities are listed below. Others not listed below can be found at the irs.gov website, search for Per-Diem Rates.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Arizona: | Phoenix, Scottsdale (Jan 1 – May 31) |
| California: | San Fran, San Diego, Napa, Palm Springs, etc. (dates vary) |
| Florida: | Daytona Beach, Ft Lauderdale, Key West, Miami, Naples, Palm Beach (dates vary, generally winter season) |
| New York: | Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, Staten Island, Nassau County/Great Neck, Suffolk County, White Plains (all year) |
| Massachusetts: | Boston, Cambridge, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket (all year) |
| Illinois: | Chicago (all year) |
| DC area: | Washington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Arlington, Fairfax and Louden counties (Virginia) and Montgomery and Prince George counties (Maryland, including Baltimore) (all year) |
| Pennsylvania: | Philadelphia, (all Year), Hershey, (May 1, - August 31) |
| New Jersey | Atlantic City, Ocean City, Princeton/Trenton (dates vary) |

When multiple meals are recorded upon one receipt the meals to be reimbursed should be clearly indicated. The names of all college individuals participating in the meal must be documented on the rear of the Travel Voucher in order for any reimbursement to be authorized.

Lodging

Employees may arrange their own lodging accommodations, however, conference lodging provided must be used. Reimbursement for lodging will be permitted only when supported by a paid bill.

Should travel plans change it is the traveler's responsibility to cancel any guarantee by 4:00 pm or according to the hotel's cancellation policy, and secure a cancellation number. Failure to do so will result in personal liability for any lodging cost.

The traveler will not be reimbursed for the cost of in-room movie rentals, fitness center expenses or other personal charges ancillary to the travelers stay.

The traveler will be reimbursed for one personal telephone call per day limited to \$5.00. Charges for business telephone calls and facsimiles are reimbursable, however, the official business involved and the date, phone # and party called must be identified on the hotel bill or receipt attached.

Lodging within fifty (50) miles of one's home or campus work site is not reimbursable unless alternative travel would be at unreasonable hours.

If an employee requires lodging within New York State, a Tax Exemption certificate can be obtained from the ECC website Purchasing/Payables quick link for presentation to the hotel at the time of check in or prior thereto. The college will not reimburse for sales taxes on lodging within New York State. Note: Tax Exemption Certificates are to be used only for official business. Improper use of these certificates could result in disciplinary action.

If the traveler uses an "express check out," he/she is responsible to obtain a receipt from the hotel as proof of payment. The receipt should indicate the method of payment and a zero balance due.

The college will not reimburse for optional gratuities paid, such as those to a bell hop, maid etc. Non-optional gratuities added to the room rate as part of the cost of occupancy are reimbursable.

Lodging expenses shared by a college employee, accompanying spouse, significant other or family member, will be reimbursed at 50% of the actual cost or the single room rate, whichever is less.

Forms available on the ECC website, Purchasing/Payables quick link, and attached to this policy are:

Request To Travel Form (RTTF)

Budget Transfer Request Form (BTRF)

Mileage Claim Form

NYS Sales Tax Exemption

NYS Sales Tax Exemption on Hotel Occupancy

Travel Voucher Form

ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
TRAVEL PROCEDURES

A Board member desiring to travel for college related business requests the President's secretary to obtain a cost estimate on their behalf. The President's secretary will complete a *Travel Request* form requiring both the Board member and Chairman of the Board's signature. Travel is not approved until the Chairman of the Board approves it by signing the *Travel Request* form. Sales tax exemption forms must be completed where necessary to avoid room sales taxes, etc.

The Chairman of the Board will verify funding is available from monthly ASC and college budget reports made available at each Board of Trustees meeting.

The Secretary to the President will make travel arrangements, hotel accommodations, conference registration and vehicle rental on behalf of the Board member. The Board member must pay for their respective travel expenses and request reimbursement of those expenses. A Board member may prefer to make their own travel arrangements.

Upon return from approved travel, a *Travel Voucher* form is completed by either the Board member or the President's secretary, if she has been provided with the necessary support documentation, and it must be signed by both the Board member and Chairman of the Board. Receipts must accompany all reimbursement requested expenditures. Meals will be reimbursed through the ASC. Alcohol, room movie rentals and other items of a personal nature, as well as optional gratuities are non-reimbursable. (see *ASC Expenditure Guidelines*, pg 5).

A Board member choosing to use their own personal vehicle for travel may request reimbursement for doing so through the use of the college's Claim For Mileage form. The Board Chairman will sign his approval of the claim after signature by the Board member.

The President's office will process all approved expenditures through the college's Business and Accounts Payable offices and the ASC. The traveler is likely to receive two expense checks covering their travel related costs.

To expedite the reimbursement process, a Board member may wish to sign all necessary forms prior to their travel, and present all dated receipts to the President's secretary immediately upon return.