



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING EXCEPTIONS
TO STATEWIDE RESTRICTIONS
RELATING TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
chapter [43.03](#) RCW sections 049, 050(6), 220, 230,
240, 250 and 265

In 2011 the legislature enacted laws that placed restrictions on reimbursement for subsistence, lodging and travel costs for member participation in meetings of many boards, commissions, councils, committees, and similar groups. [Chapter 43.03 RCW](#).

These restrictions apply to all meetings of boards, commissions and committees where specific business is conducted. Any travel and related cost reimbursement related to attending these meetings must be requested by the board, commission, or committee member and approved by the Chief Justice prior to attendance. Such requests are called "exception" requests.

Approval by the Chief Justice or the Chief Justice's Designee

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court allows independent judicial branch entities to initially review exception requests using the process noted below. The appropriate governing or designated authority needs to approve/deny the exception request and, if approved, forward the approval recommendation and associated documentation to Christopher Stanley for final review with the Chief Justice. The independent judicial branch entities include the Court of Appeals, the Office of Civil Legal Aid, and the Office of Public Defense.

The Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts, the Supreme Court Clerk, and the Law Library must receive approval from the Chief Justice or the Chief Justice's designee prior to commencing activities restricted by [RCW 43.03.050\(6\)](#).

Annual Exceptions for Regularly Scheduled Meetings

The following groups and their standing committees must receive an annual one-time calendar year exception approval to the restrictions identified in RCW 43.03.050(6) for regularly scheduled meetings during the calendar year:

- Board for Judicial Administration and standing committees
- Minority and Justice Commission and standing committees
- Gender and Justice Commission and standing committees
- Commission on Children in Foster Care and standing committees
- Interpreter Commission and standing committees
- Certified Professional Guardian Board and standing committees
- Pattern Forms Committee and standing committees

Ad-Hoc Meetings Also Require Exceptions

The members of the groups identified above must also seek an exception to each attended ad-hoc meeting (a meeting that is not regularly scheduled and called by the board, commission, or committee for a specific purpose) held by board, commission or committee.

Exception Process Necessary for Boards, Commissions and Committees Funded by the General Fund

The exception process applies to boards, commissions and committees funded from the state general fund. Boards, commissions and committees funded from other sources, e.g. Judicial Information System Account, are not required to submit an exception request. The following groups are not impacted by the provisions of RCW 43.03.050(6):

- Judicial Information System Committee and all related sub-groups
- Access-to-Justice Board and its sub-groups
- Board for Court Education programs
- Equal Justice Taskforce
- Court Improvement Workgroups (federal funding)
- Data Dissemination Committee
- Pattern Jury Instructions Committee

Other Groups or Sub-groups

All other groups or sub-groups funded by the state general fund, if not excluded specifically in the list above, must seek an annual exception through the process noted here.

AOC Staff Exempt

AOC staff support for any group is exempt from these provisions. An exception request is not necessary for reimbursement of subsistence, lodging, and travel costs incurred by AOC employees providing staff support. All policies and procedures regarding reimbursement must be followed regardless of whether an exemption is provided.

In all instances, the Supreme Court requests that all groups strive to meet in a manner that minimizes costs.

Exception Process-Administrative Office of the Courts This should be addressed in a separate document...inconsistent with the title

All exception requests must be forwarded to the appropriate authority, then to Christopher Stanely for review and processing. All requests must be submitted for to the event date. Requests and reimbursement will be denied if this procedure is not followed.

Forms must be submitted a minimum of 30 days prior to the beginning of each meeting date. If submitting for an entire year, the forms must be submitted a minimum of 30 days prior to the beginning of the calendar year.

Once the exception form has been approved by both the Division Director and the AOC Director of Management Services Division, the event can move forward as planned. **All travel and other reimbursement policies must be followed.** Failure to follow all of the policies will result in non-payment of the invoices and related travel voucher. If meals or light refreshments will be served, in accordance with policy, a separate Prior Approval for Meetings with Meals, Coffee/Light Refreshments Form must be completed, approved by the appropriate manager and submitted to Financial Services

The exception approval process is solely to obtain approval for meetings where travel reimbursement will be requested for members of groups identified in RCW 43.03.220-265. All other travel and related policies must be followed to obtain reimbursement.

The AOC travel policy manual can be found [Here](#)

Requests must demonstrate that the exception is necessary for provision of critical state services and that it is not feasible to hold meetings by means other than in-person. Each request will be evaluated using the following criteria.

- Can the activity/meeting be accomplished by means that does not require travel while maximizing member and public participation?
- Does statute, court rule, federal grant, or other authority require members to be physically present at one location only? If so, cite the specific authority.
- Must members be physically present to review materials, conduct discussions and/or view a presentation? If so, why.
- What consequences will occur if this exemption is not approved?

Exception requests must be submitted on the form available on AOC's website at <https://inside.courts.wa.gov/index.cfm?fa=controller.showPage&folder=financialServices&file=StateWideException1371>, and can be forwarded electronically to Christopher Stanley. **When transmitted electronically from the approving authority's computer, a typed name will be considered a signature.** If forms are completed manually (hard copies) rather than electronically, approving authorities must sign and the documents bearing original signatures sent or delivered to Christopher Stanley at the address below.

Christopher Stanley, Director of Management Services
Administrative Office of the Courts
P.O. Box 41170 (MS 41170)
Olympia, WA 98504-1170
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Notification of Approval or Denial

Exception requests will be reviewed as received. Approval/denial notice will be sent to the requester as quickly as possible.

Please direct questions to Christopher Stanley, AOC Director of Management Services, at (360) 357-2406 or