



Statewide Accounting Policy & Procedure

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Document Revision History

Date	Notes / Comments / Changes
05/31/2013	Updated various travel policies, procedures, and definitions in cooperation with OPB and Travel Advance policy. To be effective on July 1, 2013.
02/18/2015	Updated air travel policy for international flights; updated ground transportation policies for new DOAS statewide car rental contracts, rental car sizes, lodging clarification.
03/02/2015	Moved Group Meals to separate policy
03/15/2015	Updated link in 4.6 through 4.9
04/06/2015	Updated Section 2.2, paragraph 2; updated Section 2.3, deleted first paragraph and Tier 1 Rate statement;
06/24/2015	Updated Section 1.11 for airline reserved/ priority seat fees; updated Section 3.2 for direct billed hotels and updated Section Five, non-reimbursable expenses to include airline reserved/priority seat fees
10/01/2015	Updated section 2.2, corrected links in paragraph 3 and 5 and added clarification for exceptions to rental car policy; updated section 3.3 to include Transportation Funding Act hotel tax; clarified verbiage in section 7.10 and added new paragraph after paragraph 1.
03/01/2016	Updated Sections 4, 5, Definitions and Appendix B and D for Per Diem and Incidentals clarification.
09/30/2016	Updated Section 4.4, In order to be consistent with the USGSA calculation rules, the meal calculation was changed.
09/01/2017	Clarification for Section 2.3 and Appendix A. Updated Section 4.4, to allow 100% reimbursement on first and last day when traveling In state; removed reference of corporate cards issued thru State travel program; clarified commute miles; clarified requirements for IRS accountable plan; updated reference to State Travel Advance Policy; updated locations allowed for Business class and First class tickets.
02/7/2022	Section A was changed to have final approval from the "Head of Office of Planning & Budget or designated approver set by the Governor or designee." Section E was updated to require receipts for expenses equal or above \$25. Any expense over threshold should not be approved if required receipt is missing. Credit card signature copies without detail are not acceptable. Section One: Added clarifying language regarding type of airfare class that is allowed. Section Two: Added verbiage regarding mileage reimbursement to/from restaurants, and personal car mileage when traveler has an "assigned" car. Clarified no change regarding commute miles when teleworking. Included parking violation and parking tickets not a reimbursable expense. Added verbiage regarding tips for ride share services are applicable up to 20% Section Three: Clarified lodging allowed within 50 miles from Residence and 12 hours. Added verbiage regarding homestays/vacation rentals are not commercial lodging facility. Section Four: In State meal per diems increased to \$50 per day based on GSA Standard Rate. Section Five: adding language that the state will reimburse for shuttle, taxi, or rideshare service (when reasonable) to and from airports when public transportation is not practical. Taxi, shuttle and rideshare services between business meetings are reimbursable expenses. Section Seven: Approving authority for a non-employee. Agencies must designate an approver(s) who will be accountable for the review and approval of non-employee travel statements. Definitions: Updated the Primary definition to reference primary workstation and telework

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this Statewide Travel Policy (hereinafter called "Policy") is to provide guidelines to state agencies, universities, authorities and organizations (collectively, "Agency/Agencies") for payment of travel expenses in an efficient, cost-effective manner, and to enable state travelers (hereinafter called "Travelers") to successfully execute their travel requirements at the lowest reasonable costs, resulting in the best value for the State. Teleconferencing instead of travel should be considered when appropriate and possible. Each agency is charged with the responsibility for determining the necessity, available resources and justification for the need and the method of travel.

The Policy is based on travel industry best practices and with total cost management in mind. As such, it is important for Travelers to understand the intent of the Policy and work with their management to ensure compliance when traveling for work.

Authority

O.C.G.A. 50-5B-5 Rules and regulations governing travel

"The state accounting officer in cooperation with the Office of Planning and Budget is authorized to and shall adopt rules and regulations governing in-state and out-of-state travel and travel reimbursement that promote economy and efficiency in state government and which treat employees fairly and equitably."

Applicability

O.C.G.A. 50-5B-4 Obligations of state government organizations with respect to the state accounting officer

This Policy applies to all Agencies of state government, as defined in the O.C.G.A. 50-5B-4, regardless of whether or not the entity is using the TeamWorks Travel and Expense (TTE) system. For Non-TTE users, if this Policy does not specifically discuss procedures applicable to the Agency in order to be in compliance with the Policy, the Agency should establish procedures that ensure compliance.

For personnel with disabilities, the Agency has authority to provide reasonable accommodations during travel on official state business. Decisions regarding specific situations not addressed by this Policy shall be made and documented by the Agency.

Compliance and Accountability

Throughout the Policy, the words "may", "must" and "should" are used. When the term "**may**" is used, an Agency may comply with the stated direction or they may choose not to comply based on the need of the Agency and the Traveler. When the term "**must**" is used, the Agency nor the Traveler has the authority to deviate from the specific policy/procedure. When the term "**should**" is used, the Agency and the Traveler are expected to follow the policy/procedure as written and are required to justify any departures from such policy/procedure when the specifics of the situation indicate an alternate procedure is a reasonable departure from the recommended policy/procedure.

All Agencies are required to follow the minimum guidelines outlined in the *Policy*. **Agencies are not authorized to set more lenient policies than the *Policy*; however, agencies may establish policies that further restrict a Traveler's travel plan if the Agency**

determines that stricter policies are necessary; except, a mileage rate that is different than the rates established by SAO/OPB in accordance with O.C.G.A. 50-19-7 may not be adopted.

Periodically, the State Accounting Office (SAO) may perform a review of the agency's travel records to ensure compliance with all aspects of this Policy. This Policy may be revised based on the results found during the reviews. Dependent on the nature of the findings, appropriate and progressive sanctions for misuse will be implemented. All travel claims are subject to detailed audits conducted by the Department of Audits and Accounts.

General Provisions

The state reimburses Travelers for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in connection with approved travel on its behalf. The state encourages Travelers to take advantage of state-contracted/preferred travel discounts whenever possible.

The state has implemented the online TeamWorks Travel and Expense (TTE) system for booking airfare, hotel and rental car reservations. Use of this online booking system can significantly reduce the cost per transaction; thus, state Travelers are strongly encouraged to utilize this system.

The state has contracted for travel agency services with a designated travel management company (TMC) and requires that Agencies on the TTE system utilize this TMC when arranging travel and needing agent assistance. Certain travel discounts are offered by and can only be accessed via the TTE system, or via phone with the state's TMC. For agent-assisted transactions, refer to the SAO Travel website for relevant contact numbers and pricing.

A necessary expense is one for which there exists a clear business purpose and is within the state's expense policy limitations. A clear business purpose contains all information necessary to substantiate the expenditure, including a list of attendees, if appropriate, their purpose for attending, business topics discussed, and/or how the expenditure benefited the state.

Establishing policies and procedures for travel expenses enables the state to effectively comply with federal and state regulations.

This Policy is intended to be a comprehensive guide for the planning and reimbursement of all state-approved travel expenses. There are several key points to remember when incurring expenses on behalf of the state:

- Under no circumstances should a Traveler approve their own expense report. In most cases, they should not approve the expense reports of a person to whom they functionally or administratively report (see exceptions, paragraph A, below).
- All expense reports must be submitted via the TTE system (or via manual expense reimbursement forms if not on the TTE system) by the Traveler who incurred the expense.
- A large number of exceptions or Policy violations will increase the likelihood of expense report audits.
- The state will not reimburse Travelers for personal expenses.

Refer to the SAO Travel website for current information regarding system links, phone numbers, email and other Internet addresses, cost rates and dollar limitations.

Policies Applying to All Travel Expenses

A. Approval and Authorization

A Traveler's immediate supervisor or higher administrative authority must approve a travel expense report before reimbursement will be issued. Agencies may require multiple approvers for certain expense reports; in these instances, all approvers in the submission process are held accountable. The approver should be at a higher level of authority that is able to determine the appropriateness and reasonableness of the expenses.

Agency Head Approval

Agency head travel/expense reimbursements in any form are required to have final approval from the head of the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) or the Governor's designated approver. (Note: In most Agencies, the Chief Financial Officer/Finance Director reviews the Agency Head's travel expenditures prior to forwarding to OPB.)

Exceptions – Presidents of institutions under the umbrella of the University System of Georgia are excluded from the requirement that their expense reports must be approved by their immediate supervisor or higher administrative authority. However, processes should still be in place for their expense reports to be reviewed for appropriateness and reasonableness.

B. Role of the Approver

By approving travel expenses, the approver is attesting that they have thoroughly reviewed each transaction and the supporting documentation and have verified that all transactions are allowable expenses. The approver is the "check" in the expense reporting process to identify potential and/or actual errors in expense reporting and is equally accountable for all expenditures. The approver role should be assigned to an individual who can judge the business appropriateness of each expenditure. It is recommended, but not required, that approvers have the responsibility of approving expenses for no more than 25 Travelers.

Each transaction must be consistent with departmental budgetary and project/grant guidelines. The approver may be required to ensure the correct funding sources are charged according to agency procedure and in keeping with proper fiscal stewardship.

Should expenses not meet approval guidelines, the approver should deny the request. Denied expenses will be considered a personal expense to the Traveler and will be processed in accordance with the policies, herein. TTE Agency approvers will deny the expense by comment and return the expense report to the Traveler for correction. Non-TTE approvers may create a reduction in the Traveler's reimbursement due.

By approving a Traveler's expense submission, approvers are certifying:

- Appropriateness of the expenditure and reasonableness of the amount requested;
- Compliance with funding agency regulations and State reimbursement policies; and
- Completeness and accuracy of documentation.

C. Business Purpose Justification and Explanation Statements

In cases where a submitted expense does not conform to Policy, or if a receipt is lost or missing, an explanation is required when submitting the expense within the [TTE system](#) (or via manual expense reimbursement forms if not using the TTE system.) Each expense item within the TTE system has an available comment field for explanations or documentation of business purpose justifications. Comments must be provided in this field explaining why this exception to the Policy was necessary and, if applicable, describe the missing documentation.

The Traveler's immediate supervisor or higher administrative authority must approve these statements.

D. Internal Revenue Service Requirements

In order for travel advances and reimbursements of travel expenses to be excluded from a Traveler's taxable income, the state's travel policies must meet the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirements for an "Accountable Plan." In general, the *Statewide Travel Policy* has been developed with the IRS Regulations as its primary payment framework; accordingly:

- Advances and reimbursements must be reasonable in amount, must be made for travel only, must be in line with actual costs incurred and must be within Policy limitations. Expenses that do not comply with Policy guidelines will be the obligation of the Traveler that incurred the expense.

Policy requires that Travelers submit expenses via the TTE system (or via manual expense reimbursement forms if not using the TTE system) substantiating the amount, date, use and business purpose, ideally within 10 days, but **no later than 45 calendar days** after completion of the trip or event. Expenses submitted in excess of 60 calendar days may not be reimbursed. (See Section 7.2 for further guidance.) Expenses submitted more than 60 calendar days after completion of the trip or event, if reimbursed, should be included in the Traveler's IRS Form W-2 as taxable income.

- Policy requires that travel expenses associated with advances must be reconciled, substantiated, submitted, and approved within the TTE system as soon as possible, but **no later than 45 calendar days** after completion of the trip or event. Any portion of an advance that was not used must be returned to the state within this same timeframe.

Travel expenses, related to an advance, which are reconciled, substantiated, submitted, and approved more than 60 days after the conclusion of the travel or event should be included in the Traveler's IRS Form W-2 as taxable income.

Advance amounts in excess of substantiated travel expenses that are not returned to the state within 120 days after the trip should also be included in the Traveler's IRS Form W-2 as taxable income. (See Section 6.4 for further guidance.)

- A Traveler's commuting miles are considered personal mileage and, as such, are not reimbursable. Thus, when a Traveler **attempts to claim** reimbursement for their personal commuting mileage, the total amount of commuting Miles (one-way or round trip) must be deducted when calculating total mileage reimbursement. Commuting miles is defined as the actual mileage travelled by the Traveler between their Residence and Primary Workstation (See Appendix C for definitions). If a Traveler's travel begins or ends at their Primary Workstation AND they are not attempting to claim their Commuting Miles between Residence and Workstation or vice versa, then Commuting Miles would not be deducted.

Travel advances and expense reports submitted through TTE will be systematically monitored; reports will be available to TTE agencies via COGNOS Reporting to help you ensure IRS reporting requirements are being handled properly and timely. Non-TTE agencies are responsible for implementing internal monitoring processes to ensure compliance with these IRS regulations.

E. Documentation and Receipt Requirements

IRS requirements are met with the submission of approved expenses into the TTE system (or on manual expense reimbursement forms if not on the TTE system.) The overall, specific business purpose of the trip should clearly be stated on expense submissions. Business purpose should include information such as:

- People involved
- Business topics covered
- Brief explanation of duties performed

Required receipts must be attached electronically to the expense submission in the TTE system (or with a manual reimbursement form if not using the TTE system.) For instructions on how to attach receipts, reference the TTE System User Reference Guide.

Receipts must contain appropriate detail, including starting and ending destinations, hotel charges, and detailed item charges (credit card signature copies without detail are not acceptable). A specific business purpose for the expenditure must be noted on every expense submitted. Note that receipts are not required for meals per diem. Valid, unaltered receipts are required for the following:

- Air, lodging, rental cars and rail (such as Amtrak, etc.)
- Visa/Passport fees
- Conference registration fees
- Itemized receipts equal to or above \$25 (Expenses over the threshold should not be approved if a required receipt is missing)

Section One: Air Travel

1.1 Booking

TTE system travelers are required to utilize the online TTE system for booking air travel or the State's TMC for agent assisted transactions, if necessary; refer to the SAO Travel website for relevant contact numbers. **Contacting the State's TMC directly for assistance will result in an additional cost to the agency.** Non-TTE system users should use the booking process established in their agency.

Travelers who are combining personal travel with business travel may only do so when the personal portion does not add any cost to the state. Travel arrangements must be made to accommodate the business duties of the Traveler and not their personal preference (See Section 7 regarding reimbursement for personal travel).

State-contracted airfare tickets are not available for personal, companion or partner/spouse/family travel. This is a requirement of the airlines and our failure to monitor the use of these contract airfares could cause their cancellation. Accordingly, persons booking tickets for non-official business using contracted rates will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as well as reimbursement of the difference between the contracted rate airfare and the airline's published airfare for the reservation.

The state will pay for the airfare and/or penalty incurred for a change or cancellation of travel plans when the change or cancellation is required by the state or is the result of other unavoidable situations approved by the Agency head or designee. Travelers must state the business reason for the need to alter the flight reservation, and the total cost of the flight should be evaluated and approved as reasonable by the approver when completing the final expense report submission.

1.2 Lowest Logical Airfare

Travelers on state business should always select the lowest priced airfare that meets their approved, most logical itinerary and is in compliance with Policy. Travelers are expected to use their best judgment to save on airfare costs, considering points of departure and destination, flight times and schedules, ground transportation, etc.

Travelers using the TTE system must purchase commercial airline tickets via the online TTE system OR through the mandatory state contract, TMC. The TTE system will offer multiple choices within the parameters entered by the Traveler and TMC will also offer options based on the Traveler's specifications. **The Policy strongly encourages purchases of lowest cost airfares.**

Due to the lower cost of such fares, Travelers should use penalty or nonrefundable fares whenever feasible. If the travel plan is subsequently cancelled, the Traveler will still have an opportunity to reuse the ticket. For TTE system users, the TMC will keep this information in the Traveler's profile for future reference. Non-TTE system users should use the process established in their agency to keep track of unused airline tickets. If a refundable fare must be used, the difference in the cost of the flight must not exceed \$150.

Lower cost flights should be chosen when they are within two hours before or after the preferred flight time. Lower cost fares that are declined should be related to the job functions of the traveler and justified via the TTE system (or with a written explanation attached to manual expense reimbursement forms if not on the TTE system.)

Travelers on State business may open and maintain frequent flyer/guest accounts with airlines, hotels, car rental companies, and other travel suppliers. The cost of these memberships is the responsibility of the Traveler and will not be reimbursed by the State. Travelers may retain promotional items, including frequent flyer miles, earned on official state travel. However, if an employee makes travel arrangements that favor a preferred airline/supplier to receive promotional items/points and this circumvents purchasing the most economical means of travel, they are in violation of the Policy.

1.3 Type/Class of Ticket Allowable

Higher class/grade tickets, such as business class, premium select, business select, first class, and comfort are not reimbursable for domestic flights with the exception of travel to Alaska and Hawaii. Higher grade tickets are allowable for international travel when approved in advance by the respective Agency head or designee (see Appendix A).

It is not permissible to confirm a higher fare for upgrade eligibility or for personal reasons. Upgrades at the State's expense are not permitted. However, upgrades may be purchased after the travel is booked at the Traveler's expense.

1.4 International Travel

Federal regulations require that U.S. carriers be used for foreign travel for trips funded by federally sponsored programs, unless a U.S. carrier is not available.

TTE system users must book international travel through the TMC. Refer to the SAO Travel website for relevant contact numbers. Non-TTE system users should use the process established in their agency.

The Traveler is responsible for knowing which visas and passports are needed. Associated costs and fees are reimbursable if the travel is required, and the Traveler does not currently possess the valid documents. Receipts must be included for reimbursement.

See **Appendix A** for additional guidelines and details regarding International Travel.

1.5 Advance Booking

Once travel dates have been confirmed, all flights should be booked at least 14 days, but no more than 30 days in advance, when practical. Flights booked within 30 days of travel help manage agency cash flow and reduce the risk of potential change fees and administrative costs related to any subsequent change in travel plans.

Flights booked with less than 14 days advanced purchase are more expensive and require that a written explanation for the booking delay be provided to the approver.

Non-TTE Agency: Approvers may deny charges and/or additional costs that result from last minute airline booking.

TTE Agencies: The TTE supervisor is notified by the TTE system via email at the time travel reservations are made by the Traveler. If the reservation is not in compliance with this policy, the supervisor is to advise the Traveler via email. The Traveler has 24 hours from the time of booking the reservation to void it with no additional fee from the airline vendor.

1.6 Connecting Flights

Connecting flights should be chosen over nonstop flights when the connection does not add more than two hours to travel time and the connection saves \$200.00 or more. Travelers are not required to take a lower fare if a change of airline at the connection point is required.

1.7 Cancellations

It is the Traveler's responsibility to closely examine the cancellation/exchange rules and fees before purchasing a ticket (fees typically range from \$125 to \$250). If a trip is cancelled after a ticket has been issued, the airline reservation must be cancelled at least one hour prior to the scheduled flight. On the TTE system, this can be done via the online booking tool, or by calling the TMC. (Non-TTE system travelers should use the process established in their agency.) See Appendix D: Airlines for airline specific information.

If the ticket is refundable, the TTE system traveler should notify the TMC and request a refund. (Non-TTE system travelers should use the refund process established in their agency.)

Cancelling a reservation does not void the TTE Travel Agency Fee for the original airline reservation. The Traveler must import the Travel Agency Fee expense to their next expense report.

1.8 Voids

If your trip is cancelled within 24 hours of being *ticketed*, most airlines will allow the TMC to "void" the ticket, which will reverse the airfare charged and avoid additional airline change fees. This is not applicable to Instant Purchase Fares. (Non-TTE system travelers should use the process established in their agency.)

Voiding a reservation does not void the TTE Travel Agency Fee for the original airline reservation. The Traveler must import the Travel Agency Fee expense to their next expense report.

1.9 Exchanges

Unused tickets that are not used prior to their expiration lose their value. It is the Traveler's responsibility to use airline credits prior to expiration. Credits for cancelled tickets should be used as soon as possible. Most airlines require tickets to be exchanged and used within one year from original purchase date. Credits shall be used for the Traveler's next trip if the airline serves the destination. See Appendix D: Airlines for airline specific information.

1.10 Baggage Charges

Most airlines are now charging for checked luggage and for curbside check-in. In the event there is a charge for checking the Traveler's first piece of luggage, the State will reimburse for that charge. The State will not reimburse for anything other than the 1st piece of luggage unless an appropriate business purpose explanation is provided.

Baggage charges incurred for excess weight will not be reimbursed, unless an appropriate business purpose explanation is provided.

1.11 Other Expenses

Expenses for memberships in travel/airline clubs and/or daily club use are not reimbursable.

Charges for priority (reserved) seating are not reimbursable.

1.12 Private Aircraft

The use of aircraft owned, rented, or operated by a Traveler on state business is strongly discouraged. If it is determined that the use of this type of aircraft is advantageous (cost-efficient and practical) to the State, written pre-approval should be obtained and an explanation must be noted in the comments section of the Expense Report. The approval should be submitted with the Traveler's Expense Report. In the comments section of the Expense Report the employee should add the following comment "traveled by private aircraft; registration number NXXXX; mileage (as calculated from U.S. DOT website)."

Reimbursement for the use of private aircraft is calculated per mile based on the current reimbursement rate published by the U.S General Services Administration (GSA). For calculating the mileage between airports, please visit the U.S. Department of Transportation Inter-Airport Distance website. For trips using airports not listed on this website, a reasonable alternative should be used, e.g., an official highway map. Airplane nautical miles (NMs) should be converted into statute miles (SMs) or regular miles when submitting a voucher using the formula (1 NM equals 1.15077945 SMs).

Lodging and meal expenses en route will not be reimbursed if the expenses are a direct result of the decision to take a personal aircraft, rather than commercial aircraft.

If a Traveler opts to use a personal aircraft when use of commercial aircraft would be the most economical and advantageous for the State, the Traveler will be reimbursed up to the value of the commercial airfare (lowest coach fare).

Section Two: Ground Transportation and Car Rental

2.1 Ground Transportation

The most cost-effective method of transportation that will accomplish the purpose of the travel should be selected. Agencies should use their own discretion when determining the most cost-effective ground transportation. Among the factors to be considered should be length of travel time, cost of operation of a vehicle, cost and availability of common carrier services, etc. Common carrier should be used for out-of-state travel unless it is documented that utilization of another method of travel is more cost-efficient or practical and approved in accordance with these regulations.

Travelers are responsible for knowing which type of ground transportation is the least expensive in the area. In some areas, public transportation (e.g., taxis, shuttles, or mass transit) may be the more economical alternative. In other areas, it may be more cost effective to rent a car. When renting a car, the Traveler should also consider the costs of parking fees and fuel.

When traveling by air or train, Travelers should use shuttle services or public transportation when such options are available and less expensive than other means of ground transportation.

2.2 Car Rental

Travelers traveling on state business should use a temporary fleet vehicle, if available, unless the Traveler's supervisor determines and provides in writing, in advance of travel, that use of a temporary fleet vehicle is clearly not the most efficient method of travel.

If a temporary fleet vehicle is not available, Travelers may choose between a rental vehicle or mileage reimbursement for use of their personal vehicle.

The State has mandatory statewide contracts with specified car rental suppliers. These suppliers and contract car rental rates are automatically provided in the TTE booking system and are available from the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) website. Travelers are responsible for securing the lowest cost contract rental available at time of booking, considering all reasonable associated factors (rates, delivery time, distance and mileage, etc.)

When a rental car is necessary for TTE system travelers, reservations must be made through the online TTE system (or through a TMC agent assisted call) to ensure contracted state rates are obtained and billed under the mandatory statewide vendor contracts, and to ensure other Policy requirements are met. Refer to the SAO Travel website for relevant TMC contact numbers. (Non-TTE system users should use the car rental process established by their agency and DOAS.)

Renting outside the statewide vendor contracts requires an approved waiver initiated by the Traveler on form SPD-NI005. Travelers can find the form on the DOAS website. Approved waivers should be attached as a "receipt" in the TTE system (or with manual expense reimbursement forms, if not on the TTE system.) See Appendix E: Ground Transportation for information regarding additional insurance on rental vehicles.

Approved car rental sizes are Compact, Intermediate or Full Size. Other vehicle sizes require a business-related justification. Vans may be rented when there are more than four (4) travelers.

Reimbursement will be made for reasonable fuel charges. (This excludes renters who pick up cars from the Capitol Hill location and are furnished a fuel card and are billed based on a specific calculation for that location.) Travelers must decline optional fuel offerings offered by the car rental vendor. Maintenance and oil changes are the responsibility of the rental company and will not be reimbursed.

Rental cars under the Statewide Car Rental Vendor Contract should be returned with the same amount of gas that it had when it was picked up. Travelers should pay close attention to the fuel amount when they pick up the vehicle to ensure there are no overcharges for gas upon return of the rental car.

Travelers traveling on state business inside the Continental U.S. in any rented motor vehicle are covered by the State's liability policy; therefore, liability coverage should be declined when renting a motor vehicle. Loss Damage and Collision Damage are also covered for vehicles rented under the Statewide Car Rental Vendor Contract. When traveling to destinations outside the Continental U.S. (OCONUS), with the exception of Canada, the State Risk Management Department recommends that travelers accept collision insurance when renting cars. **Contact the DOAS Risk Management Services Department regarding any other questions related to rental car insurance coverage.**

NOTE: The State liability policy is only in effect while the employee is using the rented vehicle for official State business. For this reason, personal use of the vehicle, including allowing friends or family members to ride in a State rented vehicle, is prohibited.

NOTE: For any exceptions to the policy with regard to Rental Cars please contact the Department of Administrative Services.

In the event of an accident while driving a rental vehicle, contact the Risk Management Office at **1-877-656-7475**, as well as the appropriate car rental vendor, for claims handling.

2.3 Personal Automobile

Reimbursement for business use of a personally-owned vehicle is calculated per business-use mile, from point of departure to point of arrival, including any way points and deducting actual commute mileage, as applicable. Reimbursement rates are based on the current reimbursement rate, within the Mileage Reimbursement Rates Policy which can be found on the SAO Travel website.

The Traveler and supervisor must determine if mileage reimbursement should be made using Tier 1 or Tier 2 rates, as described below. **Any reimbursement of mileage claims paid to a Traveler in excess of rates stipulated in this Policy (e.g., Tier 2 versus Tier 1 rates) must be refunded to the State or characterized as taxable compensation to the employee.**

By law, the state mileage reimbursement rates follow the published U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) rates and are as follows:

- Tier 1 Rate: When a fleet (government-owned) vehicle is NOT available, the employee will be reimbursed for business miles traveled based on the applicable GSA Tier 1 rates.

- Tier 2 Rate: If a fleet (government-owned) vehicle is available, BUT a personal motor vehicle is used, the employee will be reimbursed for business miles based on the applicable GSA Tier 2 Rate.

The standard per-mile reimbursement rate includes gas, oil, repairs and maintenance, tires, insurance, registration fees, licenses, and depreciation attributable to the business miles driven. If you request reimbursement for mileage, you will not be reimbursed separately for those costs.

A Traveler's commuting miles are considered personal mileage and, as such, are not reimbursable. Thus, when a Traveler **attempts to claim** reimbursement for their personal commuting mileage, the total amount of commuting miles (one-way or round trip) must be deducted when calculating total mileage reimbursement. "Commuting Miles" is defined as the actual mileage travelled by the Traveler between their Residence and Primary Workstation location (See Appendix C for definitions). Agencies should declare and communicate the employee's primary workstation. If the residence is declared by the agency as the employee's primary workstation, then there are no commute miles, and all miles should be reimbursed. If the conventional worksite or a satellite worksite is declared the primary workstation, then the employee's commute miles should be deducted while in travel status. If a Traveler's travel begins or ends at their Primary Workstation AND they are not attempting to claim their commuting miles between Residence and Workstation or vice versa, then commuting miles would not be deducted.

Exceptions:

- If travel occurs on a weekend or holiday and is outside of the Traveler's normal work schedule, mileage is calculated from the point of departure with no deduction of actual commuting miles.
- If travel requires one or more overnight stays, actual commute mileage is only deducted for one round trip, upon departure and upon return and only if the Traveler is attempting to claim those miles. Mileage is calculated from the point of departure with a one-way reduction for actual commuting miles for the first day IF the commute miles are being claimed, and another one-way reduction for actual commuting miles for the last day IF the commute miles are being claimed. Days in between have no reduction for commuting miles since a commute did not occur, nor is it being claimed by the Traveler.
- If a Traveler utilizes state-sponsored transportation alternatives (ex. MARTA), the "normal commuting miles" should still be calculated as the direct mileage from the employee's Residence to their Primary Workstation if the Traveler is attempting to claim those miles.
- If an employee's Primary Workstation is his/her Residence, the requirement to deduct normal commuting miles does not apply since, by definition, there are none.

While in travel status, and at the Agency's discretion, Travelers may be reimbursed for reasonable (as defined by the Agency) ground transportation costs (Personal car mileage, rideshare, shuttle, taxi, etc.) to/from eating establishments when such establishments are not located in the lodging location, are not fiscally prudent, or within safe walking distance of the lodging and/or the business function. The Traveler may not request reimbursement for ground transportation costs for eating

establishments distanced from lodging and/or business function based on personal choice. (e.g. Traveling to St. Simon’s Island when lodging/business function is located on Jekyll Island.)

Travelers that have “assigned vehicles” for business purposes are not eligible to receive **any** personal car mileage reimbursements. It is the agency’s responsibility to monitor and communicate this policy to all Travelers that have “assigned vehicles.”

Tolls, where there is not another reasonable alternative route, and parking charges incurred while on official state business will be reimbursed. Prior to any intra- or inter-state travel, employees should seek pre-approval for toll lane reimbursements. While there are no maximum limits for parking, employees are encouraged to utilize safe, low-cost, long-term parking to minimize the cost.

While driving a personal vehicle on state business, the State provides full liability coverage and personal immunity for the Traveler for damages and injuries the Traveler may cause to others. However, the State does not provide coverage for damages to your personal vehicle. Cost of repairs to a personal vehicle, whether or not they result from the Traveler’s acts, are not reimbursable.

Under no circumstances will the State reimburse tickets, parking fines or violations related to federal and state statutes.

See SAO’s Travel Website for **Mileage Reimbursement Scenario** document.

2.4 Other Transportation

The most reasonable and customary means of transportation should be used when traveling. The State will reimburse for shuttle, rideshare or taxi fares to and from airports and railroad stations when such service is not included in air and rail fares, and where public transportation is not practical. Fares between business meetings while in travel status are also reimbursable.

The State will reimburse tips for shuttle, taxi, or ride share services, up to 20% of the total fare cost. Approvers should review these expenses prior to approving.

Section Three: Lodging

3.1 Lodging Expense

The Traveler should select the least expensive option available taking into consideration proximity to the business destination and personal safety. The Traveler or the travel arranger must inquire about the government rate availability, or the conference lodging rate, and select the lowest available rate. When the hotel or motel is the conference or convention site, reimbursement will be limited to the conference rate, if available.

Travelers on state business are allowed lodging expenses when their destination is located **more than 50 miles** from their Residence AND they are away for **more than twelve (12) hours**. Written pre-approval must be obtained from the agency head, or their designee, when lodging is required *within* the 50-mile radius. The approval must be submitted with the Traveler's receipts and documented mileage when requesting reimbursement.

Reasonable lodging expenses are reimbursed at actual cost. All lodging claims must be documented with receipts and must be at a business that offers lodging to the general public, such as a hotel or motel, NOT a private residence. **Lodging rentals obtained through vacation rental marketplaces such as Airbnb, HomeAway, and Vrbo are not considered commercial lodging facilities and should not be used while in travel status.**

When lodging is shared, the Traveler paying for the lodging seeks reimbursement for the full expense.

Upgraded room accommodations that incur an additional charge are not allowed. A complimentary upgrade should be noted on the expense report. Mandatory resort fees are reimbursable as lodging expenses.

3.2 Booking

TeamWorks Travel & Expense (TTE) system travelers are encouraged to utilize the TTE system for booking lodging arrangements, or the TMC for agent-assisted transactions. Refer to the SAO Travel website for relevant contact numbers.

TTE agencies may book directly with hotel vendors to take advantage of direct billing situations. Agencies that offer direct billing for hotels must follow the guidelines below:

- Any Agency that utilizes direct billing payments is not allowed to "pre-pay" the hotels. The hotel must be paid AFTER the trip is completed, and not before.
- All TTE Travelers are required to enter the hotel information in the TTE System as a "company paid" expense on their expense report.
- The Agency is responsible to ensure that all Travelers receive a copy of the applicable hotel invoice to attach as their hotel receipt in the TTE System.

Arrangements associated with a conference where you have to book directly with the hotel to obtain a conference rate, or your Agency is hosting a conference and providing for direct billing arrangements, should be handled accordingly. (Non-TTE system users should use the hotel booking process established in their agency.)

Consistent with the DOAS Statewide Purchasing Card Policy, TTE agencies may NOT link DOAS Statewide Purchase Cards to a TTE Traveler profile to be used to hold hotel reservations.

3.3 Special Discount Rates and Tax Exemptions

When making travel arrangements, the TTE system will display the various hotels and rates available. Non-TTE system travelers should remember to inquire about any available discount hotel rates for state government employees. Many hotels have discount rates available for state employees with appropriate identification.

State and local government officials and employees traveling within the state on official business are **exempt** from paying the **county or municipal excise tax** on lodging ("hotel/motel" or "occupancy" tax) [O.C.G.A. 48-13-51 (H) (3)], regardless of the payment method being used. *This exemption does not apply to travelers staying at an out-of-state hotel/motel.* Travelers must be able to provide proper identification to document their employment as a state or local government employee.

Additionally, as a Traveler traveling on official State business, the lodging is eligible for **exemption** from **State of Georgia Sales Tax only** when the payment method being used is either direct bill to the agency, or a State of Georgia issued credit card. Travelers should make every effort to avoid payment of sales tax when the payment method is anything other than a personal payment method.

Travelers are required to submit a copy of the Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Form, which is located on the SAO travel website, upon registration at the hotel/motel. If the hotel refuses to accept the form at check-in, the Traveler should attempt to resolve the issue with hotel management before checking out at the end of their stay. If the matter is not resolved by check-out time, the Traveler should pay the tax. TTE system Travelers should classify this tax separately as "occupancy tax" and/or "sales tax", and provide an explanation when submitting their expense report. Failure of the Traveler to submit the Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Form to the hotel/motel may result in non-reimbursement of the tax to the Traveler.

Per the Transportation Funding Act of 2015, effective July 1, 2015 hotels in the state of Georgia will charge a \$5.00 per room per night hotel tax to Travelers. State Travelers are NOT exempt from this tax.

3.4 Cancellation

Travelers should not book nonrefundable rates or rates that require a deposit unless required by conference lodging.

It is the Traveler's or arranger's responsibility to understand the cancellation rules of the room confirmed. No-show charges and penalties will not be reimbursed when the Traveler does not cancel reservations within the allotted time. Nonrefundable rates cannot be changed or cancelled; therefore, the Traveler is accepting the risk of a non-reimbursable cancellation fee.

In a case where all efforts have been taken, and a fee is still charged, an explanation must be provided when submitting the Traveler's expense report in order for the fee to be reimbursed.

Cancellation of a reservation does not cancel or void the TTE Travel Agency Fee for the original reservation in either situation. The TTE traveler must report the Travel Agency Fee for the cancelled or no-show reservation on an expense report.

3.5 Conference Lodging

Travelers who stay at a hotel/motel that is holding a scheduled meeting or seminar may incur lodging expenses that exceed the rates generally considered reasonable. The higher cost may be justified to avoid excessive transportation costs between a lower cost hotel/motel and the location of the business function.

When the conference/business function does not have an official hotel, the Traveler is required to obtain a property within reasonable proximity.

Section Four: Meals and Incidental Travel Expenses

4.1 General

Generally, meals are reimbursable on a per diem basis (not actual expenses) for overnight official business travel outside the Traveler's Primary WorkStation. When filing an expense report in the TTE system, the travel allowance functionality will assist the Traveler in obtaining the proper per diem amounts based upon travel to specific cities. For specific information on filing an expense report and utilizing travel allowance functionality, visit the SAO Travel Training page on the SAO website. Per Diem expenses do not require receipts to be provided.

Reasonable incidental travel expenses, also known as incidentals, are reimbursed separately from Per Diem Rates for In-State or Out-of-State travel; incidental travel expenses are included in International Per Diem Rates and are not separately reimbursed. ([See Appendix C](#))

- A) **In-state and Out-of-state travel per diem rates** include the cost of meals, taxes and tips on meals and follows the appropriate GSA per diem rates for a given geographical area. These rates, as well as a breakdown by meal, can be found on the [GSA website](#). (Incidentals are not included)
- B) **International per diem rates** include the cost of meals, taxes, tips on meals and other travel incidental expenses (See [Appendix A](#).) and follows the appropriate GSA per diem rates for a given geographical area. (Incidentals are included in the per diem rates.) These rates, as well as a breakdown by meal, can be found on the [GSA website](#).

4.2 Meal Reimbursement Amounts when Traveling

Employees traveling within the State of Georgia or Out-of-State (United States and Canada) are paid a per diem amount designed to cover the cost of meals (including taxes and tips), based on the number of meals per day for which the traveler is eligible. Employees traveling internationally are paid a per diem amount designed to cover the cost of meals (including taxes and tips) and specific non-meal travel incidentals. (Please see Appendix A for more information regarding international travel. Links to current per diem rates are located on the SAO Travel website.)

Travelers who are provided meals during the course of travel as part of a conference fee, or when hosting or are hosted by another party while on travel status, must deduct the corresponding, applicable meal rate from their per diem reimbursement claim for each meal provided.

Meal adjustments include those provided by hotels, meetings, conferences, or any other source. If a continental breakfast, lunch, dinner, or reception is offered as part of the travel and the food/timing is sufficient to serve as a meal, the traveler must reduce the per diem by the appropriate allowance amount. If a Traveler has medical restrictions and cannot eat a meal provided by any source while traveling, the Traveler should make every effort to have the source facilitate their needs. If the source does not or cannot honor the request, the Traveler is not required to deduct the applicable meal allowance from the per diem. However, the Traveler must include a note or other documentation with the Travel Expense Reimbursement form documenting this

information.

For non-employee meal reimbursements, Agencies must designate an approver(s) who will be accountable for the review and approval of the non-employee travel statements. Please refer to the Policy on Other Meals and Incidental Expenses for Authorized Non-State Employees on the [SAO Website](#).

4.3 Meal Per Diem: In-State Georgia

Travelers traveling within the State of Georgia are eligible for up to \$50.00 of per diem to cover the cost of three (3) meals per day. Incidentals are not included in the per diem rate. The per diem rate applies to all cities in Georgia. Per Diem Allowance are set forth by the Statewide Travel Policy and will follow the "Standard" GSA per diem rates, based on approval from SAO/OPB.

Breakfast = \$13.00 Lunch = \$14.00 Dinner = \$23.00

4.4 Meal Per Diem During OVERNIGHT Travel

Travelers traveling overnight, either in-state or out-of-state, are eligible for 75% of the total per diem rate on the first and last day of travel. For example, if the per diem rate allows a \$50 total reimbursement, \$37.50 would be allowable on a travel departure or return day ($\$50 \times .75 = \37.50) As a result, the time of departure and time of return are not considerations for calculating the Meal Per Diem when associated with overnight travel.

When meals are provided to a Traveler in conjunction with out-of-state travel events on a travel departure or return day, the meals per diem reimbursement rate is reduced by the amount of the provided meal(s) after the 75% proration. For example, if the per diem allows a \$50 total reimbursement, and lunch was provided at no cost on a travel departure or return day, the total allowable reimbursement for that day would be \$23.50 [$\$50 \times .75 = \37.50 less \$14 lunch = \$23.50].

The per diem allowance for Georgia is \$50. Out-of-State per diem allowances follow the GSA rates.

For trips involving multiple travel destinations, base the reduction on the per diem rate in effect where the night was spent, as follows:

- Departure Day: Where the Traveler spends that night.
- Return Day: Where the Traveler spent the night before returning to their Residence or Primary WorkStation.

As a reminder, the time of departure and time of return are not considerations for calculating the Meal Per Diem when associated with overnight travel.

4.5 Meal Per Diem During NON-OVERNIGHT Travel

Travelers on state business who travel **more than 50 miles** from their Residence on a work assignment, **AND** are away for **more than twelve (12) hours**, may receive the total eligible per diem allowance for that day, even when there is no overnight lodging. The per diem allowance must, however, be adjusted for any meals provided to the Traveler, as stated in Sec. 4.2, above.

For travel without an associated overnight stay, the meal per diem rate will be determined by the location of the last business stop of the date of travel. Mileage should still be reimbursed.

4.6 Meetings

Please refer to the Accounting Policy on Other Meals and Incidental Expenses for Authorized Non-State Employees on the [SAO Website](#).

4.7 Employee Group Meals

Please refer to the Accounting Policy on Other Meals and Incidental Expenses for Authorized Non-State Employees on the [SAO Website](#).

4.8 Non-Employee Group Meals

Please refer to the Accounting Policy on Other Meals and Incidental Expenses for Authorized Non-State Employees on the [SAO Website](#).

4.9 Special Meals

Please refer to the Accounting Policy on Other Meals and Incidental Expenses for Authorized Non-State Employees on the [SAO Website](#).

Section Five: Miscellaneous Travel Expenses

Reimbursable expenses while on official travel status include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Baggage handling services, not including tips
- Business office expenses (copy services, postage, and supplies)
- Business related phone calls, faxes, and internet usage charges and fees
- Conference/Registration fees
- Costs related to passports and travel visas, when necessary to accomplish the official business purpose of the trip
- Costs related to vaccinations required and/or recommended for international business travel
- Currency conversion fees
- Laundry or cleaning expenses on trips lasting seven (7) calendar days or more
- Reasonable incidental travel expenses, also known as incidentals, are reimbursed separately from Per Diem Rates for In State and Out of State travel
- Transportation costs from lodging or businesses to restaurants (domestic travel only; see Appendix A for international travel guidance.)
- Shuttle, taxi, or rideshare service to and from airports when public transportation is not practical.
- Taxi, shuttle and rideshare services between business meetings.

Non-reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Airline, car, and card membership dues and club fees
- Airline reserved/priority seating fees
- Travel upgrade fees (air, rail, car)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Cigarettes, vaping, tobacco or other smoking paraphernalia
- Bank charges for ATM withdrawals, except on international travel
- Childcare costs
- Pet housing/boarding/sitting
- Clothing or toiletry items
- Commuting between Residence and Primary Workstation
- Country Club dues
- Expenses related to vacation or personal days taken before, during or after a business trip
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Incidental travel expenses are included in International Per Diem Rates and are not separately reimbursed.
- Laundry, cleaning, pressing costs for trips of less than seven days
- Loss Damage Insurance when State agency contract rate vehicle is available and another rental car agency is utilized
- Loss or theft of cash advance money or airline tickets
- Loss or theft of personal funds or property
- Lost baggage
- Luggage or briefcases

- Medical expenses while traveling (*Exceptions may be made to accommodate ADA compliance; see Sec. 7.10*)
- Mini-bar charges
- Movies
- No-show/Cancellation fees or fees related to hotel late check-out (unless business or weather related)
- Personal reading materials (magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- Personal vehicle maintenance (including car washes)
- Personal entertainment
- Personal Pet care
- Recreational expenses
- Rental vehicle maintenance (including car washes)
- Saunas, massages
- Shoe Shines
- Souvenirs or personal gifts
- Tips covered by per diem allowances
- Traffic citations (moving violations), parking tickets, court fees and other fines
- Travel accident insurance premiums
- TSA PreCheck application fee for airport pre-screening convenience service
- Valet services for parking, when self-parking options are available, unless there are valid security reasons

Section Six: Payment Methods

6.1 Georgia Travel and Expense System Accounts

The State has established *Georgia Travel and Expense System Accounts* (GTESA), which may be used to purchase airfares and/or car rentals, via direct billing to the applicable agency, for travelers who utilize the TTE system. GTESA's are "ghost accounts" for which plastic cards are not issued. The purpose of a GTESA is to minimize administrative costs and the financial burden on Travelers while traveling on behalf of the State. Non-TTE system users should use the payment method and processes established in their agency.

6.2 Other Payment Methods

Personal credit cards or cash should be used for reimbursable travel expenses not covered in Section 6.1.

The State Purchase Card managed by the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) can only be used for purchases allowable by the [DOAS Statewide Purchasing Card Policy](#).

6.3 Travel Advances

O.C.G.A. 45-7-25 and 45-7-26 authorize the payment of travel advances to Travelers of all state agencies, commissions, and authorities. State law also charges the head of the Office of Planning and Budget with the responsibility for developing the necessary rules, regulations, and procedures to govern travel advances and to provide for proper and timely accounting of state funds advanced to Travelers once the Traveler has returned from travel status. The Office of Planning and Budget *Policy Memorandum No. 1 (Revision No. 7, April 2017)* addresses travel advances.

Continuous (Multiple) Travel Advances

In general, a Traveler should have only one travel advance outstanding at a time. However, in certain business cases (such as having multiple advances issued to accommodate continuous business travel), it may be necessary to have more than one outstanding advance. See *OPB Policy Memorandum No. 1 (Revision No. 7, April 2017)*, Section 12, for further guidance regarding Continuous Business Travel.

6.4 Travel Advance and Expense Reconciliation

Travel expenses and advances must be reconciled within the TTE system as soon as possible, but **no later than 45 calendar days** after the completion of the trip or event. Any portion of an advance that was not used must be returned to the State, via check, within this same 45 calendar day timeframe. For agencies using the TTE System, Travelers must submit all expenses in the TTE system, "matching" the expenses to the approved advance. Refer to the State's [TTE System User Reference Guide](#) for detailed procedures. Non-TTE system users should use the process established in their agency.

Section Seven: Reimbursement for Travel Expenses

7.1 General

Travelers are expected to exercise good stewardship of funds when traveling on official business. Any expenditure disallowed by the State is the responsibility of the Traveler.

7.2 Expense Reimbursement Timing

Travelers should submit all expenses for reimbursement and reconciliation within ten (10) days of the completion of the event or trip, but **no later than 45 calendar days**. However, a reimbursement request will preferably be held (not entered in the TTE system) until an amount of at least \$10.00 is due (to avoid multiple TTE system transaction fees billed to the agency).

IRS regulations state the traveler must adequately account to the employer and submit travel expense reimbursement requests within 60 days of the end of the trip. Such expenses, if submitted after 60 days, become taxable income to the traveler.

All expense reimbursement requests must be submitted as soon as possible, in conjunction with an employee's last day of employment, when applicable, but no later than 45 calendar days after the last day of employment. Outstanding requests submitted after this time period will not be reimbursed. The Office of Planning and Budget *OPB Policy Memorandum No. 1 (Revision 7, April 2017)* provides further guidance for recovering unrecovered Travel Advances, post-employment.

7.3 Expense Reimbursement Submission

Whether using the State's TTE system or the existing processes in an agency that is not using the TTE system, Travelers are responsible for their own expense reports. The State's TTE system provides the ability for a "delegate" to create an expense report on behalf of another employee. The Traveler who incurred the expense, however, must personally submit the expense for routing to the appropriate approver by logging into the State's TTE system and submitting the expense. For training documentation on how to utilize this functionality refer to the [TTE System User Reference Guide](#). Non-TTE system users should use the process established in their agency.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that expenses claimed in the travel expense report are proper, accurate, and incurred for official business. A Traveler who knowingly presents a false or fraudulent claim may be subject to penalties under criminal statutes.

An employee who receives payroll via ACH (direct deposit) will also typically receive a travel reimbursement via ACH (direct deposit) in the bank account indicated within the employee's payroll system. Otherwise, reimbursement will be made via check.

7.4 Receipts

Travelers must always submit itemized receipts if they are equal to or above \$25.00, except when meal per diem travel allowances are claimed or where airline tickets are purchased through the TTE system. Itemized Receipts may be requested for verification or audit. Itemized receipts should include:

- Name and address of the vendor
- Date of service

- Description of goods/service
- Amount paid for each individual item

Receipts are required with the travel expense report for the following expenses, regardless of dollar amount. No expense should be approved if a required receipt is missing:

- Airline fares (unless booked/purchased through the TTE system)
- Hotel expenses
- Rental car expenses (rental cost and the related expenses such as fuel)
- Breakfast, luncheon, or dinner meetings (unless claiming a per diem)
- Transportation Fares above \$25.00 (Rideshares, shuttles, rail, or other)
- Registration Fees
- Visa/Passport fees

Receipts are NOT required for the following expenses if amounts are less than \$25.00:

- Fuel purchased on a provided fuel card for rental vehicles (only at select locations)
- Parking
- Highway tolls
- Mass Transit tickets
- Taxi fares
- Airport vans

7.5 Travel Expenses Incurred on Behalf of another Agency

Periodically, a Traveler of one state organization may, in performing specific duties for another state organization, incur travel expenses as a direct result of performing such duties. The state organization making payment of such employee travel should record these expenses in account 640208/640209 (employee travel between state organizations).

If the state organization incurring the expense needs to charge back the state organization they incurred travel expenses on behalf of, this will need to be done manually and outside of the TTE system.

7.6 Personal Expenses

Reimbursement of personal expenses shall not be authorized for payment at any time. (See Section 5 for a list of non-reimbursable expenses.)

7.7 Combining Personal Travel with State Business Travel

Travelers should check with their agency before combining personal and business travel.

For in-state and out-of-state trips that combine personal travel with state business travel, reimbursement may not exceed the amount it would have cost the State if the Traveler did not combine personal travel with business travel. Combining state travel with personal travel does not, in and of itself, provide justification for using a private vehicle rather than a state-owned vehicle.

For out-of-state trips between points where scheduled airline service is available and where travelers are combining official state travel with a holiday, weekend trip, vacation or other personal travel, reimbursement will be based on the cost of round-trip coach airfare, lodging, and the meal per diems to which the Traveler would have been entitled while traveling by air, or by the least expensive reasonable means of travel.

When combining business and personal travel that includes air travel, the air travel costs cannot exceed the cost for the business air travel cost and requires documentation and written approval by a supervisor prior to booking the travel.

When combining personal travel and State business travel, baggage and luggage fees should be allocated, accordingly, and be reasonable under the circumstances.

Note: The Traveler is responsible for any additional costs incurred in booking personal travel combined with business travel.

7.8 Provisions for Authorized Non-State Individuals Including Volunteers

Please refer to the Policy on Other Meals and Incidental Expenses for Authorized Non-State Employees on the [SAO Website](#).

7.9 Personal Service Contractors

Please refer to the Policy on Other Meals and Incidental Expenses for Authorized Non-State Employees on the [SAO Website](#).

7.10 Travelers with Physical and/or Medical Conditions

Travelers with physical and/or medical conditions that may need special accommodations while on state travel, should be accommodated on a case-by-case basis adhering to all applicable laws and policies. Each Agency has the authority to provide reasonable accommodations during state travel for travelers with disabilities.

It is the responsibility of the individual TTE agency to provide “reasonable accommodations” for Travelers with physical and/or medical conditions in adhering to the Statewide Travel Policy and utilizing the TTE System. TTE Agencies are required to assign an Expense Delegate and/or Travel Assistant where needed to fulfill the needs of employees whose physical and/or medical condition renders them unable to work with the requirements of the TTE System. This accommodation will provide appropriate assistance for the employee and ensure that all requisite data is captured in the TTE System.

All state employees are to be afforded equal opportunity to perform travel for official State business even if the travel costs for disabled travelers will exceed what would normally be most economical to the State. For example:

- When a Traveler uses a wheelchair, it may be necessary to pay more for an airline ticket so the Traveler can fly on a larger airplane that accommodates the wheelchair.
- When a Traveler with a physical and/or medical condition rents a vehicle while on travel, a non-standard vehicle size may be required. When a Traveler has hearing or vision impairments, there may be a cost of providing auxiliary aids and services to enable the Traveler to successfully accomplish the purpose of the travel.

The extra travel costs required to comply with ADA shall be documented and kept on file by the Agency.

Section Eight: Policy Exceptions

8.1 Overview

Requests for exceptions to the *Statewide Travel Policy* should be infrequent and requested in advance. The **State Accounting Office (SAO) and Office of Planning and Budget (OPB)** will generally not grant exceptions to the Policy when it appears that, with proper planning and reasonable effort, the additional costs could have been avoided. Repetitive requests for similar exceptions, particularly after-the-fact requests, will be carefully reviewed and, when circumstances warrant, denied.

Agencies should not consider approved exceptions to be a blanket waiver of the travel regulations. Exceptions are only granted for an individual or individuals participating in a scheduled event and are only allowable for the specified dates of the event. Agencies are encouraged to request exceptions for unusual travel circumstances, as needed. Agencies that deviate from the travel regulations, without receiving written authorization, could be cited in the Single Audit Report issued by the Department of Audits and Accounts.

8.2 Procedures for Requesting Travel Exceptions

Agencies requesting travel exceptions should submit their request in writing to the SAO Travel office with as much advance notice as possible. All written requests must come from the agency head or other designated official and must be submitted prior to the expected travel date. All written requests should include the following:

- The name(s) of the person(s) for which the exception is requested,
- An explanation of the purpose of the trip,
- An explanation of the types of expenses to be incurred, and
- The anticipated travel dates.

Note: Exceptions granted under these provisions apply only in circumstances in which an employee will incur expenses. See Section 4.8 on group meals purchased by the employer.

8.3 Approval/Denial of Travel Exceptions

SAO and OPB are responsible for approving or denying all requests for travel exceptions. Written documentation will be returned to the requesting agency indicating whether the request was approved or denied.

Appendix A: International Travel

Approval Authority

In addition to all other policies set forth in this *Statewide Travel Policy*, the following policies must be adhered to when traveling internationally. The following approvals must be obtained in advance, dated and submitted with the traveler's expense report.

If the traveler is...	Then, approval must be made in advance by...
A State employee	The respective agency head or designee
An agency head	A higher level authority

Air Travel

Business class travel is allowed for international flights. (Any flight seat class above business class is prohibited.)

The Fly America Act was enacted to mandate the use of U.S. flag air carriers for federally funded international travel. The Federal Travel Regulations requires international flights be on U.S. flag air carriers whenever possible, which is accomplished when code sharing is present. Code sharing occurs when two or more airlines "code" the same flight as if it was their own. In other words, the international flight may be on a foreign air carrier's plane but is considered the same as one operated by an U.S. flag air carrier. Compliance with the Fly America Act is satisfied when the U.S. flag air carrier's designator code is present in the area next to the flight numbers on the airline ticket, boarding pass, or on the documentation for an electronic ticket (passenger receipt).

What does this mean to you? If you are scheduling international travel that is federally funded, you must ensure that all flights, where possible, are scheduled on U.S. flag air carriers or on foreign air carriers that code share with a U.S. flag air carrier. International travel for TTE system users must be made through the TMC. They have agents that are well versed in the Fly America Act.

Meals & Incidentals Reimbursement

For employees traveling internationally, meals, taxes, tips on meals, and other travel incidentals are included in the Per Diem Rate and are based upon GSA tables. When filing an expense report in the TTE system, the "Travel Allowance" functionality will assist the traveler in obtaining the proper per diem amounts based upon travel to specific international cities. For detailed information on filing an expense report and utilizing travel allowance functionality, review the [TTE System User Reference Guide](#).

Incidental travel expenses included in the per diem rate for international travel include: fees and tips given to porters, bellhops, hotel housekeeping, attendants, and hotel staff.

Ground transportation costs (e.g., taxi, shuttle) to and from airports and railroad stations, and between business meetings, as well as the Reimbursable Miscellaneous Expenses referenced in Section 5, are not included in the per diem, and are reimbursed separately. For TTE Agencies specific expense types for these expenses are available; for Non-TTE Agencies these are reported as Miscellaneous Expense on expense reports.

Travelers are eligible for 75% of the total per diem rate on the first and last day of international travel. For a complete listing of the GSA per diem tables, visit the GSA per diem website.

Other International Travel Expenses

With proper documentation, justification, and approval, the State will reimburse:

- Commission for currency conversion or traveler checks, when deemed necessary;
- Bank charges for international ATM withdrawals;
- Services of guides, interpreters, packers, or drivers, when deemed necessary;
- Fees for the issuance of passport, visas, and/or affidavits, when required for business international travel;
- Costs related to vaccinations and inoculations required and/or recommended for international business travel.

Foreign Currency Conversion

When a traveler incurs expenses in a foreign currency each expense should be converted to United States dollars (USD). The following methods are acceptable:

- A. Credit card statement: If the expenses are charged, the credit card company will convert them to USD.
- B. Conversion of charges via the internet for the *dates of travel*. An acceptable site is: [Oanda Converter](#) - this site allows for built in exchange fees and specific travel dates.
- C. Conversion via the TTE system is automatically calculated.
- D. Currency rate conversion based on actual cash exchange. Use the following formula:

$$\mathbf{F \times C = U}$$

F = amount of charges in foreign currency

C = conversion factor (USD's per unit of foreign currency)

U = equivalent expenses in US dollars

Example:

F = **\$100** of charges in Canadian Dollars

C = \$.68 USD's per Canadian Dollar

U = \$100 CD x \$.68 USD/CD = **\$68 USD**

Appendix B: Study Abroad Programs

Many universities in the University System of Georgia have or are developing Study Abroad programs to offer to USG students opportunities to develop a level of international knowledge and understanding that enables them to participate fully and successfully in a global society.

At this time, the *Statewide Travel Policy* does not include guidance for study abroad programs. Universities should continue with their existing policies and procedures.

Appendix C: Definitions

ACCOUNTABILITY means that employees are responsible for accounting for their travel expenses accurately. All staff will ensure travel is conducted in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

AGENCY means any department, board, commission, or other organizational unit of government that is subject to these statewide travel policies.

ASSIGNED VEHICLE means that an employee has exclusive control over a vehicle's use during the workday or is the only employee who routinely drives the vehicle (refer to Policy 10).

BUSINESS MILES means miles driven between workplaces.

COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION means any entity that offers transportation of people or goods to the public for pay.

COMMUTING MILES means the miles traveled on a regular (usually daily) basis from an employee's residence to the location most frequently associated with work performed outside of that residence (Primary Workstation). This should be a standard distance that does not change from one reimbursement request to the next.

CONTINUOUS TRAVEL means a traveler is required to be away from their Residence and Primary Workstation for any four or more days per week.

COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL EXCISE TAX means the local taxes charged by hotel/motels for lodging, also referred to as "hotel/motel" or "occupancy" tax. This tax is separate from the state sales tax.

EMPLOYEE TRAVEL EXPENSE STATEMENT means the accounting document used as the basis to reimburse a State employee for travel expenses incurred while on official business.

FLEET (GOVERNMENT OWNED) VEHICLES means a state agency owned vehicle.

GEORGIA TRAVEL and EXPENSE SYSTEM ACCOUNTS (GTESA) means the State's preferred method of payment for air fare and rental car vendors for agencies on the TTE System. This is a "ghost card" account for which plastic cards are not issued.

GUEST TRAVELER means travelers who are not employed by the State of Georgia.

HIGH-COST AREA means any area within Georgia within which meal expenses may be reimbursed at a higher amount than the limits that otherwise apply to travel within Georgia. High-cost areas are those counties which are assigned higher than the standard "CONUS" rates for meals by the U. S. General Services Administration, and, when applicable, are identified in a separate Meal Allowance Schedule document issued by SAO and OPB.

INCIDENTAL TRAVEL EXPENSES or INCIDENTALS means actual incidental expenses such as fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel housekeeping, attendants, and hotel staff. See IRS Publication 463 for further definition and guidance.

LODGING a location that provides sleeping accommodations such as a hotel, motel, inn, or similar entity that furnishes lodging to the public for pay.

MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL EXPENSE means a necessary and reasonable expense incurred by a State employee while traveling on official business. This term does not apply to meals, lodging, mileage, or transportation costs.

OUT OF STATE TRAVEL means an employee travels overnight from a point of origin within Georgia to a point of destination within another state and then returns. Out-of-state travel rates are used for all travel with a destination outside the state of Georgia.

PERSONAL MOTOR VEHICLE means a motor vehicle that is owned or leased for personal use by an employee. Personal motor vehicles include automobiles, aircraft, and motorcycles.

PER DIEM ALLOWANCE refers to the maximum food allowance for which employees can be reimbursed per day. The amount is not a reimbursement of actual expenses incurred. Receipts are not required for meal per diem amounts.

POINT OF DEPARTURE means the beginning location used to calculate state-use miles traveled in a motor vehicle. Start time is defined as the point of direct departure (from Residence or Primary Workstation) to the alternate work site, and ending time is the point of direct return to his/her Residence or Primary Workstation.

PRIMARY WORKSTATION (PWS) is defined as the location a State employee is considered to report to for work and has been declared as such by the employing agency. The PWS may be the conventional worksite (agency headquarters or agency satellite location) or the alternative workplace (e.g. employee residence). The PWS shall be used for ALL required travel calculations.

RESIDENCE means the primary residence where the employee inhabits the most time, and is the legal address listed for tax returns.

ROUTE OR TERRITORY FOR TRAVEL is when an employee travels a route or territory each day, leaving from their primary residence to multiple work sites and returning to their residence at the end of the workday. They are not required to travel to a conventional worksite site during the day. The employee's primary residence is considered the employee's PWS. If such employee is required to travel to an office location for meetings or work on a periodic or infrequent basis, such office location is considered as part of his/her route/territory for the day and no commuter mileage reimbursement shall apply.

TEAMWORKS TRAVEL and EXPENSE (TTE) SYSTEM means the on-line travel and expense reporting system administered through the State Accounting Office.

TEMPORARY WORKSTATION means a temporary work site away from the Primary Workstation, including meeting sites, where your work assignment is realistically expected to last (and does last) one year or less.

TELEWORK means an employing agency under a Telework agreement has approved an eligible employee to work at an alternate workplace as defined by the Statewide Telework Policy (Refer to DOAS website).

TRAVEL ADVANCE means any payment to an employee for travel expenses made prior to the time that expenses will be incurred for a scheduled, future trip.

TRAVEL ADVANCE AUTHORIZATION FORM means the form used to document approval of cash advances by an agency head or his designee and to document receipt of the cash advance, via check, by the employee.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY (TMC) means the State's contracted travel agent.

TRAVEL EXCEPTION means written authorization for travel reimbursement of expenses generally not allowable under the Statewide Travel Regulations.

TRAVEL EXPENSES means reimbursable meal, lodging, mileage, transportation, parking, and miscellaneous expenses related to official State of Georgia business travel.

TRAVEL STATUS means an individual is working away from their Primary Workstation on official State business. Start time is defined as the point of direct departure (from Residence or Primary Workstation) to the alternate work site, and ending time is the point of direct return to their Residence or Primary Workstation.

Appendix D: Airlines

Southwest Airlines

CANCELLATIONS:

When a cancellation for a Southwest Airlines reservation is necessary, the TTE traveler must call the airline to cancel the reservation and call the TMC to report the cancellation information.

EXCHANGES:

A TTE traveler must call the TMC to use a credit for a previously cancelled Southwest Airlines reservation. Booking the flight online in TTE will not allow the options of using the airline credit.

Appendix E: Ground Transportation

Notes on Insurance

Rental Vehicle:

Adding Insurance:

Type of Rental	Loss Damage Waiver/Vehicle Protection Insurance (LDW)	Liability Insurance (LIS)
Statewide Contract Rental Car Suppliers - All Locations	No	No
Non-Contracted Rental Car Suppliers -All Locations	Yes	No

Non-Employee Passengers:

The Statewide Travel Policy indicates that non-employees, such as family members or friends, are not allowed to drive or ride in a rental car rented for the purpose of performing official State of Georgia business. However, if a State employee fails to comply with this State policy and an accident occurs, the Employee would be covered under the State Liability policy, if they were performing the official duties and functions of their employment at the time of the incident.

Injuries to any non-employees, such as family members or friends, would not be covered by any of the State insurance coverage.

Personal Vehicle:

When using your personal vehicle for the purpose of performing official State of Georgia business, the employee is covered under the State of Georgia Liability insurance.