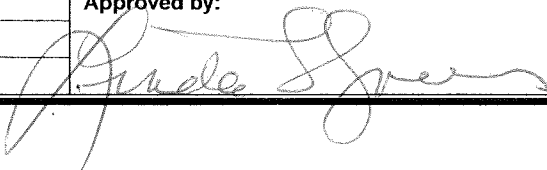


DCF	COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS ~ DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	
	Policy Name: Travel Reimbursement Documentation, Submission, and Approval Policy	
	Policy #: 17 DAF 004	Approved by: 
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Travel Reimbursement Documentation, Submission, and Approval Policy

Table of Contents

I. Purpose and Overview	2
II. Policy: Reimbursable Expenditure	2
A. Private Vehicle	2
B. Rail, Bus, Boat or Subway	3
C. Parking and Tolls	3
III. Documentation	3
• Mileage	3
• Rail, Bus, Boat or Subway	3
• Parking and Tolls	4
IV: Methods of Obtaining Travel Reimbursement	4
A. Electronic Travel Voucher	4
B. Paper Payment Voucher (PV)	5
V. Travel Voucher and Approval Process	5
VI. Program Integrity	5
A. Outlier Review	5
B. Area Office Periodic Review	5
C. Internal Audit	5
Appendix A – Approval Flow	6
Appendix B – Time Frames for Submission of Travel Vouchers	7

I. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

Department of Children and Families employees are reimbursed for travel expenses they incur in the performance of their official duties, as long as these expenses are properly authorized and documented. Travel may be necessary to attend meetings or trainings, to transport clients, to visit families in their homes or children in out-of-home placements or to appear in court.

The policy governing eligible expenditures is contained in the relevant collective bargaining agreements and the "Rules Governing Paid Leave and Other Benefits for Managers and Confidential Employees" (often referred to as "The Redbook"). This policy defines the responsibility of staff, supervisors and managers in documenting, submitting, and approving travel expenses to obtain reimbursement. The policy also defines acceptable documentation for allowable travel expenses.

The funds for travel reimbursement are allotted to each Area, Regional and Central Office unit. These units are responsible for appropriate management of these funds.

II. POLICY: REIMBURSABLE EXPENDITURES

To be eligible for reimbursement, all expenses must be submitted within one calendar year of the date they were incurred (unless the applicable bargaining unit agreement says otherwise). Expenditures submitted for reimbursement greater than one year old will not be reimbursed. To ensure timely reimbursement, it is recommended that employees submit reimbursement within the state fiscal year accounts payable timeframe applicable to when the travel occurred.

A. Private Vehicle

Department of Children and Families employees are reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in the operation of a motor vehicle owned or used by them in the performance of their official duties. State-provided cars (rental or other) are not eligible for mileage reimbursement.

The rate of reimbursement cannot exceed the rate authorized by the Legislature or the rate agreed to within the applicable collective bargaining agreement/Redbook, whichever applies. In addition, SEIU and NAGE employees are eligible for an additional car allowance (travel bonus).

Every employee is assigned a permanent work location. Travel of any kind between an employee's home and permanently assigned place of work is not reimbursable.

In the event that an employee travels to/from their home to a temporary assignment, rather than to their permanently assigned place of work, reimbursement is allowed. The reimbursement is allowed to/from their home to the place of temporary assignment, or from their permanently assigned place of work to the place of temporary assignment, **whichever is less**.

A "temporary assignment" is a place to which the employee must travel in order to accomplish their official duties.

Temporary assignments may include:

- Home visits
- School or placement visits
- Court appearances
- Meetings outside of the employee's permanent work location
- Approved trainings
- New Social Worker professional development program trainings

Staff assigned to work after-hours from their home (e.g., emergency response workers, staff called back to work, etc.) who travel to/from an assignment from their home may submit for reimbursement without applying the "lesser than" provision of their daytime permanently assigned place of work.

It is recommended that beginning and ending odometer readings be documented on the request for reimbursement. However, the total number of miles to be reimbursed must not exceed the allowable miles between the 2 points of travel as calculated in the official Milo Mileage Guide or an established web-based service (for example, MapQuest or Google Maps), give or take a reasonable variance for detours or traffic. If the variance is more than 6 miles, staff must document the cause of the variance on the travel voucher.

B. Rail, Bus, Boat or Subway

An employee may also be reimbursed for travel to a temporary assignment (see above) in which paid public transportation is used. Receipts for train, bus, commuter boat or subway should be obtained where possible. The Department will not reimburse staff for use of their MBTA, commuter rail or commuter boat passes/fares—even if the passes are used for work-related travel—as the passes are purchased primarily for commuting to and from work, which is a non-reimbursable expense.

C. Parking and Tolls

Parking and toll charges are reimbursable if they are incurred in the performance of the employee's official duties. Copies of receipts for these charges must be submitted to obtain reimbursement. A printout from EZ Pass or other similar type program that shows payment of tolls is permitted. Likewise, travel expenses incurred by the employee associated with a Department-paid rental car (e.g., gas, parking, etc.) are reimbursable (see Rental Car Policy). Copies of receipts for these charges must be submitted to obtain reimbursement.

III. DOCUMENTATION

All reimbursement for travel must be properly documented by the employee for audit purposes. Any reimbursement not properly documented may be subject to denial or repayment.

Examples of proper documentation include:

- **Mileage** – sufficiently detailed description of travel starting location, interim destination(s) and final destination must be documented on an electronic travel voucher or paper payment voucher. Street addresses must be used for non-Department office locations [e.g., (##) Main Street, Town]. Where available, staff must use the "From and To" section of the electronic travel voucher to document the travel destinations. In addition, supporting documentation must be noted in work related documents. For Social Workers, supporting documentation must be noted in consumer dictation notes, where applicable. If supporting documentation cannot be included in consumer dictation notes and no other work related documents exist to support the travel, staff must provide a sufficient description within the "Travel Description" field of the electronic travel voucher. For non-social workers, supporting documentation may include Outlook calendars, personal appointment books, Court Case Dates/Actions/Results screen, etc. Supporting documentation outside of the electronic data system must be maintained by the employee for a period of 7 years after reimbursement for audit purposes. (Staff should be able to independently document where they travelled).
- **Rail, Bus, Boat or Subway** – receipts, either the original hard copy or an electronic copy of the original, must be maintained by the employee for a period of 7 years after reimbursement for audit purposes. Where functionality exists to do so, receipts or supporting documentation must be electronically scanned and uploaded into the relevant electronic travel voucher. Uploading a legible version of the document into the relevant electronic voucher is considered as meeting the 7 year retention requirement. Where such functionality is not available to the employee, it is recommended the receipts or supporting documentation be either stapled to a printed copy of the voucher or scanned and saved in the employee's personal drive. Acceptable receipts include original paper receipts, printouts of scanned/pdf receipts, copies of electronic statements, cancelled checks, bank/credit card statements, or any other verifiable documentation.

In the event receipts are not obtainable by the employee (e.g., employee uses a pre-paid Charlie Card to purchase a subway ride), the employee must document date of travel, "from and to" location(s), why the trip was work-related (if not obvious) and cost of the trip, and keep this travel log

for a period of 7 years after reimbursement. Where functionality exists to do so, this documentation must be electronically scanned and uploaded to into the relevant electronic travel voucher. Uploading a legible version of the document into the relevant electronic voucher is considered as meeting the 7 year retention requirement. Employees using paper payment vouchers (PVs) must submit this documentation with their PV (and can use the fields on the PV itself to do so).

- **Parking and Tolls** – receipts, either the original hard copy or electronic copy of the original, must be maintained by the employee for a period of 7 years after reimbursement for audit purposes. Where functionality exists to do so, receipts or supporting documentation must be electronically scanned and uploaded into the relevant electronic travel voucher. Uploading a legible version of the document into the relevant electronic voucher is considered as meeting the 7 year retention requirement. Where such functionality is not available to the employee, it is recommended that receipts be either stapled to a printed copy of the electronic voucher or scanned and saved in the employee's personal drive. Acceptable receipts include original paper receipts, printouts of scanned/pdf receipts, copies of electronic statements (such as EZ Pass monthly statement), cancelled checks, bank/credit card statements or any other verifiable documentation.

In the event receipts are not obtainable by the employee (e.g., parking meter), the employee must document date of travel, "to and from" location(s) for the toll or parking address, why the trip was work-related (if not obvious) and the cost, and keep this travel log for a period of 7 years after reimbursement. Where functionality exists to do so, this documentation must be electronically scanned and uploaded into the relevant electronic travel voucher. Uploading a legible version of the document into the relevant electronic voucher is considered as meeting the 7 year retention requirement. Employees using paper payment vouchers (PV) must submit this documentation with their PV (and can use the fields on the PV itself to do so).

Employees are responsible for maintaining documentation within requisite timeframes even if their employment with the Department is terminated. Documents scanned and uploaded into the electronic payment voucher will be considered as meeting this requirement.

IV. METHODS OF OBTAINING TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

A. Electronic Travel Voucher

All staff that has access to the electronic travel voucher must use the electronic travel voucher to submit travel except for circumstances which are noted in this policy. The electronic travel voucher is completed online by the employee. The employee must fill in the date of travel, the place where the travel started and the destination(s), and the reason for travel. At a minimum, the employee must enter total miles traveled. Odometer readings are recommended but not required.

If travel is from the office to a home visit it would be acceptable to write "Office to [##] Main St. to Office" and the reason for travel would be listed as "Home Visit".

If the electronic travel voucher includes charges for parking and/or tolls, documentation must be maintained for potential review by the approving supervisor and/or by the Area Administrative Manager, Regional Administrative Manager or Central Office Audit staff (see Section III above).

When complete, the employee forwards the electronic travel voucher for approval. By sending the voucher for approval, the employee is verifying the following traveler's certification, which is part of the printed payment vouchers:

"I hereby certify under penalty of perjury that the below amounts as itemized are true and correct, were incurred by me during necessary travel in the service of the Commonwealth and conform fully with travel rules and regulations."

Out-of-state travel to contiguous states (i.e., NH, VT, NY, CT, and RI) may be submitted for reimbursement using an electronic travel voucher provided a Travel Authorization Form (TAF) number is obtained **prior** to travel and included in the travel description of the electronic travel voucher. **All other out-of-state travel** must be submitted for reimbursement on a paper Payment Voucher (see Section IV-B

below). A TAF form must be completed and approved **prior** to traveling to the non-contiguous state(s). Staff working after-hours where out-of-state travel is required must obtain the requisite TAF number/complete the form as applicable by the close of the next business day.

B. Paper Payment Voucher (PV)

The regulations and information requirements for the paper Payment Voucher (PV) are the same as those for the electronic travel voucher. Copies of all relevant receipts/documentation must be submitted with the paper PV. A copy of the submission should be maintained by the employee for their personal records.

To obtain reimbursement for travel, employees who do not have access to the electronic travel voucher must complete a paper PV and submit the completed form to the approving authority.

As noted in Section IV-A above, all out-of-state travel to non-contiguous states must be submitted for reimbursement on a paper Payment Voucher, and a Travel Authorization Form (TAF) must be completed and approved **prior** to traveling the non-contiguous state(s).

Paper Payment Vouchers are also required for employees to obtain reimbursement for:

- Other expenses (with approved Employee Reimbursement form attached)
- Social Worker damage or theft claims
- Tuition
- Travel submitted after staff termination (because such staff can no longer access the electronic data system)

V. TRAVEL VOUCHER REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

The employee should carefully review their completed travel voucher (electronic or paper version) before sending it for approval. As previously stated, sending the travel voucher for approval indicates that the employee is verifying the traveler's certification (see Section IV-A above and paper Payment Voucher).

The first level of approval **certifies** that the travel expenses were incurred as part of the employee's official duties and that these expenses are appropriate to the employee's itinerary. For example, the first level approver must verify that the employee was not out on a sick, personal or vacation day on any day that travel reimbursement is claimed. The first level approver should verify that the employee has filled in the date of travel, the place where the travel started and the destination(s), the reason for travel and total miles traveled if appropriate. If reimbursement for parking or tolls is included in the voucher, this approval level verifies that employee understands they are responsible for maintaining appropriate documentation. The first level approver should review such documentation as needed to ascertain that vouchers are being completed accurately.

The second level of approval certifies that the approver has reviewed the travel voucher and it is filled out correctly and conforms to the travel voucher completion procedures. If there appear to be any inaccuracies, the form will be directed back to the first approver for correction.

The last approval is by the Central Office Bill Paying Unit who will verify that sufficient funds are available to reimburse the employee and process the travel voucher.

VI. PROGRAM INTEGRITY

A. Outlier Review

All approvers (first level and second level) should closely review travel vouchers with any outlier amounts/mileage/receipts to ensure compliance with policy and follow-up with employees as needed.

B. Area Office Periodic Review

On a periodic basis, second level approvers in Area Offices will conduct a formal random sample review of travel submissions. This review will require employees to produce all relevant documentation to support the selected travel reimbursement submission. Management reserves the right to select

additional travel reimbursement submissions for further review. Failure to produce appropriate documentation may result in corrective actions such as training, repayment and/or disciplinary action.

C. Internal Audit

The Department's Program Integrity Unit will conduct periodic formal state-wide internal audits of travel reimbursement.

Appendix A

Approval Flow

Levels of Review and Approval

Traveler	1st Level Approver	2nd Level Approver
Social Worker	Supervisor	Area Administrative Manager
Supervisor	Area Program Manager or Area Clinical Manager	Area Administrative Manager
Area Program Manager	Area Clinical Manager or Area Director	Area Administrative Manager
Area Clinical Manager	Area Director	Area Administrative Manager
Area Administrative Manager	Area Director	Area Administrative Manager
Clerical/Other	Supervisor	Area Administrative Manager
Area Director	Regional Director	Regional Administrative Manager
Regional Staff	Regional Clinical Manager or Regional Administrative Manager	Regional Administrative Manager
Regional Clinical Manager	Regional Director	Regional Administrative Manager
Regional Administrative Manager	Regional Director	Regional Administrative Manager
Regional Director	Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations	N/A
Attorney	Deputy Regional Counsel	N/A
Deputy Regional Counsel	Regional Counsel	N/A
Regional Counsel	General Counsel	N/A
Executive Staff	Commissioner	N/A
Other Central Office Staff	Supervisor	N/A

Document Flow



Appendix B

Time Frames for Submission of Travel Vouchers

Staff who travel frequently as part of their job duties are strongly encouraged to submit travel vouchers on a monthly basis. This will ensure the following:

- Timely reimbursements to the employee
- Receipt of travel bonus for timely submission, if applicable
- Adequate tracking of expenditures
- Payments received during appropriate fiscal year

Deadlines for eligibility of car allowances (travel bonuses) are established by the Central Office Bill Paying Unit and are sent to employees on a quarterly basis. Failure to adhere to the deadlines will cause a delay in receiving allowances and may make the employee ineligible for the allowance.

Travel vouchers (electronic or paper versions) for the last month of the fiscal year (June) must be submitted no later than the last business day in July in order to be processed during the state fiscal year accounts payable period that ends in August. Failure to submit before the accounts payable period ends will result in reimbursement delays. Depending on the availability of funds within future state fiscal years, the delay could last several months to several years.