

## Administrative Policy No. 19.10.06

**Subject:** Travel Advance Processing

**Information Contact:** Office of Accounting Services  
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**Authorizing Source:** Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [43.03.170](#) through  
[43.03.190](#)  
State Administrative & Accounting Manual (SAAM),  
[Chapter 10](#)

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2005

**Revised:** July 12, 2018

**Approved By:** **Original signed by Judy Fitzgerald**  
Assistant Secretary / Chief Financial Officer  
Facilities, Finance, and Analytics Administration

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### Purpose

This policy describes the procedures, limitations, and accountability when requesting and liquidating Travel Advances.

### Scope

This policy applies to all Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) employees. This policy does not apply to board members, volunteers, or contractors.

### Additional Guidance

DSHS Administrative Policies, [Subchapter 19.10](#)

### Definitions

**Out-of-State** means travel anywhere outside the boundaries of the state of Washington. However, with respect to the requirement for prior authorization of out-of-state travel, travel to counties and cities in the states of Idaho and Oregon that are contiguous to the border between Washington-Idaho or Washington-Oregon are not considered out-of-state.

**Per Diem** means daily travel costs covering both lodging expenses and subsistence expenses (meals, taxes & tips on meals, and incidental expenses) while in travel status.

**Reimbursement Request** is the request for travel reimbursement that is submitted using the Travel and Expense Management System (TEMS).

**Travel Advance** is a payment made to a traveler to defray some of the costs the traveler will incur while traveling on official state business.

**Travel and Expenses Management System (TEMS)** is the software program used to process travel reimbursement requests and travel advances.

**Traveler** means any DSHS employee traveling on official state business.

## Policy

### *I. Travel Advance Limitations and Requirements.*

**A. The Office of Accounting Services (OAS) is responsible for processing all DSHS Travel Advances.**

**B. Travel Advances can only be issued for DSHS employee travel.**

**C. TEMS must be used to request a travel advance.**

Instructions for completing a [Travel Advance](#) are posted on the travel website.

**D. Use of the travel advance is limited to:**

1. Paying necessary reimbursable costs while performing official duties.
2. A travel time period of up to 30 days.

**E. Travel advances must not be used for:**

1. Use of privately owned vehicles ([RCW 43.03.170](#)).
2. Purchase of commercial airfare.
3. Lodging.

**F. Travel advance requests must be received by OAS:**

1. At least ten working days before the first date of travel, but
2. No more than 30 calendar days before the first date of travel.

**G. Travel advances:**

1. Are limited to 75% of the estimated allowable travel expenses. OAS staff may make adjustments to the travel advance request when necessary.
2. Must be for \$100 or more. OAS staff will not process travel advances under \$100.

3. Are not considered a loan to a traveler.
4. DSHS considers any unauthorized disbursement of a travel advance a misappropriation of state monies.

## ***II. Submitting and Accounting for Travel Advances***

- A. Travel reimbursement requests must be submitted in TEMS.
- B. After the travel is complete, the travel reimbursement request must be submitted and approved in TEMS within 5 working days after the last day of travel.
- C. Unspent travel advance funds must be returned by the 10th day of the month following the month for which a travel advance was issued. ([RCW 43.03.180](#))
- D. If a trip is cancelled or rescheduled, the full amount of the travel advance must be returned within 10 working days from the date the traveler became aware that the trip was cancelled or rescheduled, or the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month following the month of planned travel.

Instructions for completing the [Advance Reconciliation](#) are posted on the travel website.

## ***III. Default on Accounting or Repayment of the Advance by the Traveler***

- A. When a traveler does not enter their travel into TEMS and/or return any unused portion of an advance, the full unpaid amount shall become immediately due and payable with interest of ten (10) percent per annum from date of default until paid (SAAM 10.80.60.e and RCW 43.03.190).
- B. DSHS will withhold an amount equal to the amount of the advance owed to DSHS from the employee's paycheck if the travel advance is not accounted for or returned within the specified timeframes.
- C. The OAS Travel Unit will deny a subsequent travel advance if the traveler has failed to return a previous travel advance, even if authorized by the approving authority.
- D. If these deadlines are not met, the advance (or unreturned portion) will be reported as income on the W-2 Form and the applicable payroll taxes withheld.

## **Procedures**

### **[Travel Advance Procedures](#)**