



Report Highlights

Office of State Travel

Purchase and Travel Card Programs

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Why We Conducted This Audit

We evaluated the Division of Administration’s (DOA) Office of State Travel (OST) monitoring activities over the LaCarte Purchase Card (P-Card) and Travel Card (T-Card) Programs (card programs) during calendar years 2016 through 2020. P-Cards and T-Cards (cards) are credit cards used by authorized state employees to make purchases on behalf of their agency. During calendar year 2020, state employees used cards for approximately \$147.3 million in purchases. We conducted this audit because the obligations resulting from these transactions are direct liabilities of the state.

What We Found

Overall, we found that the number of transactions and total amount of those transactions increased from calendar years 2016 through 2019 and decreased in calendar year 2020, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we found that while OST conducts monitoring activities to detect potential improper use, it could improve this process through enhanced use of data analytics.

Card Transaction Statistics Calendar Years 2016 through 2020			
Year	Number of Transactions	Total Amount of Transactions	Average Amount of Transactions
2016	474,862	\$161,275,982	\$339.63
2017	504,051	174,886,265	346.96
2018	542,261	186,862,878	344.60
2019	557,560	192,936,070	346.04
2020	360,648	147,290,920	408.41
Total	2,439,382	\$863,252,115	\$353.88

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using card transaction data from OST.

- **Card usage increased from calendar year 2016 through 2019, with the number of card transactions increasing 17.4% – from 474,862 to 557,560 – and the amount of these transactions increasing 19.6% – from \$161.3 million to \$192.9 million. Some entities, like institutions of higher education, use these cards more frequently than other entities. For example, LSU institutions spent \$300.8 million (34.8%) of the \$863.3 million in card purchases in calendar years 2016 through 2020. In addition, transactions made through the card programs earned rebates totaling \$19.2 million in fiscal years 2016 through 2020, which fully funded OST’s budget and was also distributed to certain institutions of higher education.**
- **While OST has monitoring activities to detect entities and transactions that do not comply with program policies, it could improve its oversight by enhancing its use of data analytics and resolving data limitations to more effectively identify instances of noncompliance.** Specifically, OST could enhance its monitoring activities by incorporating a risk-based approach when selecting transactions for review. OST could also more effectively ensure that entities use only approved Merchant Category Codes. In addition, limitations in the card transaction data decrease the effectiveness of OST’s monitoring activities related to single transaction limits.

View the full report, including management’s response, at www.la.gov.