

STATE JOINT TRAVEL REGULATIONS

JUDICIAL BRANCH TRAVEL POLICY

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Who is covered by the Judicial Branch Travel Policy?

The Judicial Branch Travel Policy is applicable to judges, officials, employees and non-employees of the Maryland Judiciary, and employees of a Judicial Unit.

2. Are there any exceptions as to whom is covered by the policy?

Yes. Judges of the Orphans' Court are only reimbursed for costs incurred to attend mandatory training and conferences.

3. When do I get reimbursed for Mileage?

You will be reimbursed for miles in excess of your regular Commute Miles driven with your privately-owned vehicle while in Travel Status.

4. When am I in Travel Status?

Travel Status begins at the time you start your travel and ends when you have finished your travel. If you go to work and leave after work to travel to another location for official business, your Travel Status begins when you leave work. It ends when you return to work, or to your principal residence, if it is after normal work hours. Travel Status does NOT cover any time while you are at your principal office assignment.

5. What are Commute Miles?

Commute Miles are the normal daily roundtrip miles traveled between an individual's residence and his/her principal or assigned office location.

6. Why do I have to reduce my miles traveled by Commute Miles?

The Judiciary does not provide reimbursement for normal travel to and from your principal residence to work. If you were not traveling for the Judiciary, you would be traveling to work. Those miles are not reimbursed.

7. How do I determine my Commute Miles?

You can use your odometer, or a program such as MapQuest, to determine your Commute Miles.

8. MapQuest provides my Commute Miles by shortest distance and by shortest driving time. Which should I use?

You may use either one.

9. Do I need to provide a MapQuest printout with my Travel Reimbursement Form? No. Currently, you do not need to provide proof of Commute Miles, but your manager may check your Commute Miles to ensure they are accurate.

- 10. Do all employees have to reduce their travel miles by Commute Miles?**
Recalled/ Senior Judges do not need to reduce their travel miles by Commute Miles. Non-employees do not need to reduce their travel miles by Commute Miles. Everyone else must reduce travel miles by Commute Miles, even if public transportation is used to travel back and forth to work.
- 11. What is the standard mileage reimbursement rate?**
Please check the website for the most current mileage reimbursement rate applicable to your respective travel dates. <http://mdcourts.gov/administration/travel.html>
- 12. What if the miles traveled while in Travel Status are less than my normal Commute Miles?**
If your normal Commute Miles are more than the miles traveled while in Travel Status, you will not receive any reimbursement for mileage.
- 13. If my travel extends over several days, how do I record my mileage on my Judicial Branch Expense Account Form?**
If your travel extends over multiple days, record your Total Business Miles Traveled for the multiple days on the **last** day of travel on your Judicial Branch Expense Account Form. By doing so, Commute Miles will only be deducted once. However, you should note the territory covered on each day.
- 14. How will the reviewer know I stayed overnight if I do not claim lodging expenses?**
If you have overnight lodgings, but they were billed directly to the Judiciary, check the box(es) indicating Overnight Lodging. Please be sure to list all dates of travel, even if no expenses were incurred on the day. This will assist the reviewers when verifying Time in Travel Status.
- 15. Who is eligible for Per Diem?**
Anyone in Travel Status for more than 12 hours, and who meets the requirements for meal reimbursement, is eligible for the applicable Standard Meal Allowances for In-State, or the Out-of-State, or Out-of-County Per Diem rates.
- 16. How do I know which site to use for my Per Diem?**
The Department of Budget and Management rates (DBM Rates) should be used for In-State Travel. The U.S. General Services Administration rates (GSA Rates) should be used for Out-of-State Travel. The U.S. Department of State Foreign Per Diem rates (US State Department Rates) should be used for Out-of-Country Travel.
- 17. How do I use the GSA site to determine my Per Diem for Out-of-State Travel?**
You must enter the city and state of your travel destination to obtain the correct Meal and Incidental Expense Allowance. <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120>
- 18. How do I use the U.S. Department of State site to determine my Per Diem for Out-of-Country Travel?**
You must enter the country of your travel destination to obtain the correct Meal and Incidental Expense Allowance. https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp

19. What are the requirements for the applicable Per Diem Rates?

If you are in Travel Status for more than 12 hours, you are eligible for the applicable Per Diem Rate for each calendar day, as follows:

Travel Status of more than 12 hours, but less than 24 hours in one day- Eligible for 75% of the applicable Per Diem Rate.

Travel Status of 24 hours in one day- Eligible for 100% of the applicable Per Diem Rate.

Multiple days of travel are reimbursed at 75% of the applicable Per Diem Rate for the first and last days of travel. Any full days of travel in between are eligible for 100% of the applicable Per Diem Rate.

Employees are considered to be in Travel Status on the first and last days of overnight travel.

20. When do I reduce the applicable Per Diem Rate?

Any Per Diem Rate must be reduced by the respective individual Meal Allowance for any meal provided, such as a meal provided as part of a conference. For example, if lunch was provided to you on the first day of In-State Travel, you would reduce the Per Diem by the Standard Meal Allowance for lunch. As an example, the current Per Diem allowance is \$47.00. You would reduce that amount by \$12.00, the current Meal Allowance for lunch. The remaining Per Diem is \$35.00. Since it is the first day of travel, you will receive 75% of \$35.00, which is \$26.25. Please check the Judiciary's website on its Travel Policy for current Per Diem and Standard Meal Allowance amounts.

21. What if I don't like the meal provided, or I have dietary restrictions?

No exception is made to deduct the Standard Meal Allowance for meals provided to you. If you have dietary restrictions or preferences, you may request alternative foods directly from the provider.

22. How will my manager know if a meal was provided to me?

Each individual requesting reimbursement is required to sign the form indicating that it is correct. Per the policy, A copy of the agenda (if published) must be provided with the reimbursement request for any conference, seminar or training which is not held at the JECC, and for which meal reimbursement is requested. Falsifying a form will subject the individual to disciplinary action under the Maryland Judiciary Policies & Procedures.

23. What are the Per Diem Rates?

In-State Rates: The current DBM Standard Meal Allowances equal a Per Diem Rate of \$45. Please check the Judiciary's website on its Travel Policy for current Per Diem and Standard Meal Allowance amounts.

Out-of-State Rates: The GSA Rates vary by location and can be found at:

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120>

Out-of-Country Rates: The US State Department Rates vary by location and can be found at:

https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp

The Per Diem Rate is reduced for any meals provided. The Per Diem Rate is paid at 75% on the first and last days in Travel Status.

All Meal Allowances cover tips. You will not be reimbursed separately for tips on meals.

24. If the cost of my meal is less than the applicable Per Diem Rate, can I request a lower amount for reimbursement?

Yes. You may voluntarily request an amount **less** than your applicable Per Diem Rate.

25. What if the cost of my meal is more than my applicable Per Diem Rate?

Some meals may cost more than the applicable Per Diem Rate and some will cost less. You will only be reimbursed at the allowable Per Diem Rate per your travel type (In-State/Out-of-State/Out-of-Country).

26. Are there any exceptions to the applicable Per Diem Rate?

No. Meals incurred for In-State Travel must use the DBM Rates. Meals incurred while Out-of-State must use the GSA Rates, which are unique to the destination of your travel. Meals incurred while Out-of-Country must use the U.S. Department of State Rates.

27. What is In-State Travel?

Travel throughout the state of Maryland. Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia are considered Out-of-State for Per Diem Rates.

28. What if I need to travel Out-of-State?

Out-of-State Travel, with the exception of Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia, requires the written approval of the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals or the Chief Judge of the District Court for employees of the District Court; or, the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals or the State Court Administrator (SCA), or designee, for all other employees before travel arrangements are made. Only the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals can provide the required approval for all judges, magistrates and the SCA. The written approval **MUST** be submitted with the Judicial Branch Expense Account Form. The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals is exempt from this requirement.

29. What if I need to travel Out-of-Country?

Out-of-Country Travel requires the written approval of the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for all judges, magistrates and the SCA; or, the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals or the State Court Administrator, or designee, for all other employees before travel arrangements are made. The written approval **MUST** be submitted with the Judicial Branch Expense Account Form. The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals is exempt from this requirement. Business class travel may be utilized with authorization by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals.

30. Will I be reimbursed for telephone and internet access charges?

Yes. Miscellaneous access charges for business telephone and internet are reimbursable with receipt documentation.

31. What are the allowable means of transportation?

Normal means of transportation when traveling to and from the airport, train station, bus station, etc., are reimbursable. These include taxis, buses, airport limousines, shuttles, vans and ferries. Individuals should use the mode of transportation that results in the lowest logical cost to the Judiciary.

32. Do I need receipts for all of my expenses?

You **DO** need receipts for:

Parking (except for parking meters)

Taxis, vans, shuttles or airport limousines (including any tips)

Rental Cars

Ferries

Telephone and internet access charges

You do **NOT** need receipts for:

Meals

Road, bridge and tunnel tolls

Parking meters

Bus fares

Metro fares

Tips for baggage handling

33. What if I lose my receipt?

You will NOT be reimbursed for any charge that cannot be substantiated with a receipt, if a receipt is required by this Policy.

34. Are all tips reimbursable?

Tips for taxis, buses, shuttles, vans and airport limousines up to 15% are reimbursable.

These tips should be included on the receipt.

Tips for porter fees and assistance with luggage:

- Are reimbursable separately at \$1 per bag for In-State Travel as indicated in the policy.
- Are reimbursed as part of the Allowance for Incidental Expenses for Out-of-State and Out-of-Country Travel and will NOT be separately reimbursed.

Tips for hotel housekeeping services are NOT reimbursable.

35. Can I always use a rental car?

Rental cars may only be used when means of public transportation are not readily available, are more costly, or it is impractical to use them. Use of a rental car is subject to prior approval by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, or the Chief Judge of the District Court for employees of the District Court, or the State Court Administrator, or designee. Approval must be in writing and attached to the Judicial Branch Expense Account Form, along with the receipts.

36. When am I authorized to have overnight lodgings?

Reimbursement for overnight lodging is available only when you are more than fifty miles from your assigned office or regular place of business, unless otherwise approved by the State Court Administrator, or designee, in writing, which must be attached to the request for reimbursement. The Judiciary's Travel Coordinator must be contacted for assistance in arranging hotel accommodations.

37. Is this Judicial Branch Expense Account Form only for travel reimbursements?

No. The form may be used to request reimbursement for other authorized miscellaneous charges incurred on behalf of the Judiciary. These may include office supplies, postage, etc.

38. Can reimbursement requests be submitted on any other form?

Reimbursement requests on any form, other than the most current Expense Reimbursement Form, will be rejected and must be resubmitted on the new form.

39. Should the Expense Reimbursement be processed by local court/department staff in GEARS or mailed in?

In most cases, the expense form should be processed in GEARS by local staff. Exceptions to this are expenses directly attributable to a grant program (example FCCIP/CANDO). Those expense forms should be mailed to the respective office for processing in GEARS.

40. What is the correct Program Cost Allocation (PCA) and account?

The PCA/speed chart and account is the budget where this cost will be charged. The group's accounting staff will code the expense form and may contact any member of the Department of Budget and Finance's Accounts Payable Staff or the Travel Plan Administrator for assistance. The account for In-State Travel is 0401 and the account for Out-of-State and Out-of-Country Travel is 0403.

41. When must I submit my Judicial Branch Expense Account Form?

Reimbursement requests must be submitted within 90 days from the first date of travel or from when the miscellaneous expense was incurred. Any requests beyond this timeframe must have written approval from the State Court Administrator, or designee.