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I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

Transportation reimbursement is allowed for foster children when traveling by common carrier (Greyhound bus, Yellow Cab, Amtrak, etc.) or private car. Reimbursement is based on odometer readings at the rate currently allowed by State Employee Travel Regulations. Mileage is reimbursed per trip, and not per child. When multiple children are transported, mileage is split between each child. Cost of travel on a common carrier is reimbursable at the most cost effective rate available unless special authorization is obtained for the exception.

Children in the custody of DCFS are not allowed to travel alone; so, transportation costs for one person to accompany the child are allowed for the safety and well-being of the child. The child shall be accompanied by someone known to him/her. The child may be accompanied by:

- The assigned case worker;
- The assigned supervisor;
- Another staff known to the child;
- The foster caregiver;
- Relative; or,
- Biological parent.

If travel is required due to a change in placement, the assigned case worker or supervisor must accompany the child. Refer to [6-400](#), Placement of the Child, and [6-735](#), Initial Visits.


Per diem costs for meals and lodging are paid in accordance with state allowed travel reimbursement maximums for the child and one staff member if an overnight stay is necessary. Authorization must be obtained in advance for overnight travel and out-of-state car rentals for DCFS staff only. Refer to [6-1640](#), Payment Procedures for Expenditures.

No child in foster care may travel out-of-state for more than 30 days. The assigned case worker must be able to conduct a face-to-face visit in the child's placement every month. Refer to 6-905, Case Worker Visits with the Foster Child/Foster Parent/Caregiver. Out-of-state travel for a foster child should only occur during times the child is not in school. Exceptions may be allowed by State Office Foster Care Unit when court-ordered or medically necessary.

II. PROCEDURES

Foster caregiver must complete the CW Form [435](#), Caregiver's Supplementary Expenditure Affidavit, for reimbursement using the TIPS 211, Provider Manual Payment. Case caregivers may be reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of a foster child through the TIPS 213, Worker Reimbursement. Reimbursement shall be requested no later than the end of the month following the month the transportation expense was incurred.

This section shall be referenced in conjunction with the TIPS manual for claiming reimbursement and paying vendor services, (Division of Administration PPM 49 and [Louisiana](#)

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[State Employees Travel Guide](#)) and DCFS Travel Regulations and Corporate Travel Card policies, [DCFS 1-21](#), Travel Regulations, and [DCFS 1-21](#), State Liability Travel Card and CBA Policy.

A. TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES REIMBURSABLE TO FOSTER CAREGIVERS

Foster caregivers may be reimbursed for transportation expenses under the following circumstances:

- required or allowed by DCFS for the welfare of the child for medical or other
- professional appointments, authorized family visits, court, or case planning meetings within the state; and/or
- free transportation to school is not available and the local school board will not reimburse the foster caregiver (applicable for public school enrollment only; transportation expenses are not reimbursable for private school, nor are transportation expenses allowed when a foster caregiver just wants to transport the child.).

Transportation for routine family travel such as shopping or daily activities is not reimbursable.


In-state travel expenses on behalf of the child by the foster caregiver, with the exception of transportation to and from school and daycare is reimbursed using the applicable TIPS code for mileage:

- 300 301 Client Visitation Maintenance (costs associated with child having in-person visitation with family members, such as parents, siblings, or other relatives);
- 300 302 Client Administrative. (costs associated with travel to court, medical appointments, case planning meetings, etc.);
- 300 311 Crisis transportation in the event of an emergency;
- 800 830 Incidental Travel Expense for Child and Foster Caregiver (common carrier fees, tolls, taxi, parking, meals, lodging, and tips for baggage handling).

Residential facilities may be reimbursed for transportation expenses as per [6-1615](#), Board Rate for Residential Facilities.

B. TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES REIMBURSABLE TO POTENTIAL ADOPTIVE CAREGIVERS

When a child is freed for adoption, it is important to locate potential caregivers that may be interested in building a relationship with the child in an effort to adopt the child, refer to policy 8-425, Preplacement Activities. Potential adoptive caregivers may be reimbursed for transportation expenses under the following circumstances:

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- Required or allowed by DCFS for the welfare of the child to begin pre-placement visits or to maintain a relationship with the child
- DCFS has agreed to provide reimbursement prior to visiting the child and there is an approved home study in the child's case record

Travel expenses on behalf of the child by a potential adoptive caregiver is reimbursed using the applicable TIPS codes:

- 300 310 Travel to and from the potential adoptive parent's home to visit the child paid at the rate designated in the [PPM 49](#), LA State Employee Travel Guide;
- 800 830 Incidental Travel Expenses for Child and Potential Adoptive Caregiver (lodging, tips for baggage handlings, tolls, and meals for the child)

DCFS cannot reimburse for other caregivers or children that may accompany the potential adoptive caregiver in their travel.

C. TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES REIMBURSABLE TO CASE WORKERS


The case worker may be reimbursed when transportation is needed and no other resource is available. If the case worker uses his personal car, mileage may be claimed in accordance with state travel regulations using the following applicable codes:

- 300 301 Client Visitation Maintenance (costs associated with child having in-person visitation with family members such as parents, siblings, or other relatives);
- 300 302 Client Administrative (costs associated with travel to court, medical appointments, case planning meetings, etc.);
- 300 303 Client Exceptions (transportation exceptions to policy with state office approval) 300 325 Transportation/In State/Non-Client Specific/Closed Case (case worker mileage only).
- 300 330 Transportation assistance outside of policy

Other travel expenses such as tolls, parking, taxi, meals, lodging, tips, or common carrier fares may be claimed in accordance with state travel regulations by the case worker using the following applicable codes:

- 800/835 Incidental Expense/Client Specific Transportation; or
- 800/836 Incidental Expense/Non-Client Specific/Closed Case/ Travel related expenses other than mileage, for case worker only.

Common carrier service may be used for in-state travel, if it is documented as more cost efficient and practical than use of a state or private car, but must be approved by the Regional Administrator (RA) prior to utilization. Payment for common carrier fare for the case worker

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may be made to the vendor (the carrier service or travel agent) using the applicable incidental expense code. TIPS code 800 835 is used for incidental travel expenses for the case worker.

D. APPROVAL OF TRAVEL REQUESTS

Approval for all out-of-state travel related to a child in foster care is delegated to the AD except when prior approval is required by Child Welfare (CW) Program staff, Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), or the Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ).

Approval by CW Program staff is required when a child in foster care is in need of an out-of-state placement in a medical, psychiatric, or educational facility.

Prior approval is required by ICPC staff for the following:

- placement out-of-state;
- moving a child following an out-of-state placement disruption;
- visits that do not have a return date from the outset, ~~and,~~

ICJ approval is required prior to returning a runaway child to Louisiana. ICJ approval is requested via email at DCFS.Operation.Runaway@la.gov.

Travel situations that may be approved by the RA include:

- travel by parents or other relatives with a significant relationship to the child to visit the child in an out-of-state placement to maintain family connections (Parents and other relatives must demonstrate an inability to provide for travel costs. The Department will only provide for the cost of travel, not meals and lodging.);
- travel to return a child who has been kidnapped to Louisiana, including travel of the person accompanying the child;
- Child Welfare case worker or foster caregiver's out-of-state/international travel specific to accompanying a child on case-related travel, but not related to placement;
- out-of-state travel for supervision of a child in a residential placement;
- out-of-state travel for visits of less than 30 days that are not intended as a placement and have a scheduled return date; and,
- in-state air travel when it is documented to be more cost efficient and practical than use of state or rental car.


Out-of-state travel requests must be made in writing and as far in advance as possible.

Requests may be made for a single trip or for multiple trips, up to three months at a time.

Travel shall not be approved for more than three months at a time. When an emergency need for travel exists, the request may be made and approved verbally. The verbal request and approval must be confirmed in writing as possible after the travel.

All out-of-state travel requests must include a completed [PMF 111](#), Travel Authorization, and a memo including the following information:

- child's name, date of birth, and TIPS number;

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- confirmation of ICPC, ICJ, or Program approval of travel, when necessary, to include copy of Form ICJ III for runaways;
- case circumstances and need for travel including the purpose of travel (pre-placement visits, placement, medical or psychiatric reason, etc.);
- dates of travel;
- estimated cost of travel and how it will be paid;
- travel arrangements;
- identification of child's travel companion;
- any history of runaway behaviors, suicidal/homicidal behaviors, and/or behavioral health issues to include date of last episode and current risk of these behaviors during travel;
- current medical issues for the child;
- any medications taken by the child and who will be responsible for medication management while in travel status;
- case worker's name and contact information; and
- supervisor's signature indicating approval of the travel.

Court orders of other states do not apply in Louisiana. If a child who is a Louisiana resident enters foster care in another state, the judge from the other state must contact the appropriate judicial district for the parent in Louisiana to request the transfer of custody to DCFS in Louisiana. Until a custody order from a judge in Louisiana is received, DCFS has no jurisdiction over or responsibility for the child.


E. APPROVAL OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

Area Directors may approve travel expenses related to children in foster care. If ICPC, ICJ, or Program staff approval was required for travel, written approval must be provided to the RA approving the travel expenses. Approved expenses and payment mechanisms must meet the requirements set forth in:

- DCFS Policy [1-14](#), Travel Regulations;
- [PPM 49](#), LA State Employee Travel Guide;
- Departmental [Memo 2014-11-01](#), Louisiana HotelPlanner Portal Instructions;
- Departmental [Memo 2014-11-02](#), Louisiana HotelPlanner Portal Sample Spreadsheet;
- Departmental [Memo 2014-11-03](#), Enterprise Rent-A-Car Instructions; and,
- Departmental [Memo 2014-11-04](#), Enterprise Rent-A-Car Portal Instructions.

Child-related travel, *** * including public transportation and baggage fees, ** may be paid with the *** LaCarte card. The following TIPS codes are used to allocate costs for travel:

- 800 835 Case worker expenses for open FC cases
- 800 836 Case worker expenses for closed FC cases

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- 800 830 Incidental expenses for child and/or foster caregiver accompanying the child
- 300 310 Child's travel by airline, bus, or train
- 300 312 Parent's expenses when traveling to visit a child placed in-state
- 300 313 Parent's expenses when traveling to visit a child placed out-of-state

Receipts must be attached to requests for reimbursement.

F. CAR RENTALS

The most cost efficient method of travel shall be utilized. When circumstances warrant, rental cars may be utilized. Refer to DCFS Policy [1-14](#), Travel Regulations and [PPM 49](#), LA State Employee Travel Guide, for further information on procedures for renting a car.

The Department does not rent cars for parents or foster caregivers.

G. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION


Public transportation includes transit systems, Uber and Lyft for adult clients and when an adult client is traveling with a foster child. If utilizing Uber and Lyft type services, only standard size vehicles are reimbursable with an itemized receipt. Any additional charges other than standard fare rates are not reimbursable (i.e. wait time fees). Case workers should utilize the most economic ground transportation without occurring additional markup fee such as peak hours or special events. Case workers may utilize public transportation to assist parents with attending visits when their child is in custody or as part of service provisions in CPS, FS and FC programs. The public transportation provision can be used in-state and out of state.

H. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

International travel of a child in DCFS custody requires approval of the DCFS Secretary. DCFS generally approves the costs of international travel only when court-ordered or in the best interest of the child to maintain a relationship with relatives or a parent. International travel is all travel to destinations outside of the fifty states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Refer to [6-935](#), Travel and the Foster Child, and Chapter 11 for ICPC Policy. A request for international travel for a child in foster care must be submitted at least 45 days prior to the departure date.

International travel requires a passport. If the child or person accompanying the child needs a passport, efforts should begin immediately to obtain a passport.

Reimbursement for the cost of a child's passport is an allowable expense. The Department will not reimburse the cost of a passport for the person accompanying the child (e.g. parent, foster caregiver, or case worker).

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III. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

CW [Form ICJ II](#) Consent for Voluntary Return of Out of State Juvenile
 CW Form TIPS 211 Provider Manual Payment
 CW Form TIPS 212 Vendor Reimbursement
 CW Form TIPS 213 Worker Reimbursement
 CW [Form 106B](#) / [Instructions](#) Client Service Authorization
 CW [Form 427-G](#) / [Instructions](#) Agreement between DCFS and Residential Provider
 CW [Form 435](#) / [Instructions](#) Caregiver's Supplementary Expenditure Affidavit
[PMF 111](#) / [Instructions](#) Travel Authorization Form

IV. REFERENCES

[PPM 49](#), LA State Employee Travel Guide