

General Policies

Resources:

- Section 12-10 Forms and Instructions for *some* travel forms like the "[Increased Reimbursement Request](#)" and abbreviated travel info sheet see the [Court's Intranet](#). Refer to the [Division of State Finance forms](#) for a complete list.
- Section 12-01 [Travel Per Diem](#) Rates
- [State Travel](#) "FindIt" guide

Purpose:

Utah State Courts travel policies apply to all individuals traveling on behalf of the Utah Judiciary System. These are basic travel policies. Detailed explanations of the policies are contained in the remaining sections of this policy.

Special Terms:

"Home Base": The location the employee leaves from and/or returns to. The traveler may leave from one home-base and return to a different home-base. Home base can be your home or office whichever is closest to your destination. The rule specifies that calculation of mileage reimbursement be the shortest distance minus any normal commute mileage. For example, if you left from your home in Farmington to go to a meeting in Brigham City (assuming you normally work at the Matheson Courthouse), you would ask for reimbursement from your home to Brigham City and back. Should you go to a meeting in Nephi, you would charge mileage from the Matheson Courthouse to Nephi and back since you would not count your normal commute mileage.

"Travel Coordinator": A "Travel Coordinator" is an employee of the State Courts who has been given the local responsibility to make transportation, lodging and related reservations for those who travel on court business, and/or process and pre-audit for correctness all forms submitted for authorization and/or reimbursement for travel-related expenses. The travel coordinator also has authorization to sign pre-travel approval forms for a traveler. An Administrator or designee must sign approval for the travel.

"Meal Period": A "meal period" is a two hour time period established as a standard period during which breakfast, lunch or dinner may be eaten.

Policy:

1. It is the general intent of the Judicial Council that actual costs associated with travel required for court business should be reimbursed and that reimbursements be made within State guidelines for rates and standards, unless otherwise approved by the State Court Administrator. The authorizing original signature on the "Travel Reimbursement Request" form constitutes authorization to pay and verification that all information provided on the forms is accurate. The signature also certifies that the payment meets all policy and procedure guidelines provided by the State Court accounting manual and secondarily by the State of Utah accounting manual. If inaccuracies are found, the travel coordinator is authorized to make changes to bring the reimbursement into conformity with policy.
2. Reservations and related requests pertinent to travel on court business and related personal travel needs should be placed through the designated Travel Coordinator for each court within the judicial Districts or the Travel Coordinator specifically assigned to a group or individual. The Travel Coordinator will make all necessary arrangements upon receipt of any required approval forms.
3. The Judicial council has exempted court employees from the requirement to utilize the *FI 5 IS--Request for In State Travel* form as is required by the State Accounting Manual. Court Executives are responsible for all of the in state travel issues for their court staff
4. A "Request for Out of State Travel Authorization" must be completed prior to making any out of state travel. Travelers should plan sufficiently to obtain approval at least 21 working days before the departure date in order to obtain the best airfare pricing. Approval must be obtained by one of the following:
 - a. the State Court Administrator or designee,
 - b. or, if the travel is to be funded by the Judicial Education department, the Education Director.
5. State of Utah travel policy requires all travelers to make airline reservations through the State Travel Office. It is the policy of Utah State Courts to comply with this requirement for all airline reservations. The purpose statement of this section applies to all individuals traveling on behalf of the Utah Judiciary System: judges (including senior judges and justice court judges), court employees and non-state employees or contractors. The Courts **will not** reimburse for airline arrangements that are not made in accordance with this policy.
6. All airline tickets must be purchased using the State Travel Office Statetravel@utah.gov, 801-538-3350, 800-367-3230 or by completing a travel form [here](#).
 - a. In order to keep travel costs as low as possible, court travelers should plan sufficiently to purchase airline tickets at least 21 days in advance.
 - b. State travel will search for the least expensive trip. This may include connecting flights and if the total trip time is less than 3 hours longer and \$200 or more less expensive than a direct flight. Please refer to the State

Finance Policies and Procedures Manual Section 10-02.06 for the complete policy.

7. Changes in air reservations or flights incur fees and any additional airfare and will be charged to the traveler's budget.
8. Requests for exceptions to current reimbursement policies and procedures:
 - a. must be made and approved **prior** to any related travel expense;
 - b. must be made in writing to the State Court Administrator;
 - c. must state the reason(s) for the exception(s); and
 - d. must be approved in writing by the State Court Administrator.
 - e. **No exceptions can be made to the airline reservation policy.**
9. If during the employee's normal work week, an employee opts to drive a rental car instead of fly to an out of state location for court authorized business, and travel time using the rental car is greater than the time which would have been spent had the employee flown the **excess time spent driving will be counted as hours of annual leave and will be deducted from any annual leave currently due the employee.**
10. Travel via neighboring states is an authorized means of "in-state travel" when a traveler is traveling on routine court business and such route is the nearest or most practical to reach a destination in Utah. (State travel policy FIACCT 10.02-00, paragraph I)
11. Requests for prepayment of out-of-state travel related expenses such as conference registration fees must reach the AOC Finance Department at least fifteen (15) working days prior to the date by which the payment should be postmarked and in transit. A Purchasing card can be used to pay registration fees.
12. Employees who travel infrequently (defined as less than three times per year) may request a travel advance of up to 90% of the anticipated per diem and incidental expenses. Travel advances are requested from the AOC Finance Department, by submitting approved "Request for Out of state travel authorization" ([Form FI15](#)) and an "Employee Reimbursement /Earnings Request" ([Form FI-48](#)) forms. Advances for in-state travel require the use of the "Request for In-State Travel Authorization ([Form FI 5 IS](#)) as well as the Form FI-48.
13. Requests for travel advances must reach the AOC Finance Department, at least twenty-one (21) working days prior to when the traveler will need it. It is the traveler's responsibility to submit a request for approval far enough in advance to have it both approved and processed.
14. Travel using grant funds is governed by the State of Utah travel policies unless the grant travel policies are more stringent. In all situations, the most stringent travel policies apply.
15. If you choose to use your own vehicle for state business, the State Risk Management policy does not provide insurance coverage in the event of an accident. Your own auto insurance policy must be used in the event of an accident.

16. **All employees** are required to take the [State Driving test](#) every two years whether or not they will drive a state car. Reimbursement for private vehicle mileage will not be reimbursed if this test is not completed.
17. Where forms are established for use in the reimbursement process, reimbursement will follow the proper completion and submission of the appropriate form(s).
18. Within thirty (30) days after completion of any travel for which a reimbursement may be due, the traveler requesting reimbursement must submit final settlement claim(s) to the AOC Finance Department, completing the appropriate forms and including any required documentation.
19. Documentation required for travel reimbursements may include:
 - a. "Private Vehicle Usage Report" ([Form FI-40](#)), for commutes and day trips where only mileage reimbursement is due.
 - b. "Request for Out of State Travel Authorization" ([Form FI-5](#)), as evidence of approved travel out of state. The FI-5 is required for out of state travel.
 - c. "Travel Reimbursement Request" ([Form FI-51A, B, C or D](#)), where mileage reimbursement and per diem reimbursement is due, and the traveler **spent the night** (lodging may be listed or included in a direct bill).
 - d. "Employee Reimbursement/Earnings Request" ([Form FI-48](#)), for any advance or reimbursement for **Non-overnight** Taxable Meal.
 - e. "Increased Reimbursement Request", when requesting the higher rate when a state car is not available. (A request for the higher mileage rate is a rare occasion.)
 - f. See specific travel reimbursement policies for needed documentation for different types of travel.
20. If any advance travel payment was received, a copy of the "Employee Reimbursement /Earnings Request" ([Form FI-48](#)) must be attached to the final "Travel Reimbursement Request" ([Forms FI-51A, B, C or D](#)). If the advance payment exceeds the actual expenses for the trip, a check or money order payable to the "Administrative Office of the Courts" should also be attached to the "Travel Reimbursement Request."
21. Requests for reimbursement may be denied for the following reasons:
 - receipt by the AOC Finance Department more than thirty (30) days after the end of the fiscal year in which the claimed expenses occurred; or
 - accurate or sufficient documentation cannot be provided.
22. The policies, procedures and information provided in the Utah State Courts Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual, the determinant guideline recognized by State Finance for authorizing payments, are the definitive authority, should there be any discrepancy with information provided by any other department or subdivision of the State Courts or with information and/or policy published by the Office of State Finance.
23. Judges and commissioners attending annual and/or mid-year Utah Bar conferences are to be reimbursed per the policy established in the "Judicial Operations Budget", which provides funding for this purpose.

24. The AOC Finance Department will provide appropriate financial training on an annual or "as needed" basis in coordination with the AOC Education Department, which has direct responsibility for all who process education-related travel.