

 <b>STANISLAUS COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY</b>	Developed by/Date: Maria Lucia Gonzalez 11/2017	Page: 1 of 7	Number: 3.5
	Reviewed by/Reviewed Date: Exec Staff 03/05/2018	Replaces:	Subject: Travel
Title: <b>CSA Travel Policy</b>		Approved: 03/05/2018	

**Policy** 
     
 **Procedure** 
     
 **Guideline**

**Purpose**

Performance of Stanislaus County business may necessitate periodic travel by County officials/employees beyond their offices or locations of normal work activities. The County shall pay for business expenses when reasonable, necessary and directly related to conducting business for the county of Stanislaus. County travelers shall exercise prudent judgment and show proper discretion for accountable and economic use of public funds. Expenses shall be documented as required and shall leave no reasonable question that such expenditures were necessary and related to conducting County business.

**Definition**

The County Travel Policy mandates and guidelines establish the basic foundation of rules and requirements that departments must follow. In order to meet certain federal and/or state subvention requirements, the Community Services Agency has established its own internal policy to comply with program guidance, approval process, and record keeping required by all of our funding agencies. All travel must be for business-related purposes. This may include, but is not limited to the following: conventions, conferences, training, seminars, and meetings. Travel to meet the legal obligations of the County and our Agency, which includes, but is not limited to, transportation and placement of clients, is also included in this category. Such travel expenses may include meals, lodging, and transportation for both employees and clients being transported. Each employee is expected to exercise good judgment in incurring travel expenses.

**Policy**

**1. TRAVEL**

**1.1 INTRODUCTION:**

All employees are responsible for adherence to the County Purchasing Card Policy, County Travel Policy, CSA Purchasing Card Policy and the CSA Travel Policy. Purchases made are to be in accordance with these policies and the Auditor/Controller Purchasing Procedures, codes, standards, department procedures and any other applicable County policies.

The Department Head or designee(s) is responsible for ensuring that the most cost effective and practical method of transportation is selected.

## **1.2 GENERAL**

CSA travel shall comply with the County Travel Policy mandates and guidelines. County travelers should exercise prudent judgment and show proper discretion for accountable economic use of public funds.

**Prior approval by the Department Head or designee for all out-of-county business travel will be documented on the CSA Travel Authorization (TA) form.** Employees are encouraged to make their own travel arrangements. Divisions may also designate a staff person to make travel arrangements for one or a group of employees.

A CSA Travel Authorization form must be completed for all out-of-county business travel even when there are no costs associated with the trip to satisfy liability issues and management oversight needs. In-county travel including travel to County sponsored trainings, without a registration cost, does not require completion of the form.

## **1.3 AUTHORIZATION:**

Departments are responsible for ensuring the most cost-effective method of travel is used by travelers. Department Head or designee will approve all travel related forms and expenses in compliance with the County Travel Policy, CSA Purchasing Card Policy, and the CSA Travel Policy.

CSA's Department Head has approved Assistant Directors and Managers to be designees for travel related forms and expenses as documented in a memo maintained with the Signature Authorization records located in Financial Services.

All out-of-state travel must be approved by Department Head or designee(s) upon recommendation by an Assistant Director. The guidelines for authorizing out-of-state travel include business travel that incurs no cost to the County (i.e., is paid for through a non-County source), is business critical, and/or is linked to a mandate.

## **1.4 TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS:**

All original approved Travel Authorization forms and appropriate supporting documents shall be routed to the Financial Services Travel Unit.

Storer Travel usage is limited to booking complicated travel involving transporting minors, older adults or individuals with disabilities. CSA staff or the designated division staff will book travel for employees attending conferences/trainings and when staff are traveling for monthly compliance visits.

### **Refunds/Cancellation of Reservations:**

Employees who are unable to honor a reservation will be responsible for canceling in compliance with the terms of the hotel, airline, etc. All Refunds and Cancellation of

Reservations shall follow the County Travel Policy, Section 2.3 Travel Arrangements, D. Cancellation of Reservations. Employees shall not cancel any reservation without approval of management and notification to Financial Services. If arrangements were made by Office Services, please notify them of the cancellation. Airlines will not issue refunds, only credits to be used within a specific time period and could be designated for use only by the employee whose name is on the original ticket, posing a financial risk to the County.

### **1.5 VEHICLE TRAVEL:**

CSA's Motor Pool vehicles are reserved for transporting clients and/or to provide immediate transportation services based on client's needs.

**All trips over 100 miles one-way require a computation comparing the difference between a CSA motor pool vehicle, a rental vehicle, a private vehicle, and in some cases airfare.** Use the appropriate CSA Cost Comparison Calculator Tool available at the Financial Services, Travel Info page on OLLIE. The Department Head or designee may approve any mode of vehicle travel; however, reimbursement will be based on the lowest available cost option.

### **Travel to Toll Areas**

Employees traveling to toll areas will ensure to have cash to pay for tolls. A toll is a reimbursable business expense and is paid through the Employee Expense Reimbursement (EER) process.

### **Traffic Citations**

Tickets and fines are not authorized expenses and cannot be reimbursed by the County. Basic tolls are reimbursable, but toll violations for failure to stop or failure to pay at the toll booth are not. This includes FasTrak systems and express lanes. If a CSA employee receives a ticket, fine, or toll violation while engaged in County business, the employee is personally responsible for the full amount plus penalties. (Refer to the CSA Policy Number 3.6 Tolls, Tickets, and Fines and the GSA Fleet Policy for more information)

### **1.6 FUEL CHARGES:**

CSA staff will consider their route, their safety and the safety of their passengers when determining where to fuel County vehicles.

- **FLEET VEHICLES**

Fueling for County motor pool or CSA Fleet vehicles should be done at Card Lock Fuel Program stations. (Refer to Stanislaus County Travel Policy, Section 2.5 Transportation, B. Vehicle Travel, 2. GSA Fleet Services Motor Pool or Department-Owned Vehicle)

- **PRIVATE VEHICLES:**

Mileage reimbursement claims shall be compliant with the County Travel Policy, Section 2.5 Transportation, B. Vehicle Travel, 3. Private Vehicle and Out of County Mileage Reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement will be submitted on an Employee Expense Reimbursement form, within 30 days after incurring the reimbursable expense, per the County Travel Policy, Section 2.5 Transportation. Mileage claims received after

30 days require written justification and approval by the Department Head or Assistant Director.

### **1.7 MISCELLANEOUS OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES:**

Itemized receipts are required for any purchase in excess of \$15.00. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Taxi and BART fares
- Streetcar, city bus, ferry fares, and road tolls
- Parking expenses

## **2. MEALS**

### **2.1 POLICY:**

CSA has adopted the use of Per Diem for all meal reimbursements for employees that are short-term travel defined as an out-of-county trip from less than a day to five days that does not involve the transporting of clients.

If the travel involves the transportation of a client(s), the standard meal limits will apply for the duration of the trip and the employee will use their County Purchasing Card for meal purchases and detailed itemized receipts must be provided. See Section 2.3, Meals When Transporting Clients, listed below.

### **2.2 PER DIEM GUIDELINES:**

Eligible Per Diem will be based on the portion of the day spent out-of-County on business.

- One Day Trip (Taxable) 0-12 hours = \$20
- One Day Trip (Taxable) Over 12 hours and up to 24 hours = GSA Rate @ 75%

A one day trip is defined as a trip that is 24 hours or less.

The per diem rate option for meals and incidentals is determined annually by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), effective the first pay period after October 1<sup>st</sup>. Please refer to the rate that corresponds to **your destination site at the GSA Per Diem Rates website at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>** .

Please note that the per diem rate for one day trips between 0-12 hours is not included in the U.S. GSA rates. These rates will not automatically adjust with the U.S. GSA rates. The per diem rate for one day trips between 0-12 hours will be equal to the daily meal limit for lunch or \$20 (see County Travel Policy Section 2.6 A.1).

- Overnight Trip (Non Taxable) GSA Rate

An overnight trip is defined as a trip that is over 24 hours, but less than 5 days. Per diem for meals and incidentals is available for non-travel days (24 hour periods). This per diem

amount will be adjusted to 75% on the days of travel to and from as determined annually by the U.S. GSA rates.

For seminars and meetings at which meals are provided, the employee is not entitled to a per diem allowance for those meals. The daily per diem amount will be reduced by the meal amount listed in the U.S. GSA Travel Resources Meals & Incidental Expenses table for those meals that are provided <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/26429>. A complimentary continental breakfast is not considered a meal and the per diem for breakfast is allowable.

Per Diem reimbursements are accessed through payroll reimbursements by submitting an Employee Expense Reimbursement (EER) form once the trip is completed.

### **2.3 MEALS WHEN TRANSPORTING CLIENTS:**

When travel is related to transporting a client(s), employees will use their County Purchasing Card for the duration of the trip and the standard meal limits will apply.

- The maximum meal allowances per person as noted in the County Travel Policy are:
  - **Breakfast - \$15.00**
  - **Lunch - \$20.00**
  - **Dinner - \$35.00**

*These limits include the actual meal cost, taxes, and tip.*

Purchasing Card policies are applicable to these purchases. Employees transporting clients and purchasing meals should note the following:

1. The tip limit on meals includes an allowance for a 15% tip; however, the department head authorizes overages up to 20%. Tips for meals should be calculated based on the pre-tax amount of the meals as recommended by the California Board of Equalization. If the restaurant charges a higher tip rate automatically, the higher limit is approved within the allowed meal limits.
2. Itemized receipts are required to accompany all meal purchases. If unable to obtain an itemized receipt or receipt is lost, the Misplaced Receipt Form must be completed and submitted to the Financial Services Travel Unit.
3. Overages become employee's personal expenses and will be asked to reimburse the County.
4. The County shall not pay for any alcoholic beverages or tobacco.

### **2.4 IN-COUNTY MEALS:**

In-County meals for employees are not allowed with the exception of the following:

With department head written **pre-approval**, in-county meals are allowable when incurred in conjunction with a County business meeting for public purpose or special project, when oral interview boards include non-county employees, and/or for recognized training programs where the employee's attendance is required all day without a discretionary lunch period and

the meal cannot be claimed through another agency. County business meeting for a public purpose may include non-county employees and employees from other governmental agencies. The business purpose of the in-county meal must be documented and retained with the accounting records as support and for audit purposes. (Refer to County Travel Policy Section 4.0 In-County Meals)

### **3. LONG TERM TRAVEL**

#### **3.1 POLICY:**

The County defines long-term travel as a trip of 5 days or greater. Only the Department Head or Assistant Directors will approve all travel related forms and expenses for trips greater than 5-days in length. CSA has adopted the use of Per Diem for long term travel assignments. Employees choosing the Per Diem option will be required to comply with County Travel Policy, Section 2.5 Transportation, D. Long Term Travel Policy (Non-Taxable) established lodging limits and transportation substantiation requirements.

#### **3.2 TRIPS HOME**

CSA will develop a comprehensive arrangement on a case by case basis regarding the frequency that the County will reimburse an employee participating on a long term travel assignment to return home. CSA will consider factors such as, length of stay, travel distance, personal needs of employee and departmental needs in the determination.

### **4. NON-COUNTY COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

#### **4.1 POLICY:**

Travel for Non-County Community Partners that is not part of a contracted service may be approved by Department Head or designee and are subject to the Stanislaus County and Community Services Agency Travel and Purchasing Card policies.

#### **4.2 GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Prior to commencing any travel, the Non-County Community Partner travel must be approved for travel by Department Head or designee. Non-County Community Partners approved for attending meetings, training, and/or conferences paid by CSA are subject to the following policies:

1. Pre-approved CSA Travel Authorization form reflecting all estimated costs must be submitted to Financial Services.
2. Subject to per-diem meal rates.
3. Depending on eligibility, subject to County mileage rates.
4. Out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed with eligible expenses with valid receipts only.

#### **4.3 REIMBURSEMENT FOR OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES (NON-EMPLOYEES):**

- The appropriate reimbursement form must be completed and signed by the partner in order to receive out-of-pocket expenses. Please attach all itemized receipts.
- The partner must forward this documentation to the County contact that approved the travel for CSA business.
- The County contact is responsible for forwarding this documentation along with the CSA Travel Authorization form to the CSA Accounts Payable unit in Financial Services.