State of California
Automated Expense Reimbursement System

Efficiency Through Automation

April 2002

CalATERS Moves into the Implementation Phase!

Following the successful completion of the pilot test phase in July 2001, the CalATERS Project moved towards full implementation. Currently, four departments have implemented and are using CalATERS to process travel claims; California Highway Patrol, Corrections Headquarters, Developmental Services, and Health Services. The Department of Mental Health recently completed implementation activities and will "go-live" this month.

CalATERS project staff are conducting implementation meetings with the Department of Real Estate, Health and Human Services Data Center, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, State Controller's Office, and the Department of General Services, Contracted Fiscal Services/Department of Finance. It is anticipated that these departments will begin using CalATERS this summer. In addition, implementation activities continue with the Department of Education—it is anticipated that Education will "go-live" this fall.

Interesting Statistics...

♦ **Expense Reimbursements** — Since August 2001, 707 expense reimbursement forms totaling $143,860 have been processed. Of the total number of payments made, 575 were electronic fund transfers and 132 were warrants.

♦ **Travel Advances** — Since August 2001, CalATERS recovered $90,640 in travel advances. The Controller's Office issued 254 warrants to reimburse department's revolving funds.

♦ **Registered Users** — Currently there are 447 registered users on CalATERS. The number of registered users continues to increase as participating departments continue roll-out activities, and as new departments come on board with CalATERS.

What is CalATERS and why should we implement?

CalATERS is a web-based, graphical user interface application that allows State and non-State employees to process travel advances and expense reimbursements via the Internet or Intranet. CalATERS provides an automated solution to the current manual process utilized by many State departments to issue travel advances and expense reimbursements.

Departments that implement CalATERS will no longer have to complete the Travel Expense Claim form (STD 262). Statewide travel rules are automated and all travel requests are electronically audited prior to submission to supervisors and the accounting office. The automated edits feature of CalATERS eliminates the labor intensive process of researching the correct application of travel rules for each employee. See page 3 for a comprehensive description of CalATERS features.

CalATERS Project Team

The CalATERS Project Team is committed to providing the highest level of customer support necessary to ensure a smooth transition to CalATERS. The CalATERS Project Team includes department consultants who work closely with department staff during implementation, technical support staff who provide assistance during file preparation and interface development, and training staff who provide comprehensive training on the CalATERS application.

Department Consultants — Departments implementing CalATERS are assigned a department consultant to assist during the implementation process. The department consultant is a business analyst who has an understanding of all aspects of CalATERS. Once assigned to a specific department, the department consultant works with department staff to help ensure a smooth transition to CalATERS .

***Department Consultants (continued)*** — Department consultants apply their understanding of CalATERS to the existing method by which departments process travel advance requests and travel expense claims. Differences and similarities are identified and documented, and a plan for transition is developed. To ensure a smooth transition, department consultants assist departments with the following implementation activities:

♦ Tailoring and monitoring a department work plan.
♦ Developing a roll-out strategy.
♦ Identifying and gathering data needed for CalATERS.
♦ Evaluating the department's technical readiness.
♦ Supporting departments during post implementation.

CalATERS Training Team
CalATERS training staff are committed to supporting departments to ensure successful implementation of CalATERS. CalATERS training staff offer classroom instruction for accounting staff, and web site instructions for employees, approvers, and department staff preparing or submitting forms for others. The CalATERS training database is also available for department-led demonstrations and orientation sessions.
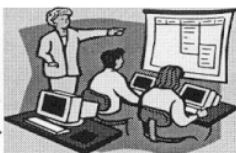
♦ **Classroom Instruction** — A two-day training class is provided for accounting staff who will have administrative responsibility for CalATERS. Attendees will learn about CalATERS roles, privileges, and system workflow, as well as how to perform new user registration, create, submit and approve travel advance and expense reimbursement forms, and apply specialized account coding.

♦ **Website Instruction** — Detailed instructions for all CalATERS users are available on the CalATERS web site at www.calaters.ca.gov. Instructions can be viewed online or printed. As changes are made to the system, users will receive bulletins alerting them of revised web site instructions.

♦ **Training Database** — Departments can request the use of the CalATERS training database. The training database works and responds like the CalATERS production system, but payments cannot be issued. The training database can be used for department demonstrations or orientation sessions to familiarize employees and approvers with CalATERS.

CalATERS Technical Team — CalATERS technical staff serve as system administrators for the daily operation of the CalATERS application and the interfaces that support the CalATERS. CalATERS technical staff are also responsible for the development of the reports that are available through the CalATERS website. In addition, CalATERS technical staff are available to assist departments and answer questions related to the technical implementation of CalATERS (e.g., file development and loading).

Post Implementation Support

What happens after a department starts using CalATERS? The CalATERS Project Team will continue to provide support to departments in the following ways:

♦ **Post Implementation Meetings** — Department Consultants schedule post implementation meetings for four to six weeks following implementation. These meetings provide departments with on-site assistance to answer questions that may arise. After the four to six week period, meetings with departments are scheduled as needed.

♦ **CalATERS Help Desk** — The CalATERS Project Team offers help desk support, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:00 pm. CalATERS help desk support staff are trained regarding the use of the CalATERS application and are available to assist your department with problem resolution. Each member of the CalATERS Project Team specializes in a different area of the system (e.g., rules, reports, groups and privileges). If the CalATERS representative answering your call is unable to respond to your question directly, they know who to ask!

♦ **CalATERS Training** — As previously discussed, classroom instruction is provided for accounting staff with administrative responsibility for CalATERS. CalATERS training staff recognize the importance of continuing education, and strives to provide just that! Additional classroom training can be scheduled for new accounting staff as needed.

CalATERS Key Features

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Statewide Travel Rules	CalATERS uses system audits to ensure compliance with applicable State rules governing the reimbursement of travel and business related expenses. The Controller's Office maintains the travel rules in CalATERS. As contracts are updated or changed, CalATERS project staff update the rules to reflect those changes. Rules are maintained in CalATERS for three fiscal years to allow for the processing of travel claims from previous fiscal years.
Department Policies	The audit and edit feature of CalATERS provides the ability for departments to define department-specific policies that are enforced by CalATERS. For example, if a department sets a policy in CalATERS that prohibits employees from submitting a travel advance request for less than 25 dollars, the employee receives an exception message if the claim exceeds the 25 dollar threshold.
Travel Advance Recovery	Travel advances are automatically scheduled for recovery from expense reimbursements. When an employee enters an expense reimbursement into CalATERS, a screen appears that displays outstanding travel advances. CalATERS attempts to recover all outstanding travel advances, starting with the oldest, and deducts that amount from the expense reimbursement. Accounting staff have the ability to update the employee's request with respect to which travel advances are recovered.
Direct Deposit	State employees on direct deposit with the State Controller's Office will automatically receive expense reimbursements directly in their account.
Warrants	Expense reimbursement warrants are mailed for non-State employees, and for State employees who are not on direct deposit with the State Controller's Office.
Taxable Reimbursements	Departments that implement CalATERS are no longer required to prepare the Standard Form 676P. CalATERS automatically identifies taxable and reportable travel-related expense items and reports this information directly to the Controller's Non-Uniform State Payroll System (Non-USPS). The Non-USPS system is used to capture taxable/reportable payment information for the Wage and Tax Statement (Form W-2), and for tax withholding from salary and wage payments issued through the Payroll System.
Reports	CalATERS offers a variety of standard reports available through the CalATERS website. Authorized department staff can view and/or print the CalATERS reports by logging onto CalATERS Reports Administration. The CalATERS reports include information relative to travel advances, processing time, audit trail, direct charge, lodging expenses, any more!
Email Notification	CalATERS uses a department's existing email system to send electronic notifications to alert employees, supervisors/managers and department accounting staff that action is needed on a travel advance or expense reimbursement form. Email notifications are also used to notify employees when a claim has been disapproved or when a claim has been adjusted.

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State Controller's Office
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P.O. Box 942850
Sacramento, CA 94250-5878

Email: calaters@sco.ca.gov

Kathleen Connell, State Controller

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Interested in Implementing CalATERS?

Departments interested in realizing the benefits of CalATERS may contact CalATERS staff by sending an email to calaters@sco.ca.gov, or by calling Natalie Clohossey, Project Manager, at 324-7145.

CalATERS project staff are in the process of developing an implementation schedule for fiscal year 2002-03. Interested departments should contact the CalATERS Project Team as soon as possible to be included on the schedule.

Department Forums Are Back!
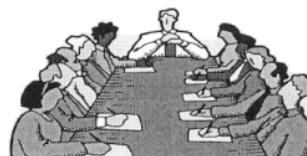
The CalATERS Project Team will conduct a department forum in May 2002. Department Forums provide an opportunity to discuss implementation of CalATERS, demo CalATERS features and functionality, and answer questions. Minutes from previous department forums are available on the CalATERS homepage www.calaters.ca.gov.

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