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State of California Automated Expense Reimbursement Project

Efficiency Through Automation

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CalATERS Pilot Successfully Concludes!

Get ready to experience a new automated way to process Travel Advance and Expense Reimbursement Requests!

The State Controller's Office is excited and pleased to introduce the California Automated Travel Expense Reimbursement System to all State departments. During the past year, the Controller's Office and IBM worked together to design, develop, test, and pilot the CalATERS. In August 2001, the State of California entered into full production mode with the successful completion of the Pilot Implementation Phase.

The Pilot Implementation Phase of the CalATERS was a partnership between the Controller's Office and three departments: Corrections-Headquarters, California Highway Patrol, and Developmental Services. While the partners performed different roles, each was dependent upon the other and each was critical to the success of the pilot.



were allowed to retain the supporting documentation within their departments rather than forward it to the Controller's Office. Processing time within the accounting offices was one day, as opposed to the multiple days currently required for departmental audit.

The Pilot Implementation Phase was divided into two phases: a Pilot Test Phase and a Pilot Production Phase. The Pilot Test Phase lasted 45 days and consisted of the departments entering previously approved and paid requests into the CalATERS Training environment. Various system functions were tested during this phase; e.g., automated routing, system audits and edits, and interfaces. After completion of the Pilot Test Phase, the pilot departments went into full production for 45 days. It was very exciting and gratifying for the CalATERS Team when the first payment was issued!

The Controller's Office extends its appreciation and congratulations to the management and staff of the Departments of Corrections, Highway Patrol, and Developmental Services for the time, effort, patience, and enthusiasm displayed throughout the entire Pilot Implementation Phase!

The CalATERS was used during Pilot Production to electronically request Travel Advances and reimbursement for travel expenses. Automatically, requests were routed first to approvers and then to department accounting offices. Once approved by the department, requests were automatically scheduled for Travel Advance issuance or Expense Reimbursement. Departments continued to issue Travel Advance checks and the Controller's Office issued reimbursement payments for travel expenses. For the first time, departments

During the Pilot period, the CalATERS Team ensured that the system performed and operated as specified by the State's requirements. No major errors were identified during this period. While there are improvements to be made, the CalATERS is fully functional and ready for further rollout.

Over 140 departments and facilities representing approximately 87% of the State's employee population have committed to participate in the CalATERS. The Controller's Office is ready to begin working with departments to implement the CalATERS statewide. For further information regarding implementing the CalATERS in your department, see the box below.

How can your department implement the CalATERS?

Departments interested in realizing the benefits of the CalATERS may contact the CalATERS staff by sending an email to calaters@sco.ca.gov or by calling Ron Hutcherson, Project Manager, at 324-7145 to discuss a time when the CalATERS can be scheduled for implementation.

More About the CalATERS....

What are the CalATERS features?

- System security via userids and passwords;
- Automated audits and edits against state rules and departmental policies;
- Automatic calculations;
- Electronic notification of requests awaiting review and approval;
- Automatic tax reporting;
- Consolidated management information;
- Direct Deposit of expense reimbursements;
- Web-based, user friendly application.

What is required of a department to implement the CalATERS?

When a department commits to implementing the CalATERS the Controller's Office assigns a Departmental Consultant to provide assistance through each step of the process. Implementation activities include development of a department-specific work-plan, gap analysis, business process reengineering, establishment of department help desk and supporting procedures, creation and maintenance of system files, and training of department staff (i.e., department accounting staff and help desk support staff).

Hardware? Software? What will departments Need?

The CalATERS was designed to work using almost all of the existing hardware and software used in state government. Following is a listing of the workstation specifications:

- Desktop or laptop PC (Pentium 90 or higher) running Windows 95, 98, 2000, or NT 4.0.
- 64 or more megabytes of system memory with no other application running.
- Java 1.1 compliant Web browser; i.e., Netscape Communicator 4.6 or higher, Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher with JVM (Java Virtual Machine) 3188.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0 for report printing.
- Internet access (TCP/IP) to the Teale Data Center.
- Access to the departmental mail system—departmental mail system must have SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) gateway to forward SMTP mail messages by the CalATERS server.
- Access to printer for report printing.

Training: Will CalATERS training be provided?

As with any new system, there is a learning curve. The Controller's Office CalATERS Training Team has developed two types of training to assist departments as they begin to use the CalATERS.


First, CalATERS Web site instructions are available for those who complete or approve Travel Advance and Expense Reimbursement requests. Employees, travelers (non-state employees),

those who prepare or submit requests for others and those who approve the requests are included in this group. Web site instructions will also be available for CalATERS Report Administrators. All instructions can be viewed or printed on an as needed basis.

Second, hands-on computer training at the Controller's Office will be provided for department Accounting Office and Help Desk staff who have administrative responsibilities for the CalATERS program. Instructions provided during the training sessions are also available on the CalATERS Web site for future reference.

CalATERS Consultants, who work closely with departments during implementation of the CalATERS, will assist in scheduling staff for training. Classes will be scheduled two to three weeks prior to implementation. Departments will be offered a minimum of two training session dates. Should assignment rotation or turn-over occur, enrollment for new staff training will be provided.

The CalATERS training materials and curriculum assumes that the employee has attained a minimal skill level necessary to perform basic computer operations, such as the use of a mouse, keyboard, e-mail, and the Internet or Intranet.



The CalATERS uses system audits to ensure compliance with applicable state rules governing the reimbursement of travel and business-related expenses. Rules such as those found in Memoranda of Understanding, Government Code, and Management Memos are applied by the CalATERS. The CalATERS not only audits the state rules, it also provides the ability to define department-specific travel rules and policies that are enforced by the CalATERS.

Based on the traveler's profile and travel dates, the CalATERS is able to identify the applicable rules. As expense data is entered into the CalATERS, system audits are applied. The audit function checks expense data against established reimbursement rates, receipt thresholds, and prior approval documentation. For example, if a requested Travel Advance or Expense Reimbursement request is within the parameters of established state and departmental travel rules and guidelines, the CalATERS will accept the data and process the request. Conversely, if a Travel Advance or Expense Reimbursement request is outside the parameters of established state and/or departmental travel rules, the system will either flag the data as an exception or initiate a hardstop. An exception notice alerts the employee that the requested expense data is an exception to either state or departmental policy—the employee may be required to enter a reason or provide additional documentation. If a hardstop is initiated, the CalATERS will not allow the employee to submit the Travel Advance or Expense Reimbursement request until the condition is corrected (i.e., the employee makes a correction or deletes the expense data).

The CalATERS audit function provides departments with a solution to a significant statewide problem—consistent application of the State's diverse and complicated travel rules for Travel Advance and Expense Reimbursement requests.

More About the CalATERS....

Who will use the CalATERS when it is implemented by a department? Will the *user roles* of department staff change with the implementation of the CalATERS? The following table provides a description of the CalATERS *user roles*. These *roles* are similar to the roles currently used in many departments. Regardless of the *user role*, all department staff will access the system through the CalATERS Web site.

CalATERS User Roles

Role	Description
<i>Employee/Non-Employee</i>	State and non-state employees complete Travel Advance and Expense Reimbursement requests via the CalATERS.
<i>Preparer</i>	<i>Preparers</i> complete Travel Advance and Expense Reimbursement requests for department staff. Unlike the <i>Submitter</i> , the <i>Preparer</i> returns the request to the employee for review and submission.
<i>Submitter</i>	<i>Submitters</i> complete and submit Travel Advance and Expense Reimbursement requests for department staff who do not prepare their own requests, or for staff who do not have access to the CalATERS.
<i>Approver</i>	<i>Approvers</i> (supervisor or manager) review and approve Travel Advance and Expense Reimbursement requests submitted by their staff.
<i>Department Accounting Office Technician</i>	<i>Department Accounting Office Technicians</i> audit and approve Travel Advance and Expense Reimbursement requests. In some departments, <i>Department Accounting Office Technicians</i> also add account code information to requests.
<i>Department Accounting Office Approver</i>	<i>Department Accounting Office Approvers</i> provide second level review and approval for requests forwarded by <i>Department Accounting Office Technicians</i> .
<i>Department System Administrator</i>	<i>Department System Administrators</i> perform the CalATERS administrative functions, including updating department-level table information and populating user profile data.
<i>Department Report Administrator</i>	<i>Department Report Administrators</i> have authority to access those reports specific to their department. From the Web site, <i>Department Report Administrators</i> are able to view, download, and print the standard reports available to their department.
<i>Department Help Desk</i>	<i>Department Help Desk</i> staff provide technical assistance to department staff. Depending on workload, departments may choose to assign one or more individuals to the <i>Department Help Desk</i> .
<i>SCO System Administrator</i>	<i>SCO System Administrators</i> are responsible for the overall administration of the CalATERS. <i>SCO System Administrators</i> are responsible for creating User IDs and delegating responsibility for certain functions to departments. <i>SCO System Administrators</i> are also responsible for maintaining the tables that are used by the CalATERS, and for the creation and distribution of the standard reports.
<i>SCO Help Desk</i>	<i>SCO Help Desk</i> staff support the CalATERS application and assist <i>Department Help Desk</i> staff in resolving questions and problems.
<i>SCO Auditor</i>	<i>SCO Auditors</i> will continue to audit Expense Reimbursement requests. Audits of Expense Reimbursement requests may occur on a pre-payment or post-payment basis.

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The *Automated Expense Reimbursement Project* is a periodic newsletter published by the State Controller's Office. Suggestions and comments regarding the newsletter or questions regarding the project may be sent to:

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Attention:
Special Projects Bureau
Suite 1012
or
via e-mail:
calaters@sco.ca.gov



CalATERS Web Site

www.calaters.ca.gov

From the CalATERS Web site, users can prepare and submit Travel Advance and Expense Reimbursement requests, download instructional information, and access the latest project news. Users can easily access the following links from the CalATERS home page:

Sign-in to CalATERS—Signs a user into the CalATERS.

User Instructions—Provides instruction for all users.

Definitions—Explains the terms commonly used in the CalATERS application, such as Claim Type and Trip Type.

Report Administration—Provides access and instructions to those departmental users assigned access to the CalATERS report function.

System Administration—This link is currently “Under Construction” and will be designed for department administrators assigned access to CalATERS administrative functions.

CalATERS Letters—Provides updates to changes in the travel process, such as changes to rules and auditing guidelines.

Publications/Participating Departments—Provides access to published newsletters, Department Forum Minutes, and the Automated Travel Reimbursement Process Executive Summary.

Help Desk Contacts—Provides a listing of participating department CalATERS Help Desk numbers.

SCO Trainers Use Only—Only Controller's Office Trainers will access the CalATERS through this link. Using this link, Controller's Office Trainers are able to provide hands-on classroom training on the CalATERS application to department staff.

