

# TRAVEL FAQs

## 1. What forms are required prior to traveling? Where can I find them?

- A Travel Authorization (TA) must be completed in FMS and routed for approval. All back-up documentation must be attached (i.e. conference agenda/brochure, pricing for registration, airfare and hotel). If requesting Telecommunication on your TA, the MCCCDC business purpose must be listed (i.e. teaching online class).

## 2. Do I need to create a TA for In-County travel?

- If there are any costs associated with the travel, YES, you will need to create a TA. If there are no costs involved, you will not need to create a TA. However, ALL group travel requires a TA, regardless of whether or not there are costs involved (field trips, club travel, etc.).

## 3. What is required after travel is complete?

- Expense Reports (ER) need to be completed in FMS and are required for all TA's regardless of whether or not you are requesting reimbursement. This includes reimbursable travel and travel that was paid with a PO or PCard. All paid receipts will need to be attached to the ER for all expenses, regardless of how the expense(s) were paid. **The only time an ER is not needed is when the TA was processed as a Penny TA (\$0.01).**
- The Expense Report must be done within 30 days of the last day of travel (or June 30<sup>th</sup> of the current fiscal year, whichever is sooner). Reimbursement requests submitted after this time frame require approval by the College President or designee and from the funding entity if professional growth or grant funds are used.
- ER's must have all receipts attached for each expense type (hotel, airfare, car rental, etc.), regardless of whether or not they are being claimed for reimbursement.

## 4. What are the Per Diem rates? [Click here for Per Diem rates](#)

## 5. Can I include tips on my Expense Report?

- Expenses including, but not limited to, gratuities, laundry, baggage handling tips, and other tips are considered incidental expenses. Per the Travel Regulations, incidental expenses are covered by per diem and are not eligible for separate reimbursement.

## 6. What if I want to drive instead of fly? How do I calculate that?

- A personally-owned motor vehicle may be used for out-of-state travel with supervisory approval. Reimbursement for mileage is limited to no more than the lowest cost mode of transportation and should be documented by traveler and approved prior to travel. Travel Authorization must include a print out of the lowest airfare available for the specified travel dates. If traveling out-of-county, within the state of Arizona, reimbursement will be at the rate set by the Arizona Department of Administration computed by odometer readings or online navigation mapping system.

**Please note:** Before any employee of the College/District operates any vehicle, including a personally-owned vehicle, while engaged in any work phase of their employment with MCCCDC, either assigned or implied, they must:

- possess a valid Arizona driver's license, and
- have read the MCCCDC Administrative Regulation 4.14 for [Motor Vehicle Usage](#).

*\* PC's Policy for In-County travel (mileage reimbursement) – Employees should reserve a college vehicle for in-county travel. If a vehicle is not available, documentation must be provided and Fiscal approval is required in order to get mileage reimbursement for in-county travel.*

## 7. Can I have my travel expenses pre-paid?

- Yes, we can typically pre-pay airfare, hotel and registration fees. This can be done via PO or PCard and only after your TA has been fully approved. Check with your department Admin. Assistant to discuss your options.

**Please note:** The employee will need to forward the approval e-mail and send a screen shot of the TA details along with the expense breakdown to the cardholder PRIOR to any purchases being made. This allows the cardholder to confirm the traveler has been approved and how much they can charge for each expense without going over the approved amount(s). For example, if a traveler is approved for airfare in the amount of \$400.00 and the traveler's airfare is \$500.00, the purchase **should not** be made on a PCard. In addition, any Maricopa Prepaid Expense Types must list how they will be paid on the TA Expense Type Description. For example, if it is going to be paid on a PO, the Expense Type Description should say "To be paid on PO - Registration fees" or if it will be paid on a PCard, the description should say "To be paid on XXXX's PCard - Registration fees."

## **8. Can I pay for travel expenses prior to my Travel Authorization approval?**

- If a traveler used their own personal credit card to book a hotel or register for a conference prior to getting approval to travel, the financial risk then transfers to them from the district. Travelers may not – under any circumstances—use a district-issued pro card to pay for travel that is not yet authorized. With that being said, MCCCDC is under no obligation to approve the travel authorization even if expenses have already been incurred by the employee. This includes professional growth travel. It is recommended that travelers get approvals far in advance and or try to work with fiscal offices and their supervisors to expedite travel authorization prior to the expenditure of funds when this is not possible.

## **9. Shuttle/Uber/taxi from house to the airport and back vs. airport parking**

- When traveling to and from airports, train stations or bus terminals, the most economical and reasonable means of transportation shall be used. To determine the most economical means of ground transportation, all factors such as car rental costs, parking, taxi fares, and/or available shuttle or limousine services must be considered. So, you are allowed to travel to the airport via shuttle, Uber or taxi; however, if airport parking (calculated at the rate of \$12.00/day) would be the most economical means of transportation, the traveler will only be reimbursed the amount it would have cost to park.
- When departing Arizona, storage or parking for personally-owned vehicles at airports, train stations or bus terminals is allowed at economy lot rates (currently \$12.00/day). If a traveler is dropped off at the airport, no parking is reimbursable. When the traveler is picked up at the airport, up to one hour of parking may be reimbursed.  
[Click here for airport parking rates](#)

## **10. When are meals covered during my trip?**

- Regardless of any circumstance or condition, a traveler may not claim more than three (3) meals in any single calendar day or in any period of twenty-four (24) consecutive hours. Meals and incidental expenses shall not exceed those amounts allowed by Travel Regulation. To claim any meal expense, the traveler must show where and when the trip begins and ends. If the traveler does not purchase a meal, or is provided a meal in the cost for other travel-related expenses, the traveler is not eligible for reimbursement for that meal. Regardless of menu, continental breakfast is considered a provided meal.
- **Special dietary needs:** Meals satisfying special dietary needs will generally be provided by airlines, conferences, hotels, etc. if requested by the traveler. It is the traveler's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for such special meals on a timely basis. In order to claim a reimbursement for a meal when a traveler's request for a meal satisfying a special dietary need has been denied, the traveler must provide a statement (with appropriate support) that details and certifies all of the following: 1) to whom such request was made; 2) by whom such request was denied; 3) the reason given for the denial; and 4) the special dietary needs of the traveler that could not otherwise have been accommodated.

## **11. When can I use ground transportation?**

- Tolls, taxi, parking, shuttle, limousine, light-rail, subway, train, streetcar and non-airport parking are classified as ground transportation and can be claimed without receipts up to \$25.00 per Expense Report. The most economical means of transportation shall be used in traveling to and from airports, train stations or bus terminals. Ground transportation for personal activities, such as sightseeing or travel to restaurants, is not reimbursable.
- Receipts required. Claims exceeding \$25.00 require receipts for **ALL** ground transportation amounts. The purpose for the ground transportation claimed must be identified. In the event that receipts are not available (i.e., subways, buses, light rail), the traveler may submit a ground transportation log in lieu of receipts.

## **12. What if I'm not staying at the conference hotel? Can I take a cab to/from my hotel & conference hotel?**

- For conference travel, reimbursements may be made at conference lodging costs. In these instances, the reimbursement amount will be the actual lodging cost, plus tax, of the conference designated hotel. Reasonable accommodations at alternate hotels in the immediate vicinity of the conference may be considered as conference designated lodging when no vacancies exist at the recommended hotel(s) and may be reimbursed at the actual rate. If the traveler chooses to stay in a hotel other than a conference designated hotel, the traveler will be reimbursed the actual lodging cost, plus tax and transportation or parking, provided the total cost (including transport from hotel to conference and back or parking fees) does not exceed the conference designated hotel cost. A brochure of the conference must accompany the requisition.

## **13. Are airline baggage fees covered?**

- Receipts are required for baggage fees. Reimbursements are limited to one bag except for reasonable allowances (examples are team travel or international travel).

## **14. What if I take personal days before or after my trip? Do I still get per diem for those days?**

- Personal days are allowable with supervisory approval and must be listed on the Travel Authorization Form. If taking personal days prior to the conference, per diem is not allowed until the first day of the conference. If taking personal days after the conference ends, your personal days begin as soon as the conference ends and per diem is not allowed from that point forward. (i.e. if the conference ends at 11:30am, per diem for lunch and dinner would not be allowed for that day).

**15. Are my meals covered if I travel within Maricopa County?**

- Meals and incidental expenses are not reimbursed for local travel.

**16. What if my costs are higher than what I was approved for on my PG application?**

- Please contact your PG Rep. to discuss your options.

**17. Can I rent a car during my trip?**

- When traveling to and from airports, train stations or bus terminals, the most economical and reasonable means of transportation shall be used. To determine the most economical means of ground transportation, all factors such as car rental costs, parking, taxi fares, and/or available shuttle or limousine services must be considered. When determining the most economical means of transportation, all rental car costs must be considered (i.e. insurance and parking).

**18. Can I drive a fleet vehicle out of state?**

- Out-of-State Use of Equipment. Any out-of-state use of College/District owned equipment, including vehicles, must be specifically approved by the governing authority (as defined in 1.15.3). The guidelines set forth in the Off Premises Property Loan Administrative Regulation 1.11 also apply.

**19. Will I receive a check or direct deposit?**

- Your reimbursement will come in the same form your payroll is set up as. So, if you receive an actual paycheck, your reimbursement will be a check and can be picked up at the Cashier's Office. If you have direct deposit set up for payroll, your reimbursement check will be directly deposited.

**20. How long does it take to get my check?**

- Once a completed Expense Report has been submitted with all the required back up documentation, it will be sent to your supervisor for approval. After that, it is routed to the Fiscal Office for review/approval. Upon approval, the system will generate payment on the next business day. The entire process generally takes approximately 3-5 business days from the time the Expense Report is submitted by the employee.

**21. My receipt doesn't show I paid, can I still use it?**

- All receipts must be original and show the method of payment.

**22. Do I need to fill out a Travel Authorization form for a webinar?**

- If there is a cost involved for the webinar and will be paid with professional growth funds, you will need to complete a Travel Authorization. This is the only way to route your request for PG funding. If there is no cost involved or you will not be requesting PG funding, you do not need to complete a Travel Authorization.

**23. What are some examples of non-allowable expenses?**

- Alcohol
- Airline or social club membership dues
- Babysitting or childcare costs
- Personal car repairs/routine maintenance or locksmith charges
- Clothing, luggage, briefcases
- Credit card delinquency fees/finance charges/annual fees
- Expenses for travel companions/family
- Trip cancellation insurance
- Frequent flier miles
- Preferred seating
- Priority check in
- Fast pass for TSA
- Health club facilities, saunas, massages
- Helicopter services for airport transfers
- Kennel fees and pet care for pets while on travel status
- Loss/theft of cash
- Loss/theft of personal property (lost baggage, etc.)
- Magazines, books, newspapers, or movies
- Optional travel or baggage insurance

- Parking or traffic fines
- Personal accident or property insurance
- Personal entertainment/grooming/gifts/souvenirs
- Personal sightseeing/tourist activities