

## Air Travel—Continued

Your luggage will be unloaded while you are exiting the plane. You may have to wait several minutes before the carousel begins to deliver the luggage from your flight. Look for the lighted marquis above the carousels to determine the luggage delivery point for your flight.

When you return to your original point of departure, you will need to have cash or a credit card to pay for parking. Make sure you request a receipt for this expense so you can be reimbursed.

## Ground Travel

Check with your department for preferred means of travel.

### Personal Car



Travel by personal car will be reimbursed from your home or your normal work site, whichever is closer to your destination.

The rate of reimbursement per mile is established by a federal standard. You should record accurate mileage for each trip.

If a group of staff is attending the same conference, you should arrange to meet at a designated location so you can travel together, just as you would if you were using a county car. Individual vehicles should not be driven to the same conference, unless the points of departure make group travel impractical. Remember that your insurance is primary if you are

driving your own vehicle. A copy of your drivers license and insurance information must be on file in the Business Office to claim reimbursement.



### Shuttles/Taxis/Car Services

Airports have shuttles available to specific hotels and general areas. Check the availability of shuttles before leaving home. Taxis are always available, and may be less expensive than shuttles if the trip is shared with several conference participants. You are expected to use the least expensive reasonable mode of transportation (including Uber, Lyft etc.). A receipt is required to reimburse shuttles, taxis, or other car services.

## Car Rentals

Car rentals should be approved and reserved at the same time as registration and hotel reservations are made. These charges cannot be prepaid, since fuel, time and distance are variable. You should have cash or a credit card to pay for the rental car. If you have the option of filling the car with gas before you return it, the cost will be less than returning the car for the rental company to fill. Rental fees and fuel costs are reimbursable.

## Meals

Meals are normally reimbursable only if you are traveling overnight. An exception may be made if you travel from home substantially longer than an ordinary day's work, **and** no meal is provided in association with the event requiring travel.



### Reimbursable Costs

Meals for overnight travel and not included with a conference, shall be reimbursed at the IRS per diem rates. Visit the IRS website at [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem) for current rates.

For 2023-2024 the standard per diem rates are:

Breakfast: \$16 for travel between 7:00AM -10:00 AM

Lunch: \$17 for travel between 11:00AM –2:00 PM

Dinner: \$31 for travel between 2:00PM –8:00 PM

**Receipts are not required for meal reimbursements**

### Program Restrictions

Programs may have restriction on the cost of meals established by the grantor (funding source). Usually, the grantor has special allowances for high-cost areas. Check with your program administrator for the Funding Terms and Conditions that may apply to your conference.

## Reimbursement of Expenses

With the exception of meals, itemized receipts are required for all approved expenses. Check your receipt for specific, identifiable items. A receipt which shows only the total is not acceptable by audit standards, and you risk not being reimbursed for a legitimate expense. If you are sharing a meal with conference attendees, ask for your own separate receipt or copies for the appropriate number of participants.

## Prior Approval for Materials

If you anticipate that the conference or workshop you are to attend will have materials that would be appropriate for use in your classroom or office, request prior approval from the Assistant Superintendent or Director of your department so that these expenses can be reimbursed. A limit will be designated.

## Common Courtesies

### Appropriate Attire

Dressing appropriately is a sign of respect, for yourself and the professionals who are presenting and attending.

### Prompt Arrival



Arrive at the activity on time so presentations are not interrupted. Arriving late is a sign of disrespect toward the presenters and organizers, and a statement about your own time management skills.

### Full Attendance

If you have registered to attend a workshop or conference, it is understood that you will stay for the entire presentation. Leaving early will disrupt the presentation.

### Cell Phones

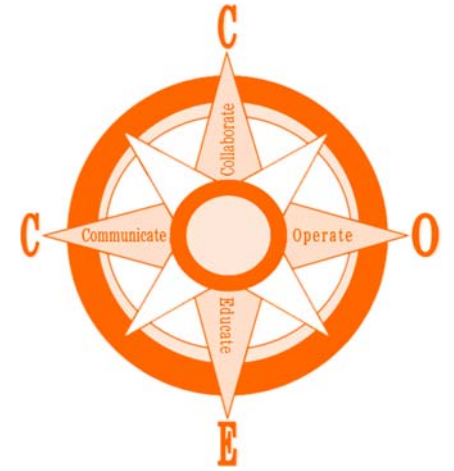
If you anticipate an emergency call, either from work or family, turn your phone to vibrate. Otherwise, be considerate of the presenter and the audience and turn the phone off.

### Private Conversations During Presentations

As a professional, do not have private conversations or cause distractions from the information being presented, which all attendees deserve to receive.

### Evaluation of Presentations

Most conferences have evaluation forms. It is your professional responsibility to complete those forms whether you have positive comments or suggestions for improving the presentations. As a representative of the Colusa County Office of Education, your comments should be respectful reflections and suggestions, not critical, demeaning comments.



## COLUSA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

### Travel Guide For Staff

The Colusa County Office of Education supports meaningful and beneficial staff development for all employees, regardless of the specific job performed. We recognize that the travel experience varies significantly between individuals, both for staff development and for personal travel. This guide was developed to answer some basic questions and provide basic guidelines for staff travelers.

### Safety

Always be aware of your own personal safety. Any evening activities should be enjoyed with a group. An unfamiliar area may present conditions or situations that can be handled best with other people involved in decisions.



### Before the Conference

#### Prepaid Registration for Conferences, Workshops, and Meetings

Prepaid registration for conferences, workshops and meetings can usually be done through a purchase order. Approval by your Deputy/Assistant Superintendent or Director is necessary for all travel. Office staff can help you complete the purchase order, but you must allow enough time for the paperwork to be approved, processed and submitted before the deadline.

Last minute arrangements are difficult for everyone involved, and the difficulty is extended to the staff of the group that is hosting the meeting.

Conferences usually have an “Early Bird” rate, offering a reduced cost for attendance. Early registration can provide substantial savings for your program.

#### Prepaid Reservations

Prepaid reservations at hotels for conference or workshop attendance will reduce the amount of personal finances that are needed for a trip. If the conference registration includes housing, you cannot make alternate reservations. Prepaid reservations are possible through a purchase order approved by the Assistant Superintendent or Director of your department, and prepayment by a County Office check.

### Travel Cash Advances

Travel cash advances are generally not provided, so you will need personal cash or a credit card. The County Superintendent shall approve travel advances on a case-by-case basis only, not to exceed 75% of estimated expenditures, with the exception of per diem meal allowance. **KEEP YOUR RECEIPTS.**



### Your Stay at the Hotel



#### Credit Card at Check-In Requirement

Even if a prepayment has been received and posted, most hotels now expect you to provide a credit card to take an impression at check-in. This requirement is to avoid having guests leave without paying their bills. If no charges are made to the room, the charge slip will be returned to you at check-out. If you do not have a credit card, you may be allowed to leave a deposit at the desk. This is returned to you if you have no additional charges.

If you have had a prepayment check sent to the hotel, at check-in confirm that the check was posted to the bill. This will give the hotel staff some time to trace the prepayment check during your stay. If the check was not posted, you may be required to pay the room fees at check-out.

#### Refrigerator/Mini-bar



You should be aware that the hotel will charge you for any items used from the refrigerator or mini-bar, if these are provided in your room, including bottled water. In fact, you will sometimes find a charge on your bill, even if you haven't used any items from the refrigerator or mini-bar. It is important to check your bill carefully to have errors removed. You cannot be reimbursed for items purchased from the refrigerator or mini-bar, or for bottled water in your room.

#### Telephone

When you check-in, the hotel will usually require a credit card in advance for any long distance charges that appear on your room phone. Some hotels assess a fee for local calls, as well. You have three options: 1) use your own credit card to guarantee phone calls; 2) pay a deposit (which will be returned if unused); or 3) inform the receptionist that you do not want your phone turned on.

If you use the hotel phone, only calls to your office or work site will be reimbursed. **Personal calls are your responsibility.**



### Room Service

Room service is very expensive. A fee for delivery to your room and an automatic tip is added to your food bill. In addition to the higher cost, room service should not be used because part of the value of conference attendance is networking with other attendees; staying in your room does not take advantage of this opportunity.



#### Pay TV

Your hotel room may have Pay TV channels. If you choose to watch those programs, you assume the responsibility for the costs. You cannot be reimbursed for these charges.

#### Parking

Some hotels have free parking. Check the conference information before you leave home. You may need to have your own cash to pay for parking in a hotel parking lot or an adjacent parking lot; or the charge may be added to your hotel bill. However you pay for parking, it is a reimbursable expense. Always ask for a receipt.

#### Valet Parking



Many hotels also have valet parking, which is an additional fee. Also, if you use valet parking, you should be aware that a tip is expected every time you ask the valet to bring your car to you or to park for you. Valet parking should only be used if parking elsewhere creates a safety issue.

#### Incidental Expenses

Incidental expenses are reimbursed at the 2022-23 standard IRS per diem rate of \$5 per day. Visit the IRS website at [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem) for current rates.

#### Other Private Charges for Goods & Services

Any other private charges that are made to your hotel room are your responsibility.

#### Check-Out

Hotels have specified times for check-out. You may check out any time before the specified time. If you check out after the specified time, you may be charged for an additional night, or a late fee. Any penalty for check-out is not reimbursable.

Remember to verify the charges on your final bill. Charges may be added to your bill in error. With a prepayment, the only charges you should have to pay are the ones that you specifically added. Without a prepayment, your bill will include room charge, tax, and possible special fees per night, in addition to your personal charges.



Attach the entire hotel bill to your request for reimbursement, whether or not a prepayment was made. In all cases, the hotel receipt must be submitted to the Business Office.

### Conference & Workshop Attendance

When you attend a conference the content of the meetings, speakers' presentations and work sessions are assumed to be valuable to your training and development. You are expected to attend all sessions, unless you are ill or an emergency occurs. Employees may be required to share information from the conference or workshop with other staff. If speakers are presenting at meals, it is important to take advantage of the information. Also, if a meal is included in the registration, you cannot be reimbursed for a meal elsewhere.

### Air Travel



Airlines have requirements for check-in and identification. You will be required to have photo identification to gain access to the departure gates. You should allow a minimum of one hour ahead

of your departure time to arrive at the terminal and go through the security precautions. Your tickets will provide information about the time and gate of departure. Extra time should be allowed to park and take the shuttle to the terminal. Make sure that you understand the procedures for check-in, boarding, and other requirements. You may need to check baggage guidelines for extra costs charged by the airline. You will be reimbursed for one bag if there is a charge for luggage.