



OTERO COLLEGE PROCEDURE

OCP 8-61c: Travel Procedure

OCP REFERENCE NUMBER:

OCP 8-61c

REVISED/REVIEWED ON:

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EFFECTIVE:

July 1, 2025

APPLICATION:

This procedure applies to all travel-related payments made to employees, students, and vendors within the Colorado Community College System (CCCS or System), including its Colleges. All such payments must be processed through the financial records, regardless of the funding source.

BASIS:

This procedure establishes travel processes and required documentation for employees, including student employees, who request, approve, and reimburse expenses incurred for and during Otero College related business travel in accordance with BP 8-60, BP 8-61, and SP 8-61C. In addition, this procedure provides direction for processing travel costs associated with employees traveling with students, students traveling on their own for programmatic needs and student life, non-employees traveling to interview for employment with the College, or non-employees/vendors traveling to attend programs and activities administered through the College.

Template forms can be found at <https://cccs.sharepoint.com/sites/Otero-BusinessOfficeKnowledgebase>. Some of the documents found in the link may be required for travel purposes. Documents include but are not limited to the following list, and colleges may have additional required documents, as deemed necessary:

- Pre-Travel Authorization Request Form (ARF)
- Out-of-State / Country Travel Request & Authorization Form
- Waiver of Liability for Domestic/International Travel (Student Only)
- Corporate Travel Card Application
- Travel Expense Form (Employee and Non-Employee)

DEFINITIONS:

For definitions applicable to this procedure, refer to Appendix A.



PROCEDURE:

Travel Authorization

Pre-Approval of Travel:

Travel is considered a sensitive and nonessential expenditure and can be easily perceived to provide a personal benefit, thereby warranting appropriate internal reviews and pre-approval of the travel and associated costs, plus close monitoring for budgetary purposes. It is expected that all travel costs incurred are reasonable, necessary, and provide benefit to Otero College.

Travel on behalf of Otero at no cost to Otero is required to have pre-approval through the requirements of this process for the purpose of liability and accountability of time.

Employee Travel:

The following chart outlines what documentation is required from an employee prior to travel, depending on the scope of the employee's travel:

	Pre-Travel Authorization Request Form	Waiver of Liability Per Student	Emergency Contact List for Students	Documented Estimate of Travel Costs	Proposed Travel Itinerary	Conference or Event Information (e.g., cost, dates, location, agenda)
Travel overnight, employee only	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Travel single day, employee only	No - Should be approved by your supervisor or authorized signature authority.	No	No	If travel expenses = mileage only, estimate before travel not needed.	No	Cost Dependent Required for expenses over \$100



Travel overnight, employee with students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Travel single day, employee with students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. A Pre-Travel Authorization Request Form (ARF) or supervisor approval is required for all travel. The form must include:

- Business purpose;
- Location of travel (city/state);
- Dates of travel;
- Name of traveler(s) (e.g., class or team roster, if applicable);
- Org code to be charged;
- Authorizing signatures;
- Estimated costs for airfare, lodging, transportation, and other allowed travel expenses;
 - Any requests for alternative arrangements due to personal preference are limited to reimbursement based on the most efficient and reasonable transportation cost available;
 - Estimates should be accompanied by backup documentation
- Calculation of expected per diem, excluding the cost of meals provided at the conference or event.

The ARF must be submitted to the College signature authority for approval and completed prior to registration and date of travel. The ARF must also have documented approval from the College employee's division Vice President, or the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration for System Office employees, and the employee's supervisor, if different from the signature authority. All out-of-state travel must be approved by Otero College's VP of Business and Administrative Services or the College President. All out-of-country travel must be approved Otero College's VP of Business and Administrative Services or the College President, **and** the System Office's Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration.

Any in-state and out-of-state travel by a President must be approved by the Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration.



2. Any grant-funded travel by an employee must also have documented authorization by the grant approving authority for allowability under the grant prior to travel.
3. Waivers of Liability and emergency contact information are to be provided by employees traveling with students or students traveling as employees. The employee traveling with students must certify that the student liability waivers and the student emergency contact information will be collected and turned into the Business Office Travel Administrator for document retention.

Student Employee Overnight or Single Day Travel and Student Travel:

A student traveling as an employee or a student traveling for programmatic and/or student life purposes must submit the following documentation:

	Authorization Request Form	Waiver of Liability Per Student	Emergency Contact List	Documented Estimate of Travel Costs	Proposed Travel Itinerary	Conference or Event Information (e.g., cost, dates, location, agenda)
Student Employee Traveler (Overnight or Single Day)	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student Traveler	Yes	Yes	Yes	Optional	Yes	Yes

1. Student employee travelers must submit an ARF for both in-state and out-of-state travel, in the same manner as a College or System employee.
2. Students traveling for programmatic and/or student life purposes should submit an ARF, approved by the appropriate division's Vice President and the Vice President for Finance and Administration.
3. The waiver of liability, emergency contact list, estimate of cost, proposed travel itinerary, and event information must be submitted by both the student employee and the student traveler to the approving authorities.
4. Payment of travel expenses to students is considered a taxable transaction, as it is not covered by the System's accountable plan.



Non-Employee/Vendor Travel:

Certain programs and activities administered through Otero require travel by parties not employed by Otero College and, therefore, are not covered under the System's accountable plan. These programs and activities would include non-paid speakers, Board members, and interview candidates. An ARF and other forms may be requested by an employee for payment of travel for non-employees which is fully taxable to the vendor. Where payment for travel of a vendor is being requested, a Contract and/or Purchase Order is required as set forth in State Fiscal Rules.

A non-employee traveling for CCCS must submit the following documentation:

	Authorization Request Form (ARF)		Emergency Contact List	Documented Estimate of Travel Costs	Proposed Travel Itinerary	Conference or Event Information (e.g., cost, dates, location, agenda)
Travel by non-employees	No		No	No	No	No
Travel by vendors (paid speaker, etc.)	Contract, PO		No	No	No	No

Travel Expenses and Travel Cards

Employee Request for Travel Advance:

Travel advances are the advance of funds to a traveler for approved travel expenses. Travel advances are approved on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the appropriate division Vice President for College employees or the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration for System employees.

A travel advance *may* be requested for 75% of the eligible per diem, up to the \$2,500 statutory limit. Please include the per diem calculations with this request. Request for advance must reach Accounts Payable at least 2 weeks prior to travel departure. An advance will be direct deposited to the employee's account on the Thursday of the week prior to departure.



The scope of approval for a travel advance must be documented in accordance with expectations outlined in the Office of the State Controller's Travel Policy for Advance Payments. Approval should be documented prior to the first day of travel and with sufficient time for processing the advance through accounts payable. The settlement of travel advances with the Accounts Payable department is required *within ten (10) business days* after returning from travel. Employees may settle travel advances by completing the Travel Expense Form and attaching itemized receipts with all necessary documentation. Failure to settle a travel advance within the specified timeframe will result in recognition of the advance as taxable income to the employee and revocation of the privilege for receiving future advances. Travel reimbursements must be reduced by any advances made and meet the documentation standards required.

Commercial Cards for Travel Options Available to Employees, with Supervisor Approval:

Once employees are approved for travel, there are three types of commercial cards available for payment of employee travel expenses:

1. Centrally Billed Travel Cards -- These may be requested for a permanent employee who travels frequently and/or who has responsibility for booking travel (hotels, airfare, and commercial transportation) on behalf of other authorized travelers. Generally, centrally billed cards may not be used to pay for meals with the exception of employees purchasing group meals with students in which case a Fiscal Rule Waiver form must have been obtained from the State Controller's Office. Centrally billed travel cardholders must submit an application and sign the "Cardholder Agreement - Central Travel Card" form. Payment must be made no later than the due date stated on the bank invoice. Colleges are expected to develop a documented process for reconciliation, audit, and violation action for the centrally billed travel cards, similar to the requirements of the Procurement Card (P-Card). See the P-Card Manual and Audit Checklist or Centrally Billed Travel Card Transactions form for minimum requirements.

Administrative or program costs necessary to purchase while in travel status should be paid for using a P-Card. For example, if the purchase of any office supplies, copies, or business-related postage, as these are not considered travel costs, follow standard purchasing processes.

Reimbursable travel expenses

Scope of Employee Travel Reimbursement:

Employees may be reimbursed for the following travel expenses:



1. Lodging - Travelers may be reimbursed for the actual costs of commercial lodging. The first night reserve/advance hotel charge may be reimbursed prior to travel, when advance payment is required by the hotel. Proof of payment and an itemized invoice are required. No reimbursement will be given for stays at personal residences or commercial bookings through third parties (i.e. Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO), Airbnb, etc.).
2. Meals and Incidentals - Per Diem for Employee Overnight Travel
 - CCCS reimburses the standard per diem rate and not actual costs per State Fiscal Rule 5-1.
 - Employees at conferences and trainings where the meal is provided and is considered sufficient by the traveler, must show a reduction to per diem requested. Employees cannot get a meal and get per diem if a meal was covered at a conference or training.
 - Employees traveling away from home overnight are reimbursed 75% of the destination city's per diem rate, including incidental expenses, for the day of departure and 75% of the departing city's per diem rate, including incidental expenses, on the day of return. The only time this will be adjusted is if a meal is provided by a conference on the first or last day of travel, that amount will be deducted from the reimbursable amount.
 - Per diem does not need to be supported by a receipt. Per diem is used in place of actual meal costs for administrative ease.
 - Tips cannot be claimed separately on a reimbursement request. Tips may not exceed 20% of the total cost.
 - Tips paid to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, and skycaps for airport check-in during individual travel are included in the incidental expense per diem.
 - Tips paid in conjunction with individual meals are included in the standard meal allowance.
 - Tips for commercial transportation, such as taxi and shuttle drivers, shall be reimbursable as part of and shall be included in the cost of transportation.
3. Meal Reimbursement for Employee with Students Overnight Travel
 - Employee with students – Employees that have meals with students are reimbursed for actual costs capped at per diem, rather than per diem for that employee, under the same reimbursement request as the students.
 - Tips paid in conjunction with group meals with students are reimbursed at a maximum at 20% of meal cost.
4. Transportation - A traveler shall be reimbursed only for the dollar equivalent of the most economical means of transportation available to the traveler that



satisfactorily accomplishes state business. Reimbursement shall be limited to the actual cost of commercial transportation.

5. Airfare and Fees

- Airfare should be purchased through designated travel agencies of state price agreements. Travelers shall use the most advantageous airline based on cost, time, and schedule.
- Baggage fees shall be reimbursed if not included in the airfare.
- The following may be reimbursed when pre-approved:
 - Fees not included in the airfare
 - Seats with extra leg room and assigned seats if there is a justifiable reason.
- The traveler shall be reimbursed for fees not included in the airfare, only if pre-approved. This includes reimbursement of one carry-on bag plus one checked bag, if charged by the airline. Luxury items such as early boarding fees, first class, trip cancellation insurance, etc., will not be reimbursed. Seats with extra legroom shall only be reimbursed if there is a justifiable reason, such as ADA accommodations, and it is pre-approved.
Documentation of airline travel costs should be submitted with the travel expense reimbursement request.
- Personal Vehicles and Mileage Reimbursement Mileage is reimbursed for business travel based on actual miles from the travelers residence to the traveler's temporary place of work, less the traveler's normal commute to work. Travel for business purpose includes conferences, meetings, training sessions, etc. Traveler must provide documentation, such as online web mapping (Google Maps or MapQuest), of the business travel mileage and the traveler's normal home to work commute, when necessary.
- Example: The distance between the traveler's home and the business travel location is 35 miles, the traveler's normal commute is 15 miles, the traveler's reimbursement of mileage is 20 miles (35 miles - 15 miles = 20 miles).
- Distinction: When an employee travels from/to their personal home and regular work location, this is considered commuting and Otero shall not reimburse the employee for these travel expenses.

6. Fleet Vehicles and Rental Cars Travelers are encouraged to use state fleet vehicles when they are available and meet the needs of the traveler, unless the traveler's college has a more restrictive practice.

- Travelers shall use state price agreements for automobile rentals in order to ensure adequate liability insurance coverage unless the price agreement does not meet the needs of the traveler. For instances where a state price agreement is not used for the automobile rental, the traveler shall purchase liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 through the automobile rental

company. If there is a business purpose for the use of a rental vehicle rather than a fleet car, and the purchase of additional insurance is required by State Risk Management, then the cost of the additional insurance is reimbursable.

- A traveler shall submit receipts for rental vehicles as documentation of the expense and shall be reimbursed for the actual costs of rental vehicles. Personal liability insurance is not a substitute. Various upgrades provided at extra cost by vehicle rental companies are not reimbursable.
- When using the Centrally Billed Travel Card for automobile rental reservations for another individual and using one of the State Price Agreements, the card being used must be registered with the awarded auto rental agency. This process allows rentals to be placed on a centrally billed travel card without having the card present at the time of rental, while ensuring all associated contract terms and conditions apply. The secure process of registering a centrally billed travel card varies by merchant.
- Fuel for fleet vehicles must be paid on the State fleet card. Fuel purchased for rental vehicles will be reimbursed at actual costs with itemized receipts.

7. Taxi, Shuttle, and Ride Share

- Travelers may require transport, such as taxi, shuttle or ride share, when traveling away from home on business. Gratuities not to exceed 20% can be included in the cost of this transportation and a receipt will be required for reimbursement.

8. Bus, Passenger Rail, and Mass Transportation

- In certain instances, chartering a bus or procuring group transportation is necessary and allowable for reimbursement when pre-approved and reasonable.

9. Programmatic and/or Student Life Related Entertainment with Students

- Entertainment costs must be pre-approved on an ARF. Entertainment costs are only allowable when in travel status with students and may include tickets, tours, and other activities that align with the program or curriculum for which the students are traveling.

Non-Reimbursable and Non-Chargeable Items:

The following expenses incurred while in travel are not reimbursable and not chargeable on centrally billed cards:

1. Alcohol;
2. Entertainment expenses (personal entertainment, magazines, hotel in-room movies, etc.);
3. Political expenses;
4. Travel insurance, including any additional or supplemental trip or rental vehicle insurances;
5. TSA pre-check, global entry, or priority seating fees;

6. Traffic fines and parking tickets;
7. Personal expenses that are primarily of benefit to the traveler and not directly related to the business travel;
8. Roadside assistance;
9. Upgrades, such as upgraded seat assignments, rental car upgrades, lodging upgrades, etc. unless there is a justifiable business reason that is documented.
10. Meals for single day travel; and
11. Late fees for individually billed Travel Cards.

Certain other limitations and exceptions exist and a more complete list of reimbursable and non-reimbursable items is noted in State of Colorado Fiscal Rule 5-1 (<https://osc.colorado.gov/financial-operations/fiscal-rules-procedures/travel-fiscal-rule>).

Reimbursement Request -Travel Expense Form:

A Travel Expense Form must be used for the purposes of reimbursement. The following information must be included on the form:

- Amount - The amount of each separate expenditure incurred while traveling, such as the cost of transportation or lodging;
- Travel Dates - Dates of departure for and return from the business travel;
- Place - Destination or locality of travel, described by name of city or town or other similar designation;
- Purpose - Reason for travel or a description of the business being conducted during the travel;
- Additional supporting travel documentation; and
- Signed certification by the traveler and supervisor or org owner authority. Certification language can be found in the Office of the State Controller's Fiscal Rule 5-1 Travel.

Appropriate Establishments and Reputational Risk:

When traveling for business or work-related events, it is essential to maintain a professional image that reflects positively on our organization. This includes being mindful of the establishments we choose for dining, entertainment, or accommodation. While we understand that some establishments may offer convenience or affordability, certain types, such as Hooters, Twin Peaks, and similar venues, may present reputational risks. These establishments, known for their themed environments and the sexualized portrayal of staff, may not align with the values and image that we strive to maintain as a company. Patronizing such venues, especially in public or business-related settings, could be misinterpreted and damage the trust and respect we've built with clients, partners, and employees.

Guidelines:



1. Opt for Professional Venues: Choose dining, entertainment, and lodging establishments that reflect professionalism and respect for all individuals. Examples include chain restaurants, local businesses with good reputations, and reputable hotel chains.
2. Avoid Controversial or Inappropriate Venues: Establishments that prioritize sexualized or suggestive themes, such as Hooters or Twin Peaks, should be avoided when possible.

By following these guidelines, we help ensure that our travel experiences remain positive and aligned with the values of our organization.

Receipt Requirement:

All employee travel-related expenses, except for per diem, require a receipt for reimbursement or support for payment on a travel card. If a receipt cannot be obtained, written notification by the traveler should be prepared documenting the details of the expense and why the receipt could not be obtained.

All requests for reimbursement or support for travel card transactions for which there are no receipts will need approval by the Vice President for College employees or the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration for System employees.

Type of Travel Expense	Reimbursement	Receipt Required?
Lodging	Actual	Yes
Meals Individual (Employee)	Per Diem Rate	No
Meals Group (Employee(s) with Student(s))	Actual cost capped at per diem per meal, if employee pays directly to vendor for the group.	Yes
Incidental Expenses	Per Diem Rate	No
Transportation for business purposes (other than airfare and including tips)	Actual	Yes
Rental Vehicles	Actual	Yes
Mileage for Personal Vehicles	State employees shall be allowed mileage reimbursement of 90% of the prevailing IRS rate per mile for each mile actually	No, but refer to mileage documentation requirements in this SP

	and necessarily traveled and authorized. See §24-9-104, C.R.S.	
Airfare	Actual	Yes
Other Allowable Travel Expenses (not paid with a commercial card)	Actual	Yes

Scope of Student Employee Travel and Student Travel Reimbursement:

The scope of what can be paid to students traveling as employees is the same as what is outlined under the “Employee Travel Reimbursement” section.

Students traveling for programmatic or student life purposes can be paid taxable stipends based on consideration of estimated or actual costs incurred by the student. For example, if payments are intended to offset meal costs, they cannot exceed the individual meal per diem paid to employees.

Travel Reimbursement Request Process

Reimbursement for Employee Travel:

Upon completion of travel, the traveler must submit a Travel Reimbursement Request form, which will be reviewed for the following:

1. Timing - For full reimbursement, the request must be submitted no later than 60 days from the last day of travel. Any reimbursement requests submitted beyond 60 days from the last day of travel will be considered taxable income to the employee, if reimbursed. Any reimbursement requests submitted after 90 days from the last day of travel will not be reimbursed per State Fiscal Rule 5-1.
2. Appropriate expenditures - The employee’s supervisor and the delegated signature authority, if different, are required to review expenditures and approve where appropriate.
 - If the amounts requested for reimbursement are acceptable and do not exceed the ARF within a 10% overage threshold, no further reviews are required and reimbursement will be approved and processed.
 - If final travel costs exceed the ARF, additional review from the original org approver is required. Secondary approval from the Vice President for College employees or the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration for System employees is recommended for differences over 10% of the original authorization.

**Reimbursement for Student Employee Travel:**

Students traveling as employees for purposes of CCCS employment are covered under the System's accountable plan and must be treated consistently with employee travel guidelines. Upon approval, student employees will receive reimbursement for travel expenses and will not be taxable if submitted within the required time frame.

Reimbursement for Student Travel:

Students traveling for programmatic or student life purposes are not covered under the System's accountable plan and may receive a stipend if the travel request is approved. This payment will be considered 1099 eligible. Approval should be documented in the ARF prior to the first day of travel and with sufficient time for processing an advance stipend through accounts payable or otherwise will be reimbursed to the student after travel.

Reimbursement for Non-Employee and Vendors:

When non-employee travel is negotiated as part of a contract or statement of work, such as paid speakers or other hired independent contractors, an invoice should be generated from the vendor. The invoice should include their personal services fees and the total of travel costs. These non-employee payments may be subject to a 1099.

Revising this Procedure

CCCS reserves the right to change any provision or requirement of this procedure at any time and the change shall become effective immediately.



APPENDIX A

Definitions

“Accountable Plan”: A plan that follows IRS Regulations for reimbursing employees for business expenses in which reimbursement is not counted as income.

“Approving Authority”: An employee who has authority to approve travel for state business and related matters.

“Commercial Card”: State issued payment cards including procurement cards and travel cards (including ghost cards and event cards).

“Commercial Card Program”: All commercial card accounts and services provided to the State and participating entities by the bank to the State.

“Employee”: Individuals employed by CCCS.

“Expenses Incurred for the Benefit of CCCS”: Expenses incurred that enable an employee or official to perform assigned duties or enable CCCS to carry out responsibilities required by law.

“Foreign Travel”: Travel to any out-of-country destination not included within the definitions of In-State Travel or Out-of-State Travel.

“Ghost Card”: Type of card account whereby an account number is issued or provided to a specific supplier for the payment of purchases made by CCCS employees.

“Incidental Expenses”: Tips given related to travel expenses (e.g., porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, skycaps for airport check-in, etc.).

“In-State Travel”: Travel within the State of Colorado and to the immediate area outside the state that is a necessary part of an otherwise "in-state" trip. **“Lodging”:** Any commercial accommodations available or offered for use for which a rate schedule has been established and payment is required, as described in the State Controller Travel Policies.

“Metropolitan Area”: A region including a city and the densely populated surrounding areas that are socially and economically integrated. For the State of Colorado,



metropolitan area shall be defined as the 50-mile radius surrounding the traveler's regular work location, regardless of the location of the traveler's residence.

"Official Function / Student Function": A meeting, conference, meal, or other function that is hosted by a President or the Chancellor, or a representative, attended by state employees, college students, and/or guests and held for official state business or programmatic purposes and is considered reasonable and necessary.

"Out-of-State Travel": Travel within the United States, other than in-state travel, including travel to the District of Columbia, Alaska, or Hawaii.

"Per Diem": An allowance for payments to employees made each day in travel status as required by fiscal rules.

"Price Agreement": A state contract between the Department of Personnel and Administration, State Purchasing and Contracts Office, and a contractor, which allows state agencies and institutions of higher education to order goods or services from the contractor, pursuant to the terms of the price agreement, by issuing a purchase order, task order, or other approved order form.

"Procurement Card" (P-Card): A procurement card is a corporate liability card, centrally billed, tax exempt and used for small purchases (under \$5,000) of general merchandise and services as governed by state law.

"Reimbursement Request": A request for reimbursement of travel expenses submitted by an employee traveler.

"Single Day Travel": Travel completed wholly within a single day.

"State Business": Official state business or other duties undertaken for state purposes and for the benefit of the state.

"Student Employee Traveler": Students working hourly or as work-studies within CCCS and authorized to travel on CCCS business.

"Student Traveler": Student authorized to travel for programmatic and/or student life purposes.



“Student Stipend”: Payments made directly to students to support or defray expenses (1099 reportable).

“Temporary Work Location”: A location whereby employment continues for no more than a period of one year at that location. If terms of employment require employee to work consistently beyond one year in two separate locations, neither location is considered temporary.

“Travel Card”: Card for travel-related purchases that may be individually billed (individual or joint and several liability, not tax exempt) or centrally billed (corporate liability, tax exempt).

“Traveler”: An employee who receives required approvals to travel on CCCS business.

“Traveler's Regular Work Location”: The primary location where the traveler is assigned to work, including the entire metropolitan area of the traveler's regular work location.

“Traveler's Residence”: The location where the traveler maintains their primary home.

“Traveling Away from Home”: A traveler is traveling away from home and considered in travel status if the traveler's duties require them to be away from their regular work location overnight or within a single day substantially longer than an ordinary day's work (at least 14 hours). For travel within a single day, the traveler needs to sleep or rest to meet the demands of the traveler's work while away from their regular work location.

“Vendor”: Third party paid under contract, which may include costs incurred for travel.

REVISING THIS PROCEDURE:

Otero College reserves the right to change any provision or requirement of this procedure at any time and the change shall become effective immediately.