

**Office of Systems Integration  
Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) Project**

**SAWS County Travel Expense Claiming Policy  
January 14, 2020**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide consistent guidelines for claiming travel expenses for county staff assigned to the CalSAWS consortium.

**Background**

The Office of Systems Integration SAWS Project (OSI-SAWS) is responsible for overseeing information technology systems that counties use to deliver critical benefits and services to the residents of California. The CalSAWS Consortium systems are county-managed with state oversight. OSI-SAWS, the California Department of Social Services, and the Department of Health Care Services recognize that county staff play an essential role in the development, implementation and maintenance of the systems. Throughout the system lifecycle, county staff agree to short-term and long-term assignments at a project office and incur expenses associated with that assignment.

**Principles**

- Policies will be reasonable, practical, defensible and accountable.
- Policies will be applied consistently across the consortium.
- Policies can vary for different phases of the system lifecycle, where warranted.
- Policies will be adopted and administered by counties.

**Definitions**

- A short-term assignment exists when an individual is assigned to a position that is proposed to last for less than a year.
- A long-term assignment exists when an individual is assigned to a position that is proposed to last for a year or more.
- Short-term travel exists when an individual working in the county (not assigned to the consortium/project office) travels to the consortium/project office, another county, or a state office for meetings, etc.
- Business travel to the counties or in the vicinity of the project location by staff on short- or long-term assignments to the consortium/project office is also short-term travel.
- Project residence is the place where the county staff resides while assigned to the consortium/project office.
- Project location is the office of the consortium/project to which the county staff is assigned.
- Stipend is defined as a fixed regular sum paid as an allowance.

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## **Long-Term Assignment Travel Expense Claiming**

For maintenance and operations, county staff cannot claim travel expenses. For development and implementation, county staff can claim travel expenses which will be reimbursed using the consortium's or county's long-term travel reimbursement policy with the following limitations:

- Actual lodging costs can be claimed for reimbursement up to the maximum specified in the consortium/county policy or the federal per diem rate for lodging for the county where the business is to be conducted, whichever is less. Receipts are required to substantiate all lodging expenses claimed for reimbursement.
- Costs for meals and incidental expenses can be claimed for reimbursement as specified in the consortium/county policy or based on the federal per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses, whichever is less.
- Actual transportation expenses paid by county staff to travel to the project location at the beginning of the assignment and to travel to the county location at the end of the assignment can be claimed for reimbursement based on the county's reimbursement policy.
- Actual transportation expenses paid by county staff to travel from the project location to the county location can be claimed for reimbursement based on the county's reimbursement policy.
- Staff can claim only for out-of-pocket travel expenses actually paid and shall receive no reimbursement for travel services provided to them gratuitously including, but not limited to, lodging, meals, incidentals and transportation provided by friends or family members.
- Transportation expenses for travel to and from the project location and the project residence cannot be claimed for reimbursement.
- Actual transportation expenses resulting from business travel in the project area can be claimed for reimbursement as short-term travel expenses.
- Relocation expenses cannot be claimed.
- Grossing up reimbursement rates to cover income tax liability is not permitted.
- All payments to county staff for travel must be in the form of a travel reimbursement, not a salary allowance or stipend.
- County staff who do not retain a primary residence in the county will be considered to have permanently relocated to the project location and are eligible to claim only for short-term travel reimbursement for business travel.
- County staff whose primary residence is within a 50-mile radius of the project location are eligible to claim only for short-term travel reimbursement for business travel.
- During D&I, if filling a long-term position with a person who will remain for the duration of the position (or over 12 months) is not practical, the position can be filled with someone on a short-term basis (less than a year). The travel reimbursement will be based on the county's short-term travel rules. However, the state travel reimbursement will not be greater than what is budgeted in the Project's travel line-item, except in rare circumstances when significant business justification warrants reallocation to cover reimbursement of short-term travel costs.

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- Counties may elect to provide reimbursement in excess of the limitations prescribed in this policy to county staff paid with county administrative funds and claimed on the County Administrative Expense Claim.

### **Short-Term Travel Expense Claiming**

For all phases, county staff can claim short-term travel expenses which will be reimbursed based on their respective county's short-term travel reimbursement policies.

### **Administrative Responsibility**

- Each CalSAWS project office will ensure that their member counties understand the SAWS County Travel Reimbursement Policy.
- The CalSAWS project office is responsible for ensuring that travel costs are appropriately budgeted and allocated based on this policy.
- The county is responsible for ensuring that all travel expenses are appropriately claimed and that all required documentation, including receipts, are on file in the county.

### **Effective Date**

This policy, as amended, shall be implemented no later than January 14, 2020.

### **References:**

Information regarding the per diem rates can be found at:

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel-resources>

For additional information please contact the CalSAWS project.