

Volunteer Travel Reimbursement Processes and Procedures

The Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program Budget office is responsible for and processes all volunteer travel reimbursements in accordance with policies and procedures established by both the Florida Department of Financial Services and Florida statutes. If you have questions or need assistance with a travel reimbursement form, please call (850) 922-7213 and ask to speak with someone in the Budget office about volunteer travel. You may also contact your local Circuit Human Resources and Budget Liaison for assistance.

The process for submitting a travel reimbursement request is as follows:

1. Volunteers seeking a travel reimbursement must record all hours and travel information (i.e. dates of travel and actual mileage) in Optima.
 - o If travel is older than 60 days and the trip was not entered in Optima, the volunteer must coordinate with his or her the Child Advocate Manager to approve the travel prior to submitting it to the Budget Office for processing. To do this, the Child Advocate Manager must sign and date the Volunteer Travel Supervisor Approval Form (See Attachment 1) and send the form directly to the Budget Office. This is required so the budget office knows the travel is correct and was approved as necessary and critical to the mission of the Guardian ad Litem Program.
2. After a volunteer records his or her hours and travel information in Optima, he or she must complete, print, **sign and date** both the Travel Reimbursement Form and the Volunteer Travel Verification Form (See attachments 2 and 3).
 - o Volunteers **cannot** use electronic signatures on the Travel Reimbursement or Volunteer Verification forms.
 - o Since all travel is entered into the State or Florida's electronic travel system, volunteers **cannot** combine multiple months of travel on a single travel voucher form. Travel for each month must be reported on its own travel voucher form.
 - o Volunteers understand that the GAL Program receives a set amount of funding for volunteer travel each fiscal year (July-June). Volunteers are strongly encouraged to submit travel reimbursement requests in a timely manner because reimbursement is done subject to the availability of funds appropriated by the legislature for volunteer travel.

- o Volunteers who have never submitted a travel reimbursement request must provide their name, address, social security number, email address and a contact phone number to with the Travel Reimbursement and Volunteer Verification forms. The Budget Office cannot process travel reimbursement requests for new volunteers unless and until this information is received and a vendor file created in the State of Florida accounting system.
 - o Volunteers **may not** incur nor will they be reimbursed for overnight travel expenditures unless the trip is approved in advance by the GAL Director of Operations or his/her designee.
3. Volunteers should scan and send all completed Travel Reimbursement and Volunteer Verification forms, along with all necessary receipts, to the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Budget office at travel@gal.fl.gov. Alternatively, volunteers may mail a copy of their Travel Reimbursement Form, Volunteer Verification Form and receipts to the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office at PO Box 10628; Tallahassee, FL 32302.
 4. When the Statewide Office receives the signed, dated travel reimbursement documents, staff in the Budget Office staff will audit the documents and verify the reimbursement amounts requested. If no corrections are required, staff send the reimbursement request to the Justice Administrative Commission (JAC) for entry into the State's financial management system (FLAIR).
 5. FLAIR assigns all invoices, including travel reimbursements, to a voucher schedule. JAC sends these voucher schedules to the Florida Department of Financial Services (DFS) for final auditing and payment.
 6. DFS receives all voucher schedules and either processes them for payment or flags them for audit. While the State of Florida has up to 40 days to pay a valid invoice (Florida Statutes 215.422), DFS pays most invoices 7 to 10 days after the voucher schedule is prepared. If selected for audit, DFS will either pay an invoice flagged for audit (after a short delay) or return it to the Guardian ad Litem Program with a reason for the payment rejection. GAL will reach out to the volunteer to resolve any payment rejection issues and, once fully addressed, resubmit the travel reimbursement for payment.