

Trial Judge Handbook

# TRAVEL

Section 6

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.10.10
SECTION	OVERVIEW	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	GENERAL INFO	REVISION NUMBER	001
		REVISION DATE	11/04/2021

The Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) will only reimburse for business travel made by the judge or their law clerk/staff attorney. Court reporters and court administrators are reimbursed travel through their county (Miss Code Ann. § 9-17-1 (2017) and Miss Code Ann. § 9-13-19 (2015)).

Due to strict DFA regulations concerning travel, submissions are heavily monitored. If you have questions before a trip or if something abnormal has occurred during your trip, please call our office and let us know.

Only **actual business expenses** shall be claimed on the travel voucher. Any claims above actual expenditures constitute fraud. In addition, any claim for reimbursement of an expense when the expense was actually paid by another constitutes fraud.

The AOC Trial Judge Travel Manual is available for download on our website [www.courts.ms.gov](http://www.courts.ms.gov) under the Forms Library/Travel section. If you have additional questions, please contact the Finance Office (Jennifer).



TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.20.10
SECTION	INSTATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS	REVISION NUMBER REVISION DATE	

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### Travel Voucher Submission Requirements

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- Original, signed travel vouchers should be submitted monthly. We do not reimburse from email or fax copies.
  - A copy of the travel voucher is available on our website [www.courts.ms.gov](http://www.courts.ms.gov) under the Forms Library/Travel section.
  - **The judge must sign at *Approved for Payment* on their law clerk/staff attorney's travel voucher.**
  
- At the end of the fiscal year, June 30<sup>th</sup>, all travel voucher submissions must be received by mid-July. A specific date will be given to you in advance. Failure to return your travel voucher during the designated lapse period will result in non-payment.
  
- In-state and out-of-state travel must be submitted on separate travel vouchers.
  
- Purpose of travel must be related to official duties and details should include:
  - The court to which you traveled
  - The reason for travel including the name of the function, workshop, committee meeting, or training with a copy of the agenda attached
  
- Points of travel should include, at a minimum, the names of the towns/cities. (i.e. Jackson to Oxford – round trip).

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.20.20
SECTION	IN-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	MILEAGE & MEAL RATES	REVISION NUMBER REVISION DATE	001 11/04/2021

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## Meals

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- You are not allowed meals in the city with which you reside or in the city of your official duty station. If you are unsure of your official duty station, please contact the Finance Office (Jennifer).
- Meals are always taxable unless an overnight stay is involved. No receipts are required. Listed below are the current rates, but you can also visit our website for the listings here: <https://courts.ms.gov/aoc/forms/TravelForms/2020-mileage-reimbursement-rate.pdf>

### October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022

Meal	In-State	Southaven & Starkville
B'FAST	8.00	9.00
LUNCH	16.00	18.00
DINNER	22.00	24.00
TOTAL	46.00	51.00

- The breakfast meal will be allowed while traveling when the departure time is prior to 6:00 a.m. or if overnight travel is involved. "Early Departure" must be footnoted on the travel voucher.
- The evening meal will be allowed while traveling when the return is later than 8:00 p.m. or if overnight travel is involved. "Late Arrival" must be footnoted on the travel voucher.

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.20.20
SECTION	IN-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	MILEAGE & MEAL RATES	REVISION NUMBER REVISION DATE	001 11/04/2021

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## Mileage

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Current mileage rate information can be obtained directly through the Finance Office or on our website at [www.courts.ms.gov](http://www.courts.ms.gov) under the Forms Library/Travel section.

- Mileage from your home to your official duty station is not reimbursable as this is deemed commuting by IRS regulations. If you are unsure of your official duty station, please contact the Finance Office (Jennifer).
- If a trial judge drives and a staff attorney/law clerk accompanies (or vice versa), only one person may request reimbursement for mileage. It is permissible to claim reimbursement for a meal if you are the passenger. Please note on the official travel voucher if you are the passenger in the vehicle by stating who drove.

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.20.30
SECTION	IN-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	ALLOWABLE/NON-ALLOWABLE TRAVEL	REVISION NUMBER REVISION DATE	

Only **actual business expenses** shall be claimed on the travel voucher. Any claims above actual expenditures constitute fraud. In addition, any claim for reimbursement of an expense when the expense was actually paid by another constitutes fraud.

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### **Allowable Travel**

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Travel related to the following is reimbursable:

- Travel from your official duty station to another assigned courthouse.
- Travel to return or pick up office equipment from the Supreme Court by the judge or staff attorney/law clerk.
- Travel for a trial judge to attend an in-state conference, CLE, or training seminar is reimbursable and permissible without prior approval. An agenda must be provided with the travel voucher.
  - Due to budget constraints, only one in-state conference is allowed per fiscal year, in addition to the two Judicial College Conferences which occur in the fall and spring.
- In-state, overnight stays are only allowable for distances of 60 miles or more one-way or if deemed allowable by a Call to Conference issued by the Chief Justice or AOC Director.
  - Detailed lodging receipts are always required with overnight stays, and the room reservation must be in the name of the employee seeking reimbursement.

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.20.30
SECTION	IN-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	ALLOWABLE/NON-ALLOWABLE TRAVEL	REVISION NUMBER REVISION DATE	

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### Non-Allowable Travel

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Travel related to the following is **NOT** reimbursable:

- Deliver personal documents (ex: health insurance form, direct deposit form, or PERS forms, Judicial Performance paperwork, etc.) to the Supreme Court
- Obtain office supplies
- Attend fundraiser/charity events
- Administer oaths
- Attend funerals
- Attend investiture ceremonies
- Officiate weddings
- Travel reimbursement requests for attending MADCP conferences will need be filed and reimbursed to you by your local county drug court.
- Necessary travel expenses **do not include** personal expense items such as entertainment, liquor charges, telephone calls to family members or telephone calls to locate your cellular phone, and travel insurance. Charges related to sightseeing (taxi, etc.) and other personal trips are also unallowable.



TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.20.40
SECTION	IN-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	SUPPORT STAFF TRAVEL	REVISION NUMBER REVISION DATE	

The Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) will only reimburse for business travel made by the judge or their law clerk/staff attorney. Court reporters and court administrators are reimbursed travel through their county (Miss Code Ann. § 9-17-1 (2017)).

- If a trial judge drives and a staff attorney/law clerk accompanies (or vice versa), only one person may request reimbursement for mileage. It is permissible to claim reimbursement for a meal if you are the passenger. Please note on the official travel voucher if you are the passenger in the vehicle by stating who drove.
- In-state conferences for staff attorneys/law clerks must be pre-approved by Kevin Lackey in AOC.
- Out-of-state conferences for staff attorneys/law clerks **are not** reimbursable.
- **The judge must sign at *Approved for Payment* on their law clerk/staff attorney's travel voucher.**

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.30.10
SECTION	OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	OUT-OF-STATE REQUIREMENTS	REVISION NUMBER REVISION DATE	

Do not combine multiple in-state and out-of-state trips on one travel voucher. Please submit in-state and out-of-state travel on separate travel vouchers, and only one out-of-state trip per one travel voucher.

Out-of-state trips for law clerks/staff attorneys **are not** reimbursable.

For more information concerning travel, please visit our website at [www.courts.ms.gov](http://www.courts.ms.gov). The AOC Trial Judge Travel Manual is available for download our website under the Forms Library/Travel section.

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### **Prior Approval**

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Each trial judge is automatically approved to attend the annual Mississippi Bar Convention held in July.

Any additional out-of-state trip must be approved through the Trial Judge Fiscal Committee and is subject to travel budget availability. Approval is required even if the trip is not fully or partially funded by the Court.

Please visit our website at [www.courts.ms.gov](http://www.courts.ms.gov) to obtain a Travel Authorization or directly at this link <https://courts.ms.gov/aoc/forms/TravelForms/outofstatetravel.pdf> .

**Travel authorization requests must be submitted to the AOC no later than 6 weeks prior to the trip start date.**

**Do not book lodging or airfare until you have received your approval letter.**

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.30.20
SECTION	OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	TRAVEL EXPENSES	REVISION NUMBER	
		REVISION DATE	

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### Transportation – Public Carrier, Personal Car, Rental Car

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- Airline tickets may be purchased at your own risk, or you can utilize our Avanti Travel Agency services and bill the Court directly. You must have trip approval before you book your flight. Once the trip is approved through AOC, we will contact our Avanti rep and let them know you are authorized to use their services.
- If you prefer to drive instead of fly, the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) will only reimburse for the lesser of the two. You must submit 2 flight quotes and a detailed cost comparison with your Travel Authorization form for review.
- For any travel instances which would require a rental car, please contact the Finance Office (Jennifer) to discuss this option. In most cases, a rental car is automatically disallowed. If the rental car is approved by the Trial Judge Fiscal Committee, you can visit our Travel Forms library for a listing of State contracts. **You must follow the guidelines to ensure complete reimbursement for charges.**

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### Lodging

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- Hotel reservations are your responsibility. If you must pay a room deposit, it is typically only one night's charge.
- We cannot reimburse for lodging until the end of the trip.
- The final zero balance lodging receipt detailing the nightly charges is required for reimbursement.

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.30.20
SECTION	OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	TRAVEL EXPENSES	REVISION NUMBER REVISION DATE	

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### Meals

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- Each city/county in the U.S. has a maximum daily meal allowance. Please visit our website under the Forms Library/Travel section for a listing per city/state of this daily rate.
- Meal receipts are not required.
- A meal breakdown is not necessary for an out-of-state trip.
- Meal tips are limited to 15% and should not be included in the total meal amount but listed in the “other” column on the back of the travel voucher.
- If you have any questions, please contact the Finance Office (Jennifer).

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### Other Expenses

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- Receipts must be submitted with your travel voucher for any item/service costing \$10 or more, except for meals.
  - Baggage fees
  - Shuttle/Taxi fares
  - Airport parking
- Tips for cabs, bellhops, room cleaning, parking, etc. are allowable without a receipt, costing under \$10, and within reason.
- Excessive tipping will not be reimbursed (i.e. \$5 bellhop/cleaning tip daily or 30% tip for a meal).

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.20.30
SECTION	OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	GENERAL JURISDICTION	REVISION NUMBER REVISION DATE	

For every new circuit, chancery, county, family court judge, elected or appointed, there shall be a requirement that every judge shall attend, within one year of taking office, even though (s)he has not taken office, the General Jurisdiction course at the National Judicial College at Reno, Nevada, or other judicial college approved by the Committee on Continuing Judicial Education provided funding is available through the Mississippi (MS) Judicial College or state travel allowance.

Classes are typically offered in April and October each year, and the training lasts two weeks. Please contact the Mississippi Judicial College at 662-915-5955 for more information on the classes, registration, and scholarships.

If there are any fees associated with the registration of this conference, those charges can be reimbursed to you through your office allowance account. All other expenses will be reimbursed through the Trial Judge Travel Budget.

**A completed out-of-state travel request along with all supporting documents should be submitted to the Finance Office no later than 6 weeks prior to the trip start date.** The travel authorization form can be found at [www.courts.ms.gov](http://www.courts.ms.gov) under the Forms/Travel section, <https://courts.ms.gov/aoc/forms/TravelForms/outofstatetravel.pdf>.

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## Travel Expenses

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### **Please do not make any reservations until you receive approval.**

- Airline tickets may be purchased at your own risk and reimbursement sought immediately after the expenditure, or you can utilize our Avanti Travel Agency services and bill the Court directly. You must have trip approval before you book your flight. Once the trip is approved through AOC, we will contact our Avanti rep and let them know you are authorized to use their services.
- Hotel reservations are your responsibility. If you must pay a room deposit, it is typically only one night's charge. We cannot reimburse for lodging until the end of the trip, so please keep your deposit receipt/email confirmation. The final, zero balance, lodging bill is required for reimbursement.
- Rental cars are not allowed. The conference is usually held within walking distance of the hotel where you will be staying.
- Shuttle/cab fare from the airport and back is reimbursable and a receipt is required for reimbursement. If you have special circumstances, please contact the Finance Office, and we will discuss other options.

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.20.30
SECTION	OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	GENERAL JURISDICTION	REVISION NUMBER REVISION DATE	

- Shuttle/cab fare related to sightseeing or to/from restaurants is not reimbursable.
- Baggage fees can be reimbursed and are typically \$25/bag each way for a total of \$50. If the charge is slightly higher, we will reimburse with no issues. A receipt for each charge is required for reimbursement.
- One laundering fee is reimbursable since the trip exceeds seven days. The hotel should be able to provide you with a cost estimate and a receipt is required for reimbursement.
- Daily meal reimbursement rate – Please contact the Finance Dept. for the current rate.
- You will obtain bulky training manuals/materials, so it is permissible to mail those items to your office or home to avoid any additional baggage fees. A receipt is required for reimbursement.
- Airport parking is reimbursable and a receipt is required for reimbursement.
- Mileage incurred driving to and from the airport is reimbursable at the current mileage rate. Please visit [www.courts.ms.gov](http://www.courts.ms.gov), Forms Library/Travel for the rate.

TOPIC	TRAVEL	SUB-SECTION	06.20.40
SECTION	OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL	ISSUANCE DATE	10/31/2018
SUB-SECTION	OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL REQUEST FORM	REVISION NUMBER	
		REVISION DATE	

**SUPREME COURT OF MISSISSIPPI  
OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL REQUEST**

Please submit form at least six (6) weeks prior to trip start date.

**TRAVELER INFORMATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**TRIP INFORMATION**

Title of Conference: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Destination: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Travel: \_\_\_\_\_

**ESTIMATED COSTS OF TRAVEL**

Registration Fee/Tuition	\$ _____	*Attach a copy of conference agenda or brochure, including reg/tuition fee cost.
Airline Charge	\$ _____	*Attach a copy of ticket estimate(s).
Taxi Fare/Shuttle Fare/Rental Car** **Evidence that rental car is cheaper than use of taxi/shuttle <b>MUST</b> be provided	\$ _____	*Attach a copy of taxi/shuttle/rental car estimate. Rental car estimate must be from an approved State Vendor with adj rates.
Mileage	\$ _____	*If driving vs flying, attach flight estimate. Lesser of two will be reimbursed.
Hotel Accommodations (Lodging)	\$ _____	*Attach a copy of lodging estimate.
Meals	\$ _____	*www.courts.ms.gov, Forms Library (Travel) lists out-of-state meal reimbursement rates.
Other Expenses	\$ _____	*Other: _____
<b>Total Estimated Cost of Trip</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**AOC OFFICIAL USE ONLY:**

Finance Department Authorization: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Funded By:  Judicial Travel Budget  Drug Court Fund  Local Drug Court Fund  Grant/3<sup>rd</sup> Party  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Travel Request:  Authorized  Authorized but not funded  Denied

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form and supporting documents to:  
 Administrative Office of Courts, Post Office Box 117, Jackson, MS 39205-0117.