

Rancho Santiago Community College District
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION
Chapter 7
Human Resources

AR 7400 Travel

References:

Education Code Section 87032
2 Code of Federal Regulations Part 200.474

The Chancellor has designated authority for approval of travel requests to the Vice Chancellors and Presidents for employees in each of their respective areas. The travel requests may be for attendance at meetings, workshops, conferences, trainings or conventions that are within the scope of the employee's job assignment. The Chancellor must approve **in advance** all travel outside of the United States.

Employee travel will be reimbursed for actual, necessary, and reasonable expenses up to approved amounts as described in this Administrative Regulation and may be subject to additional limitations established by staff development or other funding sources.

The district retains the right to direct employees to attend relevant conventions or conferences.

Mileage:

Employees required to use their personal automobiles for travel within or outside the district to carry out their job assignments may receive reimbursement for business mileage incurred in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Reimbursement for such business mileage shall be at the prevailing IRS standard rate.
2. All employees driving on district business shall take the most direct route possible.
3. Actual claimed business mileage driven will be reimbursed. Attach Google Maps or other similar online map printouts to support all mileage claims.
4. Employees requesting reimbursement must certify that their vehicle is covered by automobile insurance as required by district rules and regulations for Public Liability and Property damage.
5. A Mileage Reimbursement Claim form shall be filed with the District's Accounts Payable Department within 15 days following the month the mileage was incurred and only used when no other expenses are associated with the travel except related parking and tolls.
6. If any other travel-related expenses are incurred, the mileage reimbursement should be included on the Conference Request Claim form instead of using the Mileage Reimbursement Form.

Travel:

Employees authorized by the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors or Presidents to attend meetings, workshops, conferences, trainings or conventions may receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. A Conference Request Claim form must be completed, signed by the requestor, and required prior authorization signature obtained **before attendance** at any event. For any overnight stays within California, employees should fill out the last page of the form titled Hotel/Motel Transient Occupancy Tax Waiver to present upon check-in. Not all hotels accept the form, but when they do, it provides substantial savings to the district.
2. Allowable expenses associated with travel include only reasonable and necessary expenses: transportation, lodging, registration, meals not covered by conference registration and during the period of travel, car rentals, ground transportation (including Uber, Lyft or other rideshare transportation) fares (including gratuity not to exceed 20% of the fare), parking, mileage and other miscellaneous incidental charges such as minor supplies, postage, reproduction costs, telephone and electronic communication expenses with documentation of the business necessity.
 - a. **All** expenses should be the most economical and must be authenticated by the original itemized receipts, other than meals.
 - b. Transportation expenses must be the lowest economical and class roundtrip airfare using only commercial carriers for travel, or mileage not to exceed lowest economical roundtrip airfare, unless specifically approved **in advance** by the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor or President with documentation of the business necessity.
 - c. As each airline's options differ and are continuously changing, employees shall confirm that the fare booked is the particular airline's lowest economical fare. The district will not cover additional fees such as extra legroom, early check-in fees, exit row upgrades, additional baggage fees over a single checked bag plus a single carry-on bag if applicable, or any other upgraded or additional costs. Any upgraded or additional costs are personal expenses and will not be reimbursed.
 - d. If traveling with supplies, equipment or other heavy materials required for participation in the conference or event, employees should consider the cost of other courier or shipping methods to determine if it is less costly than checking additional bags (Purchasing Services department can assist with these options). In either case, documentation of the business necessity for this additional cost is required.
 - e. No reimbursements shall be made for tips/gratuities other than as noted in this Administrative Regulation, trip insurance, valet parking, personal expenses including telephone calls and entertainment expenses, or the purchase of alcoholic beverages.
 - f. Car rentals must be booked based on the most economical class of vehicle for the number of people traveling together. The District will not reimburse for premium or luxury vehicles or any other upgrades or additional costs.
 - g. Lodging for conferences within 50 miles of the District Office or College site is **not allowable** unless specifically approved **in advance** by the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor or President with documentation of the business necessity.
 - h. Lodging expenses are reimbursed for the actual dates of the approved conference. The night before or the night the conference ends may be

reimbursed if specifically approved **in advance** by the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor or President with documentation of the business necessity.

- i. The district shall not pay for lodging that exceeds the published standard single occupancy room rate for conferences. Most conferences offer a block of rooms at a reduced rate to those who book early, it is recommended that employees plan accordingly to book at the lower rates. Employees should also ask if a government rate is available and less expensive.
 - j. The district does not allow business lodging booked from vacation rental companies such as Airbnb, VRBO, etc.
3. Travel advances may be requested for the following:
- a. Transportation, registration, and lodging payable directly to the third party vendor can be paid in full.
 - b. Cash advances to the employee may **also** be requested **only** for **any** costs that will be incurred **prior** to travel, ~~and are limited to 75% of the total approved estimated expenses, including any expenses paid directly to vendors.~~ Other costs that will be incurred during travel will be reimbursed upon return.
 - c. Travel advances will not be authorized for any employee whose expenses will be reimbursed by outside funding or for any employee who has not reconciled prior travel advances with the district.
 - d. Air travel and lodging expenses are typically arranged on the Internet and charged to the employee's credit card. As an alternative employees may book through the District's authorized travel agency (For more information, see the FAQs on the Accounts Payable website). Booking through the travel agency will increase the total amount by at least \$35 per transaction, the travel agency service fee.
 - e. The district shall not contract with a travel agency owned or partially owned by an employee or a relative of an employee of the district. Further, the district shall not contract with an employee of a travel agency who is also an employee or a relative of an employee of the district.
 - f. Prepayments or advances for conferences paid with grant or categorical funds is not allowable when the payment and conference dates cross fiscal years without documentation of the specific authorization by the grant.
 - g. If using the District's authorized travel agency to book air travel, please submit a purchase requisition in Colleague for the air travel and submit a scanned **copy** of your approved Conference Request Claim form to the District's Purchasing Services Department via email to purchasing@rsccd.edu.
 - h. For all other travel/cash advances, a purchase requisition is not needed. Please submit one (1) **copy** of your approved Conference Request Claim Form to the District's Accounts Payable Department via interoffice mail. Include a copy of the conference agenda. Also include the invoice if requesting a travel advance payable directly to a third party vendor. If requesting a cash advance, include all travel confirmations/documentation that equals the total estimated expenses.
 - i. Travel advances must be submitted 15 business days in advance to allow time for processing.

4. In accordance with IRS Publication 463, meal allowances are applicable only when travel requires absence from home or the district overnight during a usual and customary meal period. Meal allowances will not be provided for conferences or meetings where no overnight stay occurs.

For members of Chancellor's Cabinet, reasonable and necessary business meals should be charged to the district-issued credit card and supported by original receipts and proper documentation in accordance with the signed cardholder agreement.

For all other district employees, all meals for which expenses are actually incurred shall be paid at the per diem rate per meal using the current single low-level IRS rate. For fractional parts of a day that do not require overnight travel (i.e. **the first day of a conference or the final day of a conference in which there was an overnight stay. For example, a conference ends at noon and you return home by 5 PM, a per diem for dinner would not be allowable**), the appropriate meal expenses shall be reimbursed.

- a. The intent of travel meal reimbursement is to cover the incremental expense of having to eat out and not having the ability to eat at home. It is not intended to cover the entire cost of the meal.
 - b. When the cost of meals is included in a registration fee, separate reimbursement for the covered meals is **not allowed**. If the employee decides to purchase a meal instead of the included meal, this is a personal expense and will not be reimbursed.
 - c. No receipts are required for meal reimbursement. The District instead will reimburse employees using the IRS per diem rates as noted above.
5. Within fifteen (15) business days of returning from travel, the original Conference Request/Claim form must be reviewed and approved by the Immediate Management Supervisor to account for all expenses, and submitted via interoffice mail to the District's Accounts Payable Department
 - a. A claim form should include a check payable to RSCCD if the amount of expenses claimed are less than the amount advanced to the employee and should be submitted to the District's Accounts Payable Department within fifteen (15) business days from returning.
 - b. The claims for reimbursement **must include** original itemized receipts for **all** expenses incurred by the employee (except meals) including registration, transportation, lodging, car rental, airport/hotel parking, etc., along with a copy of the conference agenda and memo of explanation for miscellaneous expenses or any exceptions explaining the business necessity with the Immediate Management Supervisor approval.
 - c. Only allowable expenditures up to the amount authorized will be reimbursed.

Responsible Manager: Assistant Vice Chancellor of Fiscal Services

Revised: February 16, 2016
Revised: October 3, 2016
References Updated: November 7, 2016
Revised: July 10, 2017
Revised: April 1, 2019
Revised: March 23, 2020

Revised: November 1, 2021
Revised: XXX