



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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July 17, 2019

TO: Agency Directors
Presidents of Higher Education Institutions
State Boards and Commissions

FROM: David Schumacher
Director

SUBJECT: NEW PROCESS FOR EXEMPTION APPROVALS FOR TRAVEL ALLOWANCES FOR CLASS 1, 2, 3, AND 5 GROUPS

Background

In 2011, the Legislature prohibited any person designated as a member of a class 1, 2, 3, or 5 board, commission, council, committee, or similar group from receiving an allowance for subsistence, lodging, or travel expenses **if the cost was paid by the state general fund**, unless an exemption was approved by the appropriate authority.

The 2011 legislation designated the Office of Financial Management (OFM) as the approving authority for exemptions for the executive branch. OFM delegated this approval authority to the following individuals for boards, commissions, councils, committees, or similar groups within their purview:

- Separately elected officials;
- Presidents of institutions of higher education; and
- Chairs and executive directors of boards and commissions required by the state constitution.

In addition, to reduce administrative work, OFM approved a blanket exemption for travel allowances for meetings required by state law or necessary to receive federal funds. The blanket exemption was to be narrowly interpreted by agencies, and only applied where a state or federal law, rule or grant specifically required an in-person meeting.

New process

The 2019 Legislature approved [Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5311](#), which now directly grants the authority to approve travel expenses to the above individuals. The new law also gives approval authority to agency directors for boards under their purview. It takes effect on July 28, 2019.

Attached is the current OFM exemption form that you can modify for your approval process. You may wish to consider approving blanket exemptions for your groups using the criteria described above.

If you have questions, contact Rachel Milnes at (360) 902-0555 or ofmbudget@ofm.wa.gov.