



**State of Georgia
Department of Administrative Services
State Purchasing Division**

Official Announcement # 23-03

FROM: Jim Barnaby, Deputy Commissioner of State Purchasing

JB

DATE: May 1, 2023

TO: State of Georgia Purchasing Card Administrators, Chief Financial Officers, and Agency, College, and University Procurement Officers

RE: Announcement of Revised Statewide Purchasing Card Policy

The State Purchasing Division (SPD) is pleased to announce several policy updates to be incorporated into the [Statewide Purchasing Card Policy](#) ("the P-Card Policy"), **effective May 1, 2023**. Policy updates are outlined below and in the attached Summary of Statewide Purchasing Card Policy Changes Table.

1. **Specific Use Accounts.** Allowing specific use accounts to be approved in writing with guidelines provided by SPD individually and removing language regarding ghost cards.
2. **State Agency Definition.** Language in Section I was adjusted to align the definition of State Agency with the definition provided by O.C.G.A. §50-5-83. The definition was provided in the definitions section at the back of the P-Card Policy.
3. **Administrators, approvers, and cardholders must be State employees.** The requirement that cardholders be part-time or full-time State employees has been extended to include administrators, backups or coordinators, and approvers.
4. **Delegation of duties to backups or coordinators designated with SPD.** Administrators may delegate certain administrative duties as allowed in the P-Card Policy to backups or coordinators who have been designated with SPD and received training. These duties cannot be delegated to cardholders.
5. **State of GA MCC Codes and Groups must be utilized.** Merchant Category Codes (MCCs) must be limited to approved MCC Codes and assign State of Georgia MCC Groups or groups which have been approved by SPD.
6. **Documentation requirements.** Some transactions may require additional documentation. These additional documents must be kept with the transactions. Documentation must be legible and include all pages of invoices or other documents.
7. **Reconciliation.** As a reminder, all entities must reconcile electronically through Team Georgia Marketplace™ (TGM) or Bank of America Works®. Reconciliation includes transaction documentation, comments, disputing transactions, reporting fraud, and signoffs. If reconciling in Bank of America Works®, the administrator must maintain the documentation through hard copy, shared drive, or other electronic means and make it

available to SPD upon request. Language referring to Bank of America Works® as a repository has been removed.

8. **eBooks for use in college classrooms.** Colleges and universities may purchase eBooks for use in classrooms, virtual and in-person. Documentation requirements are included in Allowable Purchases – Restrictions Apply.
9. **Memberships to wholesale warehouses and shopping clubs.** The prohibited purchase section related to memberships to wholesale warehouses and shopping clubs was amended to reflect that the prohibition is specific to memberships not in the entity's name. As a reminder, for TGM entities, the State's Amazon Prime Enterprise Business account is the mandatory Amazon Prime membership account.
10. **Service Charges.** The section for Surcharges and Convenience Fees was updated to include Service Charges and the guidelines related to Visa's rules for merchants for accepting these charges.
11. **Returns, Credits, Disputed Items, and Reporting Fraud.** This new section outlines the steps for disputing a charge, receiving credits, and reporting fraud.
12. **Schedule of Cycle End Dates and Payment Due Dates.** A schedule of billing cycle begin dates, end dates, and payment due dates is included for cycle end dates of the 27th and 15th.
13. **Definitions.** The following definitions were added to the definition section of the P-Card Policy: agency, backup p-card administrator, cardholder, Concur, O.C.G.A., p-card coordinator, specific use account, and service charges.
14. **Global Edits and General Clean-Up:** SPD made edits in general formatting and clean-up. A global change includes replacing "vendor" with "supplier" and updating the section numbering.

SPD will conduct webinars to review these changes. Please distribute this Official Announcement internally. For any questions related to this Official Announcement, please get in touch with us at cardprograms@doas.ga.gov.



Summary of Georgia Statewide Purchasing Card Policy Changes

Effective May 1, 2023

NOTE: This table summarizes changes to the Statewide Purchasing Card Policy (the “P-Card Policy”) as announced through Official Announcement #23-03. If there is any conflict between this table and the P-Card Policy, the revised P-Card Policy shall govern.

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
Global Updates		
Formatting was updated throughout, including section numbering, page margins, and general grammatical adjustments.		
Cover Page		
Updated cover sheet and release date		
Program Overview		
Program Overview	The P-Card Program is the only charge card program authorized for use by State Agencies, units of the University System of Georgia, and technical colleges within the Technical College System of Georgia.	The P-Card Program is the only charge card program authorized for use by State Agencies as defined in O.C.G.A. §50-5-83 , units of the University System of Georgia, and technical colleges within the Technical College System of Georgia.

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
Program Overview	The terms of the contract with the Bank also permit State Authorities and Commissions and local governments ¹ to use the program. The State Purchasing Division approves all participation in the program. State Entities not under SPD purchasing card authority are not required to follow the Statewide Purchasing Card Policy; however, this is recommended.	The terms of the contract with the Bank permits State and local governments¹ to use the program. The State Purchasing Division approves all participation in the program. State Entities not defined as “agencies” in O.C.G.A. §50-5-83 are not required to follow the <i>Statewide Purchasing Card Policy</i> ; however, this is recommended.
Types of Accounts		
Standard P-Cards	Cardholders must be permanent, part-time, or full-time, State employees whose jobs require the use of a P-Card or other account.	Administrators, including backups and coordinators, and Approvers must be permanent, part-time, or full-time, State employees. Cardholders must be permanent, part-time, or full-time, State employees whose jobs require the use of a P-Card or other account.

¹ Local governments include, but are not limited to, counties, cities, towns, Boards of Commissioners, and Boards of Education within the State of Georgia.

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
Specific Use Accounts (formerly Ghost Card Accounts)	<p>B. Ghost Card Accounts</p> <p>Ghost Card accounts are no longer allowable except for those designated to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pay expenses related to charges made for employee travel through the online Travel and Expense Management System used in conjunction with Travel Inc., the TeamWorks Travel and Expense designated travel agency. 	<p>1.2 Specific Use Accounts</p> <p>Specific use accounts are used for an entity to consolidate purchases to a single supplier or for a specific purpose under one account which will aid in reconciliation, oversight, and controls. Specific use accounts must be approved by SPD and are limited to:</p> <p>Those designated to pay expenses related to charges made for employee travel through the online Travel and Expense Management System used in conjunction with Travel Inc., the TeamWorks Travel and Expense designated travel agency.</p> <p>Others approved by the State Purchasing Division P-Card Program.</p> <p>Any approvals will be given in writing and will include requirements related to documentation, MCC restrictions, setup in Works and other systems, and other usage, controls, and reconciliation requirements.</p>
State Entity Program Roles and Responsibilities		
Card Program Administrator	Any or all of the following administrative responsibilities may be delegated to another individual or to one or more Card Program Coordinators, depending on the size and complexity of the Entity's program.	Any or all of the following administrative responsibilities may be delegated to one or more designated Card Program Backups or Coordinators, depending on the size and complexity of the Entity's program. These backups or coordinators must be designated with SPD, have received the appropriate training, and not be cardholders.
Internal Controls		
Merchant Category Code Authorizations	Addition	<p>6.4 Merchant Category Code Authorizations</p> <p>2. Program Administrators must limit MCCs to State of Georgia approved MCCs and ensure State of Georgia MCC Groups or SPD approved MCC Groups are assigned to profiles in Bank of America Works®.</p>

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
Documentation, Reconciliation, and Accounting		
Documentation	Addition	<p>7.1 Documentation</p> <p>4. Some transactions require additional documentation related to the purchase. If the transaction requires additional documentation to support the purchase, that additional documentation must be kept with the transaction documentation. An example of this includes but is not limited to documentation required by the SAO Group Meal Policy.</p> <p>5. All documentation must be legible (e.g., not too dark, not too light)</p> <p>6. All documentation must contain copies of all pages of invoices or other documents.</p>
Reconciliation	Addition	<p>7.2 Reconciliation</p> <p>Electronic reconciliation is required for all entities. Reconciliation must be performed before payment is made and must be completed in time to ensure timely monthly payment. See Schedule of Cycle End Dates and Payment Due Dates for reference.</p> <p>The reconciliation process must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transaction documentation • Comments made by the cardholder, approving manager, or both • Disputing charges, if necessary • Reporting any fraudulent charges • Signoff of transactions by the cardholder and approver, at minimum

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
Team Georgia Marketplace™	<p>c. Cardholders, proxy reconcilers, supervisors, or approving officials must upload a copy of the invoice or receipt and any other relevant documentation (e.g., email correspondence) to the transaction, including those for which a purchase order was issued. Attachments must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Be a PDF document ii. Be legible (e.g., not too dark, not too light) iii. Contain copies of all pages of invoices or other documents 	<p>3. Cardholders, proxy reconcilers, supervisors, or approving officials must upload a copy of the invoice or receipt and any other relevant documentation (e.g., email correspondence) to the transaction, including those for which a purchase order was issued. Attachments must meet the Documentation requirements in this policy or other policies related to the transaction.</p>

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
<p>Bank of America Works®</p>	<p>3. State Entities using Works® Payment Manager for reconciliation have the option to use receipt imaging, a functionality that allows users to upload electronic (e.g., PDF) copies of invoices, receipts, and other supporting documents to Works® Payment Manager. To use this option, contact the State Purchasing Division to coordinate with the Bank to make this available. All documentation must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be a PDF document b. Be legible (e.g., not too dark, not too light) c. Contain copies of all pages of invoices or other documents <p>4. If a State Entity uses receipt imaging, the original must be maintained for at least one year from the statement billing date</p>	<p>3. State Entities using Works® Payment Manager for reconciliation must maintain documentation for all transactions. All documentation must be maintained by the administrator, either through hard copy, shared drive, or other electronic means and made available to SPD upon request and meet the documentation requirements contained in this policy or other policies related to the transaction.</p>

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
Use of the Card and Other Accounts		
Allowable Purchases – Restrictions Apply	<p>5. Software, Data Plans, and “Apps ”</p> <p>a. Software, unless prohibited by State Entity internal policy, can be purchased with the following restrictions:</p> <p>i. Data plans, software, or applications (apps) for State-issued computers, smart phones, and tablets only (e.g., iPhone, Android, iPad).</p> <p>ii. Purchases cannot be made for personal devices even if used for business purposes</p>	<p>5. Software, Data Plans, and “Apps ”</p> <p>a. Software, unless prohibited by State Entity internal policy, can be purchased with the following restrictions:</p> <p>i. Data plans, software, or applications (apps) for State-issued computers, smart phones, and tablets only (e.g., iPhone, Android, iPad).</p> <p>ii. Purchases cannot be made for personal devices even if used for business purposes.</p> <p>b. For colleges and universities, eBooks for use in a classroom may be purchased. Documentation must include an invoice or receipt in accordance with section VIII.A and include a roster of class participants and class syllabus.</p>
Prohibited Purchases	2. Data plans, software, or applications (apps) for non-State Entity issued devices, including, but not limited to, smart phones, laptop computers, and tablets	2. Data plans, software, or applications (apps) for non-State Entity issued devices, including, but not limited to, smart phones, laptop computers, and tablets, except as permitted in Section 8.1.2.
Prohibited Purchases	3. Memberships at wholesale warehouses and shopping clubs (e.g., Sam’s, Costco, Amazon Prime)	<p>3.3. Memberships at wholesale warehouses and shopping clubs (e.g., Sam’s, Costco, Amazon Prime) when membership is in the name of a person rather than the State Entity.</p> <p>For TGM entities, the State’s Amazon Prime Enterprise Business account is the mandatory Amazon Prime membership account, and no other type of Amazon Prime account may be purchased.</p>

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
Surcharges, Convenience Fees, and Service Charges		
Surcharges, Convenience Fees, and Service Charges	Many suppliers charge a credit card processing fee or convenience fee for accepting credit cards including the P-Card. These types of fees are strictly regulated by Visa and MasterCard (also called the Associations).	Many suppliers charge a credit card processing fee or convenience fee for accepting credit cards including the P-Card. These types of fees are strictly regulated by Visa and MasterCard (also called the Associations). These must be clearly labeled in the documentation as to the amount and include which fee was charged.

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
The following has been added to the Policy:		
<p data-bbox="100 280 401 313">9.3 Service Charges</p> <p data-bbox="100 321 2024 391">A service fee may only be charged by a supplier in countries specified by Visa and for specific purposes. If a merchant or supplier charges a service fee, that merchant or supplier must follow Visa’s requirements including but not limited to:</p> <ol data-bbox="100 396 2024 865" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept Visa as a means of payment in all channels where payments are accepted (for example: in a Face-to-Face Environment and a Card-Absent Environment, as applicable) 2. Be authorized to process tax payment transactions if the Service Fee is charged by a government taxing authority or its third party. 3. Disclose the fee clearly to the Cardholder as a Service Fee, or local language equivalent, before the transaction is completed and provide the ability for the Cardholder to cancel the transaction without incurring a fee or penalty. 4. Not represent the Service Fee as a fee charged by Visa. 5. Ensure that the Service Fee amount is: <ol data-bbox="153 651 2024 865" style="list-style-type: none"> a. A reasonable reflection of the costs associated with completing the Transaction (such as the Merchant Discount Rate, Merchant service fee, or any other costs paid to third parties for services directly related to accepting a Card) and, where possible, capped. b. A flat, fixed, banded, or ad valorem amount, regardless of the value of the payment due, as required by applicable laws or regulations. c. Assessed only on the final transaction amount, after all discounts and rebates have been applied during the transaction. d. Not charged in addition to a surcharge or convenience fee <p data-bbox="100 870 2024 940">Merchants or suppliers located in the United States, and which have the following MCC Codes are permitted to charge a service fee provided Visa’s rules for Merchants are followed:</p> <ul data-bbox="153 945 1178 1232" style="list-style-type: none"> 8211 (Elementary and Secondary Schools) 8220 (Colleges, Universities, Professional Schools, and Junior Colleges) 8244 (Business and Secretarial Schools) 8249 (Vocational and Trade Schools) 9211 (Court Costs, Including Alimony and Child Support) 9222 (Fines) 9311 (Tax Payments) 9399 (Government Services [Not Elsewhere Classified]) 		

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
Returns, Credits, Disputed Items, and Reporting Fraud		
<p>The following has been added to the Policy:</p> <p>10.1 Returns, Credits, and Disputed Items</p> <p>In most cases, disputes can be resolved directly between the cardholder and the supplier that provided the goods and services. A “disputed” charge is one for which the cardholder did not receive what was ordered or there is some other problem with the goods or services ordered. A cardholder may also have a “questionable” charge due to double billing or the supplier name on the statement not matching the backup documentation (e.g., for online orders.) The cardholder must use the following guidelines when returning or disputing an item:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If an item needs to be returned for any reason, contact the supplier to send the item back to the supplier in the manner agreed upon. Begin documenting contact names, dates/times of contacts, and what transpired. This documentation should be kept with the resolution action (credit or refund) once the issue is resolved. 2. Request a credit from the supplier to be refunded or credited onto the card which was used to make the transaction (or replacement card if card has been replaced). This credit may appear on a subsequent charge card statement. 3. All documentation must be kept on file pertaining to returns for reconciliation. 4. For disputes and questionable charges not resolved between the cardholder and the supplier within 30 days, Bank of America’s dispute process must be utilized. Bank of America will investigate the dispute on the cardholder’s behalf and assist in the resolution. Provide Bank of America with all documentation to include previous phone calls or contacts with the supplier to aid in a timelier resolution. Bank of America’s dispute resolution process must be utilized within 60 days of the cycle end date for the transaction. <p>10.2 Reporting Fraud</p> <p>Immediately report all fraudulent charges that appear on the statement to Bank of America and the entity’s purchasing card administrator. The administrator is responsible for immediately reporting all fraudulent charges to the State Purchasing Card Program Manager. Program administrators can contact SPD’s purchasing card team for additional assistance if needed in cases of fraud by emailing cardprograms@doas.ga.gov.</p>		
Addendum: Schedule of Cycle End Dates and Payment Due Dates		
Schedules for estimated cycle end dates and payment due dates for billing cycles ending on the 27 th and 15 th have been added to the P-Card Policy		

P-Card Policy Section	Original	Update
Definitions		
Definitions		Agency Backup P-Card Administrator Cardholder Concur P-Card Coordinator Service Charges Specific-Use Account