

Policy: **Travel Authorization & Reimbursement**  
Responsible for Policy: Administration & Finance

Policy Number: **G-16**  
Most recent approval date: July 2015

### **Policy Statement**

Except as otherwise provided in this policy, Finger Lakes Community College will reimburse the employee for authorized travel expenses as and to the extent provided in this policy.

Finger Lakes Community College employees are required to obtain administrative approval in advance of all College-related travel. The College shall fund travel expenses necessarily incurred by College personnel in the course of their work-related responsibilities, subject to and in compliance with applicable laws and college policies.

### **Reason for Policy**

This policy is intended to furnish College employees with guidelines regarding the authorization and subsequent reimbursement of necessary travel expenses incurred in the pursuit of official College business. Prior approval in advance of all travel establishes work status of staff when away from the campus. Such prior approval will avoid jeopardizing various protections available to employees on official work status.

### **Applicability of the Policy**

This policy applies to all College employees and members of authorized College boards and committees.

### **Definitions**

Employee - an employee or trustee of Finger Lakes Community College, or a member of an authorized Finger Lakes Community College board or committee.

### **Related Documents**

- FLCC Employee Handbook
- FLCC Faculty Manual

### **Review date/action taken (requires Board of Trustees approval):**

- May 2010: original approval date
- September 2012: revisions to policy
- July 2015: no revisions

## **Procedures**

### Responsibility for Expenditures - General

1. Approved travel authorization is required for travel to conventions, conferences, student field trips, travel courses, etc. A travel authorization form must be prepared in advance and signed by the required authorizing officials. This form should be matched with related vouchers; otherwise, expenses incurred will not be reimbursed.
2. An approved blanket travel authorization is required for routine fieldwork within the boundaries of Ontario County and other contiguous counties.
- ~~3.~~ The selected means of transportation (air, train, auto rental) shall be arranged by the authorized traveler.
4. Travel advances are available where out-of-pocket expense creates a hardship or when it is simply warranted. To avoid the need for substantial advances, the Controller's Office will make every effort to prepay conference expenses in advance by voucher. Please contact the Controller for assistance.

Travel advances must be settled within 10 days after the employee returns. Additional advances will not be approved when prior outstanding advances exceed the ten-day rule.

Advance registration fees can be arranged by Administration & Finance when a signed, approved claim is received by the Controller. A minimum of 30 day notice is required. Please contact the Controller for assistance.

5. Only those expenses which are actual, necessary and reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. Personal expenses that do not fall into these categories will not be reimbursed. Expenditures such as laundry, entertainment, repairs to personal vehicles, and bar/lounge bills are not reimbursable.
6. Travel by common carrier is the preferred mode of transportation. Air travel should be by coach or tourist accommodation.
7. Use of a privately-owned vehicle for travel is authorized when the conditions of the travel make it more economical or equal to the cost of a common carrier or rental car usage. All such travel will be reimbursed at the prevailing mileage rate. Anticipated mileage costs should be included in the total amount requested on the travel authorization form.
8. Only original receipt documentation that supports evidence of an actual reimbursable expense will be accepted for reimbursement. Photocopies of receipts, signed credit/debit card advices and slips, and monthly card statements will not be accepted in support of claims for reimbursement except for EZ Pass, tolls or similar expenses.

### Travel Authorization Form - Approval Requirements

1. A completed travel authorization form must be completed in advance of travel by the employee. The maximum amount requested should reflect all expenses expected to be incurred and paid by the College. Expenses accrued prior to obtaining the required approvals may be deemed as unauthorized expenses.
2. In general, travel authorization requests must be approved by the appropriate department chairperson, department head or Associate Vice President, as well as the appropriate Vice President. For grant-funded requests only, requests must be approved by the department chairperson/head, the Academic Affairs Office, the Grants Officer and the Vice President for Administration.
- ~~3.~~ An original and one copy of the approved/signed travel authorization form must be forwarded to the Controller for verification and encumbering of funds pending receipt of proper verification, one copy of the request will be returned to the requesting department.
4. If authorized travel is postponed the employee must notify the Controller so that the funds may be unencumbered.

5. If additional costs are discovered prior to departure, the employee should submit a second authorization for travel expenses form marked "supplemental" to the Controller through the proper channels for the additional amount required.

### Reimbursable Travel Expenses

#### Lodging

Rates for lodging must be actual expenses that are supported by receipts specifying dates and rates. If lodging is within New York State, the employee must present a tax exemption certificate when registering at the motel/hotel. If the certificate is not presented and the motel/hotel applies sales tax to the room charge, the tax will not be reimbursed. Lodging within Ontario County and contiguous counties is not an ordinary and necessary expense and will not be reimbursed except under emergency conditions. Approvals for reimbursement under emergency situations must be submitted and approved by the College President.

#### Meals

Separate per diem reimbursement rates for breakfast, lunch and dinner are as follows effective January 2010:

Breakfast: \$ 8.50

Lunch: \$ 11.50

Dinner: \$ 22.00

All meal rates are inclusive and of gratuity and applicable taxes. Meal receipts are required when claiming reimbursement for individual meals. A meal per diem of \$42.00 per day or \$46.00 in larger cities (effective January 2010) may be claimed to cover meals taken within a 24-hour period. Meal receipts are not required to claim the per diem.

Employees are not required to furnish receipts for meals claimed under the per diem meal allowance provision. If lodging, registration, or other items of expense include meals, they cannot be claimed again as a per diem allowance.

Meals will be reimbursed on the date of departure if departure occurs before 7 a.m. (breakfast), before 11:30 a.m. (lunch) or before 6 p.m. (dinner). Meals will be reimbursed on the date of return if return occurs after 8 a.m. (breakfast), after 2 p.m. (lunch), or after 7 p.m. (dinner).

When multiple meals are purchased by a single individual, the name of all individuals and purpose of the expense must be documented on the voucher in order to authorize payment.

#### Gratuities

Hotel gratuities on the date of arrival and the date of departure are reimbursable at a fixed allowable rate established by the Controller. Gratuities for meals are reimbursable as part of the per diem meal allowance specified above and will not be reimbursed separately.

#### Telephone/Facsimile Transmission Expense

Long distance telephone calls directly related to official college business will be reimbursed if a statement is provided that includes specific date(s) and who the telephone call is from/to. Local calls will require the date(s) when calls are made. Fax charges relating to official business will be reimbursed if a statement is provided that includes the specific date and recipient name/address. Reimbursement for personal telephone calls is authorized up to a maximum of \$5.00 per day.

#### Transportation and Related Expenses

Travel must always be by the most direct route and any other travel will be at the expense of the employee.

Lodging may qualify for reimbursement if the conference is a minimum of 35 miles from the traveler's home or campus; whichever is closest to the conference site.

Travel reimbursement for individuals, including spouses, not employed by the college shall not be authorized. Lodging expenses shared by a college employee, accompanying spouse or significant other will be reimbursed at half the actual expense or at the single rate, whichever can be determined by examination of the bill.

Mileage will be paid at the rate as established by the Internal Revenue Service from time to time, and only those miles traveled that are documented as actual, necessary and reasonable will be allowed for purposes of reimbursement.

When two or more employees travel in a privately-owned vehicle, the claim for reimbursement must list the names of those traveling in the vehicle. Reimbursement will be made only to the vehicle owner. An automobile liability insurance policy covering the privately-owned vehicle must be in force when using said vehicle on College business. The policy should provide minimum bodily injury limits of at least \$250,000 for each person, \$10,000 for each accident, and property damage liability limit of \$25,000. Other transportation-related expenses, such as parking fees, tolls, taxis and buses, will be reimbursed provided that a properly documented receipt is submitted with the claim voucher.

Miscellaneous Expense

Miscellaneous charges, such as supplies in conjunction with a school program or seminar, may be claimed provided that itemized receipts are attached to the claim voucher.

**Forms/Online Resources**

- Authorization for Travel Expenses form
- Expense Voucher
- Daily Mileage Sheet
- Per Diem Meal Allowance Request form
- FLCC Tax Exemption Certificate

**Appendix**

- None

**Review date/action taken:**

- May 2010: original effective date
- September 2012: revisions to procedures
- July 2015: no revisions