

NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE
Policy Number 6Hx17-4.63

TITLE	OFFICIAL TRAVEL
REFERENCE	112.061 FS
HISTORY	Florida Statute 112.061 Revised 2004 Local Language Revised March 2009

Local Language

Purpose

With prior approval, Northwest Florida State College shall reimburse board members, employees, and other authorized persons, hereafter referred to as college representatives, for reasonable travel expenses incurred while traveling in the performance of their official duties. Reimbursable expenses include: transportation, lodging, meals, and related incidental costs. Reimbursements for travel funded by Federal, State, special project, or grant funds shall be made in accordance with the project budget but will not exceed the limits established within this policy.

Definitions

- A. **Common Carrier:** Train, bus, commercial airline operating scheduled flights, or rental cars of an established rental car firm.
- B. **College Representatives:** Board members, full-time and part-time employees, students, and volunteer employees registered with the Personnel Office.
- C. **In-District Travel:** Travel within Okaloosa and Walton counties.
- D. **Official Headquarters:** The city or town in which the college representative's office is located.
- E. **Travel Classes:**
 - 1. Class A travel - Continuous travel of 24 hours or more away from official headquarters.
 - 2. Class B travel - Continuous travel of less than 24 hours which involves overnight absence from official headquarters.

3. Class C travel – Travel for short or day trips out-of-district where the traveler is not away from his/her official headquarters overnight.

F. **Travel Day:** A period of 24 hours consisting of four 6-hour quarters.

G. **Travel Period:** A period of time between the time of departure and time of return.

Authority for Travel

Authorization for official travel by college representatives, when necessary for the effective operation and management of the College's educational programs and services, is at the discretion of the President.

- A. Advance written approval must be obtained for travel outside the district and for attendance at conferences within the district. Traveling without proper authorization may result in the traveler losing contract rights, contract related insurance coverage and retirement benefits, and assuming the costs incurred in connection with the travel.
- B. Travel reservations, prepayment of registration fees, and the distribution of allowable subsistence advances will not occur without a properly completed and approved travel authorization form.

Allowable Transportation Expenses

A. Travel within and outside the district

1. Approved travel within the district by college representatives shall be conducted in College vehicles, if available; otherwise private vehicles may be used.
2. Approved travel outside the district, including out-of-state, shall be by common carrier, college vehicle, or private vehicle (including aircraft), depending on the nature and location of the temporary duty assignment. The acceptable routing and mode of travel for any authorized trip shall be that which is determined by the President, or appointed designee, to be the most efficient and economical means to meet the essential needs of the college representative in performing official duties.

3. College representatives using NWFSC vehicles in the performance of their official duties are required to possess a valid driver's license, including a commercial driver's license (CDL) when required by law. College vehicles are to be operated in a safe and lawful manner. Traffic or parking violations incurred while driving a College vehicle are the responsibility of the operator and will not be paid or reimbursed by the College.
 - (a) Authority to operate a College vehicle is limited to college representatives other than students.
 - (b) Authority to travel in a College vehicle is limited to College representatives, similar individuals from other Florida Community Colleges, and visitors having business with the College.
4. When travel is by College vehicle, a College credit card shall be used, wherever possible, for the purchase of gasoline and emergency road service. Credit cards can be obtained from the Physical Plant Department when signing out a vehicle. Use of College credit cards shall be restricted to expenditures incurred in the operation of OWC owned or leased vehicles. Any out-of-pocket expenses directly related to the operation of a college vehicle (except as noted in 3. above) may be reimbursed provided they are substantiated by appropriate receipts.
5. Joint travel in a single vehicle is required (except as noted in subsection C.3. below), whenever feasible, by college representatives attending the same function and for which a travel reimbursement request will be submitted.
6. All travel must be by a usually traveled route. Individuals that travel by an indirect route for personal convenience shall be responsible for any additional costs. Reimbursement for expenses will be based on usually traveled routes.
7. Costs for travel of individuals, i.e., family, guests, accompanying college representatives on approved travel are not reimbursable.

B. Common Carrier

1. Travel by air, rail, bus, or other common carrier shall ordinarily be at the lowest discounted rate for the chosen mode of transportation.

Reimbursement, however, shall not exceed the cost of discounted coach air fare.

2. Tickets for common carrier transportation may be charged directly to NWFSC through the College's contracted travel agent. A list of those employees authorized to make reservations and secure common carrier tickets is maintained and available in the Purchasing Department.

College representatives shall be personally liable for any charges assessed for unused travel reservations that are not released within the time limits specified by carriers unless the circumstances were beyond their control.

3. Expenses claimed under this section, whether paid directly by the College or claimed for reimbursement, must be supported by a ticket stub, receipt, or similar evidence of expense.

C. Travel by Private Aircraft

1. Travel in a private aircraft must be approved in advance by the College President.
2. Aircraft must be leased/rented in the name of the College.
3. College representatives who intend to pilot a private aircraft while on College business must attach to their Travel Request form documentation that they are a certified pilot and show proof of insurance.
4. Traveling as a passenger on a private aircraft when two or more employees are traveling to the same destination is optional.
5. Reimbursement for use of a private aircraft shall not exceed the lesser of round trip discounted coach air fare or the cost of the most economical means of traveling to a destination.

Employees traveling in a private aircraft should note that the Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD & D) insurance policy provided by the College specifically excludes this activity from coverage. In the case of an accident, double indemnity loss benefits would not be paid. AD & D insurance is different from the college provided life insurance policy which would continue to cover an employee traveling in a private aircraft. Loss benefits would be paid in accordance with the terms of the life policy.

D. Travel by Privately Owned Vehicles

1. College representatives shall be reimbursed at a rate established by Florida Statute and/or State Board Rules for use of a privately-owned vehicle in conducting College business. No reimbursement is allowed for commuting to and from one's official headquarters.
2. Board members may be reimbursed for mileage to and from official board meetings FS 1001.41
3. All mileage shall be computed from point of origin to point of destination using an Official State mileage chart or equivalent valid source of documented mileage as determined by the Office of the Associate Vice President for Business Services.
4. A "closed loop" routing concept shall be used in computing in-district travel mileage. If a portion of the loop would constitute a person's normal travel to or from work, or be in lieu of normal travel to work, that portion of the mileage which is the normal distance to the official headquarters shall be subtracted from reimbursable mileage.
5. Mileage is payable to only one of two or more college representatives traveling in the same vehicle. **Travel expense vouchers shall indicate the names of the persons traveling together.**
6. In the case of out of district travel, reimbursement for use of a privately owned vehicle shall not exceed round trip discounted coach air fare.
7. One way distances for travel between College locations have been established. as follows:

Locations	<u>Miles</u>
Niceville Campus - Fort Walton Beach	14
Niceville Campus - DeFuniak Springs	34
Niceville Campus - Eglin AFB	8
Niceville Campus - Hurlburt Field	20
DeFuniak Springs - Fort Walton Beach	47
Eglin AFB - Hurlburt Field	12
Eglin AFB - Fort Walton Beach	10
Hurlburt Field - Fort Walton Beach	5
Niceville Campus – Crestview Center	23
Niceville Campus – South Walton Center	28
Fort Walton Beach Campus – South Walton Center	33

8. Personal vehicle mileage will not be reimbursed if the employee does not carry motor vehicle liability insurance pursuant to the Florida Statutes.

D. Car Rentals

The State of Florida annually negotiates a contract for rental vehicles. The purpose of this contract is to provide maximum economies in the rental of automobiles for official business. All rentals must be made under the terms, prices, and conditions of this contract. Rental reservations with the state contract vendor may be made through the College's contracted travel agent. In addition, the College has been issued special credit cards that are to be used when executing a rental agreement. A credit card should be obtained from the Business Office prior to leaving for a temporary duty assignment that involves a rental car. Specific provisions and requirements of the State contract are identified below.

1. **Class B** - Compact vehicles are to be used except when the number of passengers or the amount of materials being transported make use of a compact vehicle impractical. Request rental vehicles by class and not by make or model. This provision does not preclude the acceptance of a vehicle class upgrade offered by the rental company due to a shortage of Class B vehicles. The upgrade must, however, be at the Class B rate.
2. Rental rates for all classes of vehicles rented in Florida and out-of-state rentals DO NOT include gasoline. To obtain reimbursement for fuel purchased for rental vehicles provided by the contract vendor, submit fuel purchase with travel reimbursement request.
3. Drop-off charges may apply in Florida between cities. Check with vendor for approval and rate. Drop-off charges DO apply to out-of-state rentals.
4. Insurance coverage for bodily injury and property damage is provided. The contract vendor assumes all fire, accident, and collision losses. Payment of the Collision Damage Waiver (C.D.W.) or Loss Damage Waiver (L.D.W.) fee is not authorized and will not be reimbursed. NOTE: Collision damage is assumed by the vendor for business rental only. If vendor allows personal use of vehicles at state rates, collision damage coverage will not be included in the rate. Accidents involving a rental vehicle shall be reported promptly.
5. Payment for Personal Accident Insurance (P.A.I.) coverage is not authorized as a College expense and will not be

reimbursed. College representatives may purchase this coverage at their own expense.

6. The contract vendor issued credit card is the only acceptable method of payment that will ensure that state rates will be applied to the rental.
7. The state contract does not prohibit the use of rental vehicles that have lower net rates INCLUDING primary insurance coverage, payment of collision damage waiver fee, cost of fuel, or when the contract vendor cannot provide vehicles. Collision damage insurance should **NOT** be purchased if a vehicle is rented from other than the contract vendor in these specific situations. The College's consortium insurance policy provides this coverage.
8. Reimbursement requests for rentals companies other than the contract vendor must clearly specify: "Vehicle with lower net rate rented," or "Vehicle not available from contract vendor."
9. The contract is designed to provide low cost transportation on trips which originate at airport locations and which have an average length of approximately 85 miles per day. The contract is not designed to provide vehicles for state-wide travel, but may be used for state wide travel.
10. Under the provisions of Administrative Rule 138.12(1), all occupants of state rented vehicles are required to utilize the seat belts or occupant restraint system provided. Failure to utilize seat belts or occupant restraint system shall be considered improper use of a vehicle and shall subject employees to disciplinary action. If an accident resulting in injury to a College representative occurs and the representative is not utilizing the seat belts or occupant restraint system provided, and the failure to use these systems contributes to injuries received, worker's compensation benefits may be reduced under the provisions of Section 440.09(4), Florida Statutes.
11. Promotional gifts, rebates, and coupons received by College representatives from rental vehicle companies are considered College property.

E. Miscellaneous Transportation Expenses

1. Reimbursement may be claimed for boat, ferry, and taxi fares; bridge, road, and tunnel tolls; and parking fees. When such expenses exceed one dollar, they must be substantiated by appropriate receipts.

2. Travel to and from an airport shall be done using the most economical and practical mode of transportation.

Allowable Living and Subsistence Expenses

Allowable living and subsistence expenses consist of those direct expenditures made by an employee in meeting necessary and reasonable existence needs while traveling on college business. These expenses will be reimbursed subject to the limitations described in this section. Non-business expenses will not be reimbursed.

A. Class A and Class B travel

1. A college representative traveling on official college business involving an overnight absence shall be reimbursed for subsistence in either of the following, for each day of such travel, at the option of the traveler:
 - (a) Per Diem shall be reimbursed for each quarter, or fraction thereof, of the travel day included in the travel period.
 - (b) Lodging expenses claimed under (b), above, must be supported by receipts. Meals will be reimbursed at the per diem flat rate. No receipts are required for meals.

B. Class C Travel

1. A college representative traveling out-of-district on official college business not involving an overnight absence shall be reimbursed for meals at a flat rate. No receipts are required for meals.
2. Monies appropriated from the State Treasury may not be used to pay meals for Class C travel.
 - a. Faculty and staff travel associated with athletics will be reimbursed for meals with Raider Club funds.
 - b. Faculty and staff travel associated with the Arts Center will be reimbursed for meals with Foundation contributed funds.
 - c. All other faculty and staff will be reimbursed for meals with other non-appropriated funds.

C. Miscellaneous Living and Subsistence Expenses

1. Expenses incurred for storage of baggage, telephone calls on official College business, rental of equipment or temporary meeting facilities necessary to conduct official College business, and special purchases essential for the fulfillment of the travel or work assignment are reimbursable.
2. Miscellaneous expenses shall be itemized separately on the travel expense voucher and must be supported by appropriate receipts.

D. Prohibitions

1. No reimbursement shall be made for meals when travel is within the College district or within thirty miles of the College representative's residence except when a meal is an integral part of the meeting or conference activity.
2. No reimbursement shall be made for the cost of entertainment or alcoholic beverages.
3. No reimbursement shall be claimed for meals or lodging expenses included in a conference or meeting registration fee.

Registration Fees

- A. Expenses incurred for registration fees shall be reimbursed.
- B. Actual and necessary fees for attending events which are not included in a basic registration fee that directly enhance the purpose of the participation in the conference or meeting may be reimbursed. Such expenses may include, but are not limited to, banquets and other meal functions. It shall be the responsibility of the traveler to substantiate that the charges were proper and necessary.

Advance and Direct Payment of Travel Expenses

- A. Travel and related expenses shall generally be handled on a reimbursement basis. Registration fees and common carrier transportation charges may, however, be prepaid by the College. Car rental fees, as previously outlined in Allowable Transportation Expenses - Section D., may be charged on a College credit card.
- B. It is suggested that College representatives involved in authorized travel make use of personal credit cards and submit a travel reimbursement request form with required receipts for reimbursement. Travel

expenditures may not be charged directly to the College except as noted in A., above.

- C. Employees who would experience a financial hardship as a result of College requested/required travel, may request a travel advance equal to 70 percent of estimated meal, lodging, and personal vehicle mileage expenses. Travel advance requests require the approval of the Vice President for Administrative Services.

Travel Authorization, Travel Advances, and Reimbursement Requests

- A. College representatives shall utilize the appropriate travel related forms developed for implementing this policy. Travel reimbursement requests should be submitted within seven working days following the temporary duty assignment. In-district mileage reimbursement requests for employees whose assignments require frequent travel should be submitted within seven working days following the month in which the travel took place and no later than sixty (60) days to comply with IRS accountable reimbursement plan rules.
- B. Travel reimbursements shall be on a tax-exempt basis insofar as allowable by law. Florida Statutes prohibit payment of tax charges. If taxes are assessed, they become the obligation of the traveler except for tax on airline tickets as required by law and situations where service providers will not honor the College's Tax Exemption Certificate; e.g., hotels, restaurants, car rental companies. When making travel reservations, travelers should inquire whether the College's Tax Exempt Certificate will be honored. Hotel reservations may be handled through the purchasing department to ensure tax exempt status for in-state travel.
- C. Mutual resolution of any special conditions or circumstances not provided for in this policy, shall be resolved by the traveler involved, the appropriate vice president/provost/dean, the Associate Vice President for Business Services, and forwarded to the President for approval. A concept of least cost to the College yet fairness to the traveler shall prevail as the guideline in making judgments regarding authorized travel and reimbursements.
- D. Inclusion of unofficial, improper, or nonessential travel expenses in reimbursement requests shall subject the traveler to refusal of reimbursement and appropriate disciplinary action.

Student Travel Provisions

- A. Students approved for travel to represent the College at functions such as student activity and organization meetings and athletic events shall be

governed by the terms of this policy except as noted below. The College reserves the right to further limit and restrict students from incurring any expenses, provided for in this policy, deemed nonessential to fulfilling the purpose of the travel.

- B. Subsistence allowances for students approved for travel will be determined on an event by event basis by the College to provide greater opportunity for student travel within the budgetary constraints established for such activities.
- C. Travel advances for student travel will be disbursed to the faculty/staff advisor traveling with the student group who will be responsible for paying all expenses, except meals, not prepaid by the College. A travel advance equal to 100 percent of the estimated expenses including meals, lodging, entrance fees, and other reasonable incidental costs may be requested.

The advisor will disburse meal funds to the student travelers. Each student must acknowledge the receipt of these funds in writing. Students will be responsible for paying all meal costs utilizing the funds provided. Additional meal expenses beyond those that have been provided for become the responsibility of the student. In situations where it is more cost effective for the College, the advisor may pay for a group meal in lieu of disbursing funds to students. The total cost of that meal together with the amounts disbursed for that day's other meals may not exceed the approved daily subsistence allowance rate or the statutory daily meal reimbursement limit. Each student must acknowledge in writing the receipt of a meal in lieu of meal funds. The advisor must submit a receipt for the group meal.

Travel advances should be reconciled within seven days following the trip including the return of any unused funds. The Travel Reimbursement Form shall be used for this purpose and be supported by detailed receipts and, when appropriate, subsistence allowance acknowledgement forms.

- D. Students under the age of 18 must provide the advisor with a written document signed by a parent or guardian granting permission for the student to travel with the student group.