

**STANISLAUS COUNTY  
COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY (CSA)  
PURCHASING CARD AND TRAVEL POLICY**



Fiscal Year 2015-2016  
Approved by CSA Executive Team  
May 16, 2016

Effective June 1, 2016

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PURCHASING CARD AND TRAVEL POLICY  
As of June 1, 2016

**1. Introduction**

**1.1 BACKGROUND:**

The Board of Supervisor's approved the Stanislaus County Purchasing Card Policy on January 13, 2015 <http://intranet/departments/auditor-controller/auditor-files/policies/purchasing-card-policy-1-13-2015.pdf> and the revised County of Stanislaus Travel Policy on March 15, 2016 <http://intranet/departments/auditor-controller/auditor-files/policies/Travel%20Policy%20Approved%202016.pdf> to provide basic guidelines for County Departments.

County Department Heads are accountable to the Board of Supervisors and the public for the funds and assets entrusted to them. Each County Department Head is responsible for administering the basic County Purchasing Card and Travel Policy. The Community Services Agency policy clarifies and defines the specific needs of the department in accordance with County policy.

The following revised **CSA Purchasing Card and Travel Policy** approved by the CSA Executive Team on May 16, 2016 supersedes the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 CSA Purchasing Card and Travel Policy that was previously approved by the Executive Team on November 10, 2015.

**2. PURCHASING CARD**

**2.1 INTRODUCTION:**

All employees authorized to use a Purchasing Card are responsible for adherence to the County Purchasing Card Policy and the CSA Purchasing Card and Travel Policy.

**2.2 PURCHASE CARD AUTHORIZATION:**

Managers should identify all staff that travel and need a Purchasing Card assigned to them. A Stanislaus County Purchasing Card Authorization and Application Form must be completed with the employee agreeing to the terms and conditions of the County Purchasing Card Policy prior to the issuance of a County Purchasing Card. (Reference County Purchase Card Policy, Section 1.3 Roles and Responsibilities, A. Cardholder and G. Misuse of Purchasing Card, and 2. Policies.)

Managers performing oversight of County staff assigned, contracted, extra-help, and personal services contractors may authorize the issuance of a CSA Purchasing Card to perform CSA business.

The Department Head or designated Assistant Director approve all purchasing card applications and maintenance action forms.

**2.3 PURCHASING CARD LIMITS:**

CSA Purchase Cardholder Limits (up to)				
\$50,000	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$4,500	Maximum of \$2,000
Buyer & Storekeeper II	Office Services Manager	Storekeeper I	CSA Director	All Other CSA designated cardholders
	IT EDP Purchasing Application Specialist III	Facilities Staff Services Analyst	Assistant Directors	
			Director's Confidential Assistant V	
			Manager III's & IV's	
			Support Staff who make travel arrangements	

**2.4 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALLOWABLE PURCHASES & RESPONSIBILITIES:**

A valid appropriate County expense is **approved in advance** and considered a business expense for public benefit, incurred while the employee is performing his/her duties and comply with the County Purchasing Card Policy, Section 2.3 Purchasing Card Usage and Restrictions.

Use of the Purchasing Card as a method of payment does not eliminate the need to comply with contracting, public works, or uniform accounting procedures.

**2.5 AGENCY APPROVED PURCHASERS:**

The Department Head is responsible for limiting the number of person(s) who may purchase supplies and direct customer goods to maximize discounts and operational efficiencies.

- **Office Services (OS) staff** are identified as the primary buyers for supplies, equipment, and direct customer goods for the agency (including online purchases). Purchase requests are submitted online through One Stop Collective Activity Request System (OSCAR). Through this system, OS, Financial Services, and the requesting section are able to obtain all necessary approvals before purchasing any goods. In urgent situations when the purchase is necessary and time sensitive, Office Services may designate another cardholder to make a purchase (excludes Electronic Data Processing (EDP) equipment and fixed assets). The cardholder is responsible for insuring the cost-effectiveness and prudence of these purchases with the advice and approval of OS staff including the Buyer, Manager II, and/or Storekeeper II.
- **Managers:**  
May purchase books/materials for the department CSA staff library at conferences/trainings.
- **Designated Information Technology Staff:**
  - May purchase on-line cellular hardware and /or Electronic Data Processing (EDP) (non-capital assets – items costing less than \$5,000 per item, including taxes, shipping, etc.) following County Purchasing Card Policy and GSA Purchasing Division Policies and Procedures Manual.

- May make one-time purchases as part of the child welfare research that can be accessed on-line with a credit card fee.

**Other Employees Authorized to Purchase:**

- The Human Resources Manager is authorized to purchase publication notices for personnel recruitment and fingerprinting fees.
- Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Welfare Services (CWS) and Emergency On-Call Social Workers may in an emergency situation use the Purchasing Card when access to the voucher process is unavailable (i.e., after hours). The Worker will complete the appropriate Emergency Client Purchase form and submit with the original receipt. If the vendor does not accept a voucher, a pre-approval by Financial Services is required to use this vendor.

**2.6 DEPARTMENT HEAD RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Each month the Department Head or Department Head's designee(s) will certify compliance with 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities, Section B. Department Head, that all Purchasing Card charges are valid and appropriate County and/or Department expenses.

If it is determined by the Department Head that the Purchasing Card has been used for unauthorized or non-County Business purposes, the card holder shall reimburse the County in full within (10) days. Employees shall remit a personal check made payable to Stanislaus County CSA or cash for identified over-limits to the CSA Cashier, obtain a receipt, and provide this receipt to the Purchasing Card Accounting Technician. If the cardholder has not reimbursed the County as requested, the cardholder agrees that the County will offset all such unauthorized or improper charges through payroll deduction.

**3. TRAVEL**

**3.1 INTRODUCTION:**

All employees authorized to use a Purchasing Card are responsible for adherence to the County Travel Policy and the CSA Purchasing Card and Travel Policy. The Department Head or designee(s) is responsible for ensuring that the most cost effective and practical method of transportation is selected.

**3.2 GENERAL**

CSA travel shall comply with the County Travel Policy mandates and guidelines. County travelers should exercise prudent judgment and show proper discretion for accountable economic use of public funds. Expenses shall be documented as required and shall have no reasonable question that such expenditures did, in fact relate to and were necessary for conducting County business.

**Prior approval by the Department Head or designee for all out-of-county business travel** will be documented on the CSA Travel Authorization. All such expenses must comply with the Stanislaus County Travel Policy and the CSA Purchasing Card and Travel Card Policy. To the extent possible, all authorized employee travel expenses should be charged to a County Purchasing Card. Employees are encouraged to make their own travel arrangements. Divisions may also designate a staff person to make travel arrangements for one or a group of employees.

A CSA Travel Authorization form must be completed for all out-of-county business travel even when there are no costs associated with the trip to satisfy liability issues and management oversight

needs. In-county travel including travel to County sponsored trainings, without a registration cost, does not require completion of the form.

### **3.3 AUTHORIZATION:**

Departments are responsible for ensuring the most cost-effective method of travel is used by travelers. Department Head or designee will approve all travel related forms and expenses in compliance with the County Travel Policy, 2. Travel Policy Provisions, 2.1 Travel Approval and the CSA Purchase Card and Travel Policy.

CSA's Department Head has approved Assistant Directors and Managers to be designees for travel related forms and expenses as documented in a memo maintained with the Signature Authorization records located in Financial Services.

All out-of-state travel must be approved by Department Head or designee(s) upon recommendation by an Assistant Director. The guidelines for authorizing out-of-state travel include business travel that incurs no cost to the County (i.e., is paid for through a non-County source), is business critical, and/or is linked to a mandate.

### **3.4 TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS:**

All original approved Travel Authorization forms and appropriate supporting documents shall be routed to the Financial Services Travel Unit.

Storer Travel usage is limited to booking complicated travel involving transporting minors, older adults or individuals with disabilities. CSA staff or the designated division staff will book travel for employees attending conferences/trainings and when staff are traveling for monthly compliance visits.

### **Refunds/Cancellation of Reservations:**

Employees who are unable to honor a reservation will be responsible for canceling in compliance with the terms of the hotel, airline, etc. All Refunds and Cancellation of Reservations shall follow the County Travel Policy, Section 2.3 Travel Arrangements, D. Cancellation of Reservations. Employees shall not cancel any reservation without approval of management and notification to Financial Services. If arrangements were made by Office Services, please notify them of the cancellation. Airlines will not issue refunds, only credits to be used within a specific time period and could be designated for use only by the employee whose name is on the original ticket posing a financial risk to the County.

### **3.5 VEHICLE TRAVEL:**

CSA's Motor Pool vehicles are reserved for transporting clients and/or to provide immediate transportation services based on clients needs. CSA encourages staff to use a rental vehicle or private vehicle when traveling to business meetings, trainings, and/or conferences.

**All trips over 100 miles one-way require a computation comparing the difference between a CSA motor pool vehicle, a rental vehicle, a private vehicle, and in some cases airfare.** Use the CSA Vehicle Comparison Calculator Tool available at the Financial Services, Travel Info page on OLLIE. The Department Head or designee may approve any mode of vehicle travel; however, reimbursement will be based on the lowest available cost option.

### **Travel to Toll Areas**

Employees traveling to toll areas will ensure to have cash to pay for tolls. A toll is a reimbursable business expense and is paid through the Employee Expense Reimbursement (EER) process.

### **Traffic Citations**

Tickets and fines are not authorized expenses and cannot be reimbursed by the County. Basic tolls are reimbursable, but toll violations for failure to stop or failure to pay at the toll booth are not. This includes FasTrak systems and express lanes. If a CSA employee receives a ticket, fine, or toll violation while engaged in County business, the employee is personally responsible for the full amount plus penalties. (Refer to the CSA Policy Number 3.6 Tolls, Tickets, and Fines and the GSA Fleet Policy for more information)

### **3.6 FUEL CHARGES:**

CSA staff will consider their route, their safety and the safety of their passengers when determining where to fuel County vehicles.

- **FLEET VEHICLES**

CSA Fleet vehicles should be fueled at the County Morgan Road fuel station for in-county travel and when out-of-county travel permits, as this is the most cost efficient. In instances where utilizing the Morgan Road fuel station is not feasible for County owned vehicles, or when fueling Rental vehicles while on County business, the preferred methods for fueling are as follows: Option 1–Cruise Americard/Voyager Fuel Card and Option 2 – County Purchasing Card.

- **PRIVATE VEHICLES:**

Mileage reimbursement claims shall be compliant with the County Travel Policy, Section 2.5 Transportation, B. Vehicle Travel, 3. Private Vehicle and Out of County Mileage Reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement will be submitted on an Employee Expense Reimbursement form, within 30 days after incurring the reimbursable expense, per the County Travel Policy, Section 2.5 Transportation. Mileage claims received after 30 days require written justification and approval by the Department Head or Assistant Director.

### **3.7 MISCELLANEOUS OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES:**

Itemized receipts are required for any purchase in excess of \$15.00. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Taxi and BART fares
- Streetcar, city bus, ferry fares, and road tolls
- Parking expenses

## **4. MEALS**

### **4.1 POLICY:**

CSA has adopted the use of Per Diem for all meal reimbursements for employees that are short-term travel defined as an out-of-county trip from less than a day to five days that does not involve the transporting of clients.

If the travel involves the transportation of a client(s), the standard meal limits will apply for the duration of the trip and the employee will use their County Purchasing Card for meal purchases and

detailed itemized receipts must be provided. See Section 4.3, Meals When Transporting Clients, listed below.

#### **4.2 PER DIEM GUIDELINES:**

Employees when traveling out-of-county, and not traveling related to client(s) transportation, will be approved a Per Diem rate.

The per diem rate option for meals and incidentals is determined annually by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), effective the first pay period after October 1<sup>st</sup>. Please refer to the rate that corresponds to **your destination site at the GSA Per Diem Rates website <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>**. Attach a copy of the per diem printout from the U.S. GSA website to the Travel Authorization form and/or Employee Expense Reimbursement form.

##### ➤ One Day Trip (Taxable)

A one day trip is defined as a trip that is 24 hours or less. A taxable allowance is authorized for trips that are **12 hours up to and including 24 hours**.

Exception: Please note that the per diem rate for one day trips between 0-12 hours is not included in the U.S. GSA rates. These rates will not automatically adjust with the U.S. GSA rates. The per diem rate for one day trips between 0-12 hours will be equal to the daily meal limit for lunch or \$20 (see County Travel Policy Section 2.6 A.1).

##### ➤ Overnight Trip

An overnight trip is defined as a trip that is over 24 hours, but less than 5 days. Per diem for meals and incidentals is available for non-travel days (24 hour periods). This per diem amount will be adjusted to 75% on the days of travel to and from as determined annually by the U.S. GSA rates.

For seminars and meetings at which meals are provided, the employee is not entitled to a per diem allowance for those meals. The daily per diem amount will be reduced by the meal amount listed in the U.S. GSA Travel Resources Meals & Incidental Expenses table for those meals that are provided <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/26429>. A complimentary continental breakfast is not considered a meal and the per diem for breakfast is allowable.

Per Diem reimbursements are accessed through payroll reimbursements by submitting an Employee Expense Reimbursement (EER) form once the trip is completed.

#### **4.3 MEALS WHEN TRANSPORTING CLIENTS:**

When travel is related to transporting a client(s), employees will use their County Purchasing Card for the duration of the trip and the standard meal limits will apply.

- The maximum meal allowances per person as noted in the County Travel Policy are:
  - **Breakfast - \$15.00**
  - **Lunch - \$20.00**
  - **Dinner - \$35.00**

*These limits include the actual meal cost, taxes, and tip.*



Purchasing Card policies are applicable to these purchases. Employees transporting clients and purchasing meals should note the following:

1. The tip limit on meals includes an allowance for a 15% tip; however, the department head authorizes overages up to 20%. Tips for meals should be calculated based on the pre-tax amount of the meals as recommended by the California Board of Equalization. If the restaurant charges a higher tip rate automatically, the higher limit is approved within the allowed meal limits.
2. Itemized receipts are required to accompany all meal purchases. If unable to obtain an itemized receipt or receipt is lost, the Mislabeled Receipt Form must be completed and submitted to the Financial Services Travel Unit.
3. Overages become employee's personal expenses and will be asked to reimburse the County.
4. The County shall not pay for any alcoholic beverages or tobacco.
5. Meal costs will be reimbursed for actual meal charges up to the maximum allowed by the County

#### **4.4 IN-COUNTY MEALS:**

In-County meals for employees are not allowed with the exception of the following:

With department head written **pre-approval**, in-county meals are allowable when incurred in conjunction with a County business meeting for public purpose or special project, when oral interview boards include non-county employees, and/or for recognized training programs where the employee's attendance is required all day without a discretionary lunch period and the meal cannot be claimed through another agency. County business meeting for a public purpose may include non-county employees and employees from other governmental agencies. The business purpose of the in-county meal must be documented and retained with the accounting records as support and for audit purposes. (Refer to County Travel Policy Section 4.0 In-County Meals)

To mitigate the appearance of a conflict of interest, County employees are not allowed to make County purchases using their County Purchasing Cards at any of the O'Brien's Markets.

#### **4.5 FOOD AND BEVERAGE POLICY:**

As of November 10, 2015, CSA established a Food and Beverage Policy. All Food and Beverage Requests must comply with the policy and be approved prior to the event with a Food & Beverage Form signed by the Department Head or Assistant Director.

### **5. LONG TERM TRAVEL**

#### **5.1 POLICY:**

The County defines long-term travel as a trip of 5 days or greater. Only the Department Head or Assistant Directors will approve all travel related forms and expenses for trips greater than 5-days in length. CSA has adopted the use of Per Diem for long term travel assignments. Employees choosing the Per Diem option will be required to comply with County Travel Policy, Section 2.5 Transportation, D. Long Term Travel Policy (Non-Taxable) established lodging limits and transportation substantiation requirements.

## **5.2 TRIPS HOME**

CSA will develop a comprehensive arrangement on a case by case basis regarding the frequency that the County will reimburse an employee participating on a long term travel assignment to return home. CSA will consider factors such as, length of stay, travel distance, personal needs of employee and departmental needs in the determination.

## **6. ANNUAL UNIT “LEADERSHIP, DEVELOPMENT, & PLANNING DAY”** **MEETING POLICY:**

### **6.1 POLICY:**

Staff Leadership, Development & Planning Day (LDPD) meetings are considered a normal part of doing business, throughout the agency. Topics discussed at the LDPD meeting include: team building; succession planning, developing strategies for the unit/section that support the agency strategic plan and priorities or; working on success factors.

The frequency of LDPD meetings is generally once a year, but may be held more frequently with approval by an Executive Team Member. A pre-approved CSA Travel Authorization form including the purpose of the meeting and a copy of the LDPD agenda approved by the Department Head or designee is required for meetings held off site CSA premises.

Effective November 10, 2015, LDPD meals may be supported within the Food and Beverage Policy on a case by case basis. The request must meet the Food and Beverage Policy and be approved by the Director or Assistant Director.

## **7. OUTREACH EVENTS SPONSORED BY CSA**

### **7.1 POLICY:**

Outreach events must have an agenda and a specific description of the intent of the event that relates to educating and informing the community for the public benefit about our programs offered at Community Service Agency. These events must have prior CSA Executive approval. CSA cost plan provides public service announcements (media), brochures and services related to community outreach necessary for notifying the public of matters of public concern (per OMB A-87 Super Circular).

Organizers' responsible for the event must have a budget approved by the CSA Executive Team Member. This budget shall include all estimated expenditures and shall be provided to Financial Services in advance to verify availability of funding.

All outreach events must have community participation. Staff attending shall have a role in education and information sharing with the community for the public benefit.

A CSA Travel Authorization form must be completed and approved by an Executive Team Member for CSA Staff attending this event.

Organizers' must complete a contract request form and forward this form to the Contract Section of Financial Services if any agreements are necessary, i.e., Non-County presenter contracts.

Organizers' must have any room rental agreements signed by the General Services Agency Purchasing Agent.

Organizers' are to contact a buyer in Office Services for the ordering of any budgeted supplies related to this event.

If food is included in the event, a Food & Beverage form is required to be completed with approval of Department Head. This form is forwarded to Financial Services for the identification of the appropriate funding source. This approved form must also be provided to Office Services to make arrangements, if applicable.

Meal rate limits apply to Outreach events depending on the length of the event. Any costs exceeding this limit will require Department Head's or designee's approval.

## **8. NON-COUNTY COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

### **8.1 POLICY:**

Travel for Non-County Community Partners that is not part of a contracted service may be approved by Department Head or designee and are subject to the Stanislaus County and Community Services Agency Travel and Purchasing Card policies.

### **8.2 GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Prior to commencing any travel, the Non-County Community Partner travel must be approved for travel by Department Head or designee. Non-County Community Partners approved for attending meetings, training, and/or conferences paid by CSA are subject to the following policies:

1. Pre-approved CSA Travel Authorization form reflecting all estimated costs must be submitted to Financial Services.
2. Subject to per-diem meal rates.
3. Depending on eligibility, subject to County mileage rates.
4. Out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed with eligible expenses with valid receipts only.

### **8.3 REIMBURSEMENT FOR OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES (NON-EMPLOYEES):**

- The appropriate reimbursement form must be completed and signed by the partner in order to receive out-of-pocket expenses. Please attach all itemized receipts.
- The partner must forward this documentation to the County contact that approved the travel for CSA business.
- The County contact is responsible for forwarding this documentation along with the CSA Travel Authorization form to the CSA Accounts Payable unit in Financial Services.

## **9. RECORD KEEPING**

### **9.1 RECORDS RETENTION:**

Purchasing Card and Travel related records shall be kept by Financial Services in accordance with

the CSA Record Retention Policy.

Link to: [CSA Purchase Card and Travel Policy Reference Tool](#)