

POLICY

SUBJECT: Out-of-State Travel for Parents or Legal Guardians
NUMBER: CS-123-14
APPLICABLE TO: Community Services Employees

APPROVED: _____ /s/ signature on original

Sam Abed, Secretary

EFFECTIVE DATE: _____ 4/9/14

I. POLICY

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS or Department) shall fund transportation and lodging when appropriate for parents or legal guardians to visit youth placed by the Department in out-of-state placements. Fiscal management of transportation and lodging costs will be charged to the per diem budget of the Region where the youth resides.

II. AUTHORITY

A. Md. Code Ann., Hum. Servs., §§9-203 and 204.

III. DIRECTIVES/POLICIES RESCINDED

A. Department Funding for Out-of-State Travel for Parents or Legal Guardians, CJ-01-06

IV. FAILURE TO COMPLY

Failure to comply with the Secretary's Policy and Procedures shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

V. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Standard operating procedures have been developed.

VI. REVISION HISTORY

DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE OF REVISION
Revised policy: new timeline for travel requests (must be made 15 days in advance); new acknowledgment procedures and form for parents; and travel request and reimbursement forms revised.	April 9, 2014



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MARYLAND Department of Juvenile Services

PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: Out-of-State Travel for Parents or Legal Guardians
NUMBER: CS-123-14
APPLICABLE TO: Community Services Employees

APPROVED: _____ /s/ signature on original

Linda McWilliams, Deputy Secretary

EFFECTIVE DATE: _____ 3/27/14

I. PURPOSE

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS or Department) establishes these procedures to provide guidelines for the request of out-of-state travel for parents, legal guardians, and youth.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Legal Guardian* means an individual to whom the court has granted physical and legal custody to provide for a child's needs including legal authority and responsibility for a child.
- B. *Parent* means the birth or adoptive mother or father of the child and includes by reference both mother and father as applicable.
- C. *Travel* means the travel of a parent, legal guardian or youth to or from Maryland and to or from an out-of-state placement at which DJS placed a youth.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Request for Out-of-State Travel

- 1. DJS shall ensure that parents or legal guardians shall visit their children who are in out-of-state placement. The Community Case Management Specialist (CMS) may accompany the parents or legal guardians if the parent is unable to travel independently.
- 2. Funding will be provided for travel and lodging for no more than two adult parents or legal guardians (over age 21) for quarterly visits for youth in out-of-state placements. Except for an emergency travel request, the Department will fund one trip per quarter (90 calendar days) for parents or legal guardians to visit their child. The quarter begins on the first day the youth is in residence in an out-of-state placement. The Department reserves the right to suspend a quarterly visit when parents or legal guardians do not comply with DJS or residential program requirements.

3. All requests for visits must be coordinated with the youth's parent or guardian and the CMS.
4. All out-of-state travel for parents or legal guardians shall be approved by the Regional Director prior to a trip being arranged.
5. The CMS must notify the Travel Coordinator of all requests for travel approved by the Regional Director at least 15 business days prior to date of travel. Final approval and all arrangements for out-of-state travel for parents or legal guardians shall be made by the DJS Office of Budget and Finance.
6. Requests for DJS to fund out-of-state travel for parents or legal guardians shall be submitted on a *Request for Parents and Legal Guardians Travel Form* and include the requested dates of the trip, the names of the travelers and the reason for the trip.
7. The *Request for Parents and Legal Guardians Travel Form* approved by the RD shall be submitted by the CMS to the Office of Budget and Finance DJS Travel Coordinator at 15 business days prior to the anticipated travel date.
8. If a parent or legal guardian chooses to drive to the facility where their child is in residence, DJS shall reimburse the parent or legal guardian's mileage at the rate of one-half the State reimbursement rate. The youth's CMS shall ensure the parent completes and signs the *Parent/Legal Guardian Mileage Verification/Reimbursement Form* after the parent or legal guardian's visit. The CMS shall verify that the parents or legal guardians appeared for the visit with the youth and confirm that the reported mileage is accurate based on mileage information provided via an Internet map/direction locator (i.e. Google).
9. The CMS shall forward the completed *Parent/Legal Guardian Mileage Verification/Reimbursement Form* to the DJS Office of Budget and Finance within 30 calendar days of the visit.
10. The Department will pay for travel and lodging accommodations for a youth's parent or legal guardian only to the extent that travel and lodging are not provided by the out-of-state placement.
11. The Department shall not reimburse parents or legal guardians for meals.

B. Responsibilities

1. **Community Case Management Specialist.** The CMS shall:
 - a. Place youth in out-of-state programs in accordance with the *DJS Placement Policy*.
 - b. Complete a *Request for Parent or Legal Guardian Travel Form* and submit the form to the Regional Director for approval three weeks prior to the date of travel. Upon receipt of the approved travel form from the Regional Director, forward the form to the DJS Travel Coordinator **within 15 business days of the date of travel or within 24 hours of an emergency.**

- c. Meet with the parent or legal guardian upon notification that parents or legal guardians have been approved for an out-of-state placement to review the following:
 - 1) Name, location, description and visiting requirements of the placement,
 - 2) Approximate date of the youth's admission, and
 - 3) Funding and requirements for travel and lodging for parents or legal guardians; and
 - 4). Travel procedures for parents and obtain a signed copy of the *Acknowledgment and Review of Travel Procedures for Parents Form*.
- d. Coordinate the parent or legal guardian visit date, travel and lodging arrangements with the placement facility and the Office of Budget and Finance DJS Travel Coordinator. Ensure parents have travel arrangements from the airport, bus or train terminal to the out-of-state placement facility including, but not limited to ensuring the placement will provide transportation to the facility or the parents or legal guardians has transportation to the facility. DJS will rent an automobile for parents or legal guardians who have a valid driver's license and reimburse for the cost of gas with an original receipt.
- e. Notify the parent that DJS will only reimburse for rooms and tax; all other charges or incidentals, including but not limited to meals, phone charges, room service, or damages to the hotel property, are the responsibility of the parents or legal guardians and will not be reimbursed by DJS.
- f. Notify parent that if the parents or legal guardians need to cancel travel arrangements, the parents or legal guardians must notify the CMS 72 hours prior to the travel date. Parents who fail to provide timely notice of any cancellation will be charged for costs incurred by the Department. The CMS must immediately email the DJS Travel Coordinator and their supervisor, as soon as the parent reports the need to cancel. During holidays, weekends, and non-business hours, the CMS may need to cancel the travel arrangements if unable to speak to the DJS Travel Coordinator or their supervisor to cancel the hotel reservations.
- g. Notify the parents or legal guardians that if the parent fails to notify the CMS within 72 hours of any cancellation, the parents or legal guardians will be responsible for reimbursement unless the parents or legal guardians can provide documentation of an emergency to the CMS who will forward it to the DJS Chief Financial Officer for resolution.
- h. On the next business day after the visit, the CMS shall confirm with the program that the parent completed the visit according to the out-of-state program requirements. If the parent fails to

- complete the visit, the parent may be held responsible for all travel costs incurred.
- i. Ensure the *Parent/Legal Guardian Mileage Verification/Reimbursement Form* is completed by the parent or legal guardian if the parent or legal guardian travels by personal vehicle to visit the youth; inform the parent or legal guardian that the following is needed prior to being reimbursed:
 - 1) The date of the visit and verification from the facility that the visit occurred;
 - 2) The parent's or legal guardian's Social Security Number;
 - 3) The address of the starting location of the trip, the beginning mileage and the ending mileage; and
 - 4) Notify the parent/ that DJS will reimburse mileage at one-half the rate of the State's mileage rate and obtain a signed copy of the *Acknowledgment and Review of Travel Procedures for Parents Form*.
 - ii. Upon notification that travel arrangements have been made, notify the parent or legal guardian of the arrangements and provide the itinerary to the parent.
 - iii. Provide the parent or legal guardian a copy of the *Request for Parent or Legal Guardian Travel Form* and/or the *Parent/Legal Guardian Mileage Verification/Reimbursement Form*.
2. **Regional Directors.** Regional Directors shall:
- a. Review each completed *Request for Parents or Legal Guardians Travel Form* for accuracy and completeness. Disapprove or approve the request; if necessary, indicate the reason for the disapproval. Return the approved *Request for Parents or Legal Guardians Travel Form* to the CMS.
 - b. Waive the 15 business days' notice in the case of a youth emergency or an emergency discharge and assist the Office of Budget and Finance DJS Travel Coordinator in expediting the travel arrangements.
3. **DJS Office of Budget and Finance shall:**
- a. Identify individual(s) within the unit to serve as the DJS Travel Coordinator to receive and review any *Request for Parents or Legal Guardians Travel Form* for accuracy and consistency with applicable policies and procedures.
 - b. Review the Region's budget to ensure that funds are available for travel and lodging, if requested. If funds are not available, immediately communicate such information to the Regional Director and discuss alternatives that will ensure that the travel will occur.
 - c. If funds are available, process the *Request for Parents or Legal*

- Guardians Travel Form* and secure travel arrangements. If the funds are not available, submit a written justification to the Regional Director within two business days of the decision.
- d. Upon receipt of an approved *Parent/Legal Guardian Mileage Verification/Reimbursement Form*, check to ensure the form has been completed accurately and all required receipts or documentation are attached. If all required receipts and documentation are received, request a check for the reimbursement amount. If all required receipts and documentation are received, but the request is denied, notify the CMS in writing of the reason why the reimbursement has been denied.
 - e. Upon approval of travel or lodging, the Travel Coordinator will provide all travel and lodging information, including confirmation numbers and contact information in case of cancellation, to the Case Management Specialist in writing prior to the first day of travel.

C. Request from Parents or Legal Guardians who Reside Outside of the State of Maryland

1. The Department may provide reimbursement to the parents or legal guardians who reside out-of-state to visit a youth the Department has placed in an out-of-state placement. DJS staff shall comply with this policy when making travel arrangements for a parents or legal guardians who reside out-of-state.
2. The DJS Chief Financial Officer or designee shall review the approved *Request for Parents and Legal Guardians Travel Form* and/or *Parent/Legal Guardian Mileage Verification/Reimbursement Form* for parents or legal guardians who reside outside of the State of Maryland, and retain final approval or disapproval authority on a case-by-case basis.

CI. Emergency Out-of-State Travel Request

1. The Department shall consider funding for emergency out-of-state travel for parents or legal guardians on a case-by-case basis.
2. A CMS shall request emergency travel within 24 hours, or the first business day of knowledge of the need for emergency travel for parents or legal guardians. Complete a *Request for Parent/Legal Guardian Travel Form* and email to the Regional Director.
3. The Regional Director shall approve in writing an emergency travel request that must state the nature of the emergency and shall submit the request to the DJS Travel Coordinator and copy the CMS.
4. Final approval and payment of emergency travel requests for parents or legal guardians shall be made by the Office of Budget and Finance.
5. The DJS Travel Coordinator shall verbally inform the CMS of the decision

to approve or deny the request for emergency travel by close of business on the date of the request. If denied, the reason for the denial shall be documented in writing to the CMS within 24 hours or by close of business on the next business day.

IV. DIRECTIVES/POLICIES REFERENCED

A. **DJS Placement Policy, CS-110-13**

V. APPENDICES

All forms can be found on the intranet under Forms/Youth Services Related.

1. **Request for Parent/Legal Guardian Travel Form**
2. **Parent or Legal Guardian Mileage Verification/Reimbursement Form**
3. **Acknowledgment and Review of Travel Procedures for Parents Form**



DJS POLICY AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Statement of Receipt and Acknowledgment of Review

SUBJECT: Out-of-State Travel for Parents or Legal Guardians
NUMBER: CS-123-14
APPLICABLE TO: Community Services employees

I have received and reviewed a copy (electronic or paper) of the above titled policy.

I understand that failure to sign this acknowledgment form within five working days of receipt of the policy shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

I understand that I will be held accountable for implementing this policy even if I fail to sign this acknowledgment form.

SIGNATURE

PRINTED NAME

DATE

THE ORIGINAL COPY MUST BE PLACED IN THE EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES.