



LETTER OF INSTRUCTION (LOI)

Date: 13 July 2026

From: Chief Operating Officer
To: Conference Attendees

Subj: 2026 ANNUAL MARINE TOYS FOR TOTS FOUNDATION COORDINATOR TRAINING SYMPOSIUM
FROM 10 – 13 SEPTEMBER 2026

Ref: (a) Marine Corps Order (MCO) 5726.14F
(b) Force Order (ForO) 5000-24.2
(c) 2026 Standing Operating Procedures (SOP)

Encl: (1) Program of Events – **To be published when finalized**
(2) Transportation Information
(3) STL to the Hyatt / Hyatt to STL Shuttle Plan – **To be published at a later date**

1. Situation.

- a. The annual Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots campaign remains the hallmark community outreach program of the United States Marine Corps (USMC). The mission of the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots (TFT) Program is to collect new unwrapped toys and distribute those toys to children in need at Christmas, helping to bring the joy of the holiday season and deliver a message of hope to America's underserved youth.
- b. Each local campaign is led by a Campaign Coordinator—either an active-duty or Reserve Marine/Sailor assigned by Marine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES), or a vetted Local Community Organization (LCO) volunteer. Together, these Coordinators plan and execute over 870 individual campaigns across the United States each year.
- c. To ensure campaign success, the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation (MTFTF) hosts an annual training conference. This event brings together new and returning Coordinators to provide the tools, information, and shared insights needed for a successful campaign season. Since its inception in 1999, the conference has grown into a national event with approximately 500 attendees.
- d. Training is delivered through general sessions, regional breakout discussions, and panel forums, all supported by both in-person instruction and virtual participation. Speakers include MTFTF staff, senior Marine Corps and MARFORRES leadership, and experienced Campaign Coordinators who share the best practices and lessons learned from the field.

2. **Mission.** From 10–13 September 2026, the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation (MTFTF) will host the Annual Campaign Coordinators Training Symposium at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at The Arch, St. Louis, Missouri, in order to (IOT) train and educate both new and veteran Campaign Coordinators to effectively plan, manage, and execute a local Toys for Tots campaign. The training equips Coordinators to collect,

purchase, and distribute toys in accordance with Marine Corps policy and Foundation guidelines—bringing the joy of Christmas and a message of hope to children in need within their communities.

3. Execution

a. Intent

- 1) The purpose of the Annual Training Conference is to (1) train new and veteran Campaign Coordinators to successfully execute a local TFT campaign in compliance with Marine Corps and MARFORRES orders/policies, IRS laws/regulations, and applicable state and local laws, and (2) provide a venue for Coordinators and Foundation staff to exchange ideas, learn from one another, and build camaraderie ahead of the upcoming campaign season. The conference enhances local operations, reinforces rules and guidelines set by the Marine Corps and the Foundation, and ultimately improves the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Program. Equally important, these sessions offer Coordinators an opportunity to build lasting connections in support of a common mission. The two-day training event also recognizes top-performing Coordinators from the previous year.
- 2) Upon completion of the training, Marine Reserve Unit (MRU) and Local Community Organization (LCO) Coordinators—as well as the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation—will be fully prepared to execute an outstanding 2026 campaign that maximizes the number of toys collected, purchased, and distributed to children in need across the Nation.

b. Concept of Operations. The training conference will be executed in six phases:

- 1) Phase I – Travel to the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at The Arch / Check In / Meet & Greet
- 2) Phase II – Day 1 Training
- 3) Phase III – Recognition Dinner
- 4) Phase IV – Day 2 Training
- 5) Phase V – Check Out / Return to Home Station
- 6) Phase VI – Submission of Conference Evaluation Forms

c. Tasks

1) Conference Attendees

a) LCO Campaign Coordinators:

- (1) All first-time (new) Campaign Coordinators must attend training.
- (2) Any Coordinator who has not attended in-person training within the last five years.
- (3) Any LCO whose campaign is on probation for the 2026 season.
- (4) If a new LCO Coordinator cannot attend, campaign approval will be rescinded, and all associated costs must be reimbursed by the traveler.
- (5) Invited veteran Coordinators are expected to contribute ideas and mentorship to newer attendees. Your support is essential to ensuring a successful campaign season.

b) Marine Force Reserve Campaign Coordinators:

- (1) MARFORRES will issue specific guidance directing Marine Coordinators to attend, along with applicable instructions.
- (2) Veteran Marine Coordinators are likewise expected to assist and mentor less experienced Coordinators.

c) All Coordinator Attendees (i.e., Gear Common to All)

- (1) Once identified by your Regional Campaign Manager as “required to attend” or once RSVP is approved, attendance is mandatory.
- (2) Virtual training is not an alternative for those designated to attend in person. It exists to enhance the reach of training to campaign staff, volunteers, and unit personnel unable to travel.
- (3) Virtual Training access instructions will be provided one week prior to the event.

d. **Coordinating Instructions**

- 1) **Event Dates.** 10 – 13 September 2026 where 10 and 13 September are travel days and 11 and 12 September are training days.
- 2) Hyatt Regency St. Louis at The Arch is located at 315 Chestnut Street, St. Louis, MO 63102.
- 3) Attendees are required to RSVP, verify full name and any special needs/dietary concerns, to the appropriate Regional Campaign Manager. RSVP's need to be via email, not phone, so the Regional Campaign Manager can properly track and have written verification of the correspondence.
- 4) Attendees **MUST** be either the actual Campaign Coordinator or the assistant who is responsible for any/all local Toys for Tots administrative matters, i.e., accounting and general administration. Any person that is not the actual Campaign Coordinator that plans to attend the conference **MUST** be approved by the Chief Operating Officer via your Regional Campaign Manager.
 - a) The exception to the above is for Marine Coordinators. Per MARFORRES, all Marine Coordinators must attend this training and cannot send their assistant Coordinator.
- 5) First time (new) Campaign Coordinators must attend and are not authorized to send their assistant.
- 6) **RSVPs are required to be communicated to your Campaign Manager not later than (NLT) Monday, 10 August 2026.**
- 7) References (a) through (c) can be found at www.toysfortots.org – https://www.toysfortots.org/about_toys_for_tots/coordinators_corner/Default.aspx as well as on the Secure Section at <https://lco-admin.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-admin/secure-site/> under number 8 – MARINE ORDERS AND MANUALS.
- 8) **Only one (1) TFT Coordinator from each campaign site is authorized to attend the training. Do not contact the Foundation to request authorization to bring a guest to the conference.** The contract that the Foundation has with the Hyatt only allows for one person per room. This is primarily since the Foundation has only paid for one person per room. If a Coordinator brings an unauthorized guest, they will be asked to leave the Hyatt and their approval to be a Coordinator will be revoked. For Marines, the Foundation will notify their chain of command.
 - a) Exception to this rule is the Regional and National Coordinators of the Year winners. Each can bring one guest.
- 9) Staying at another facility or getting a rental car is a personal expense and is not reimbursable.
- 10) **Arrival.** Not earlier than (NET) 1000, Thursday, 10 September 2026. Please understand that the Hyatt advertises that the earliest time rooms are available is 1600, so there may be a delay in your ability to enter your assigned room prior to 1600. In most cases, the Hyatt can get everyone who checks in to their assigned room by mid-afternoon. In previous years, there were some attendees that tried to check into the hotel on Wednesday. Unless you have the Chief Operating Officer approval to check in on Wednesday, 9 September 2026, you will be turned away and will need to secure lodging at another hotel at your own expense.
 - a) If you arrive on Wednesday, 9 September and attempt to check into the Hyatt without receiving authorization from the Chief Operating Officer, you will not be allowed to stay at the Hyatt. If they allow you to stay, your room charge **WILL NOT** be funded by the Foundation.
 - b) If you arrive late and have not received authorization from the Chief Operating Officer to do so, your room charge for the days you miss **WILL NOT** be funded by the Foundation.
 - c) **Note that Shuttle Service information is in Enclosure (3).**
- 11) **Departure.** Enclosure (3) details the time the shuttle service between Hyatt and St. Louis Lambert International Airport (STL) commences/concludes. If you are required to depart Hyatt

earlier, you will need to arrange your own transportation. The Foundation recommends Uber or Lyft as these services are less expensive than taxis. In previous years, there have been attendees that depart the training early. Remember that the Annual Coordinator's Training Conference is funded by donors. Bottom line --- Departing the training early is not authorized and it is a disservice to our donors.

- a) If a Coordinator decides to ignore this and depart training early without prior authorization, any change fees will not be reimbursed and will be at the Coordinator's expense.

b) Note that Shuttle Service information is in Enclosure (3).

- 12) If you have received prior authorization from your Regional Campaign Manager to depart on Saturday, you must check out of your room that morning and have the Hyatt hold your luggage. We do not want to have the Foundation charged for an extra day that is not used.

13) Cost Accounting/Purchase of Airline Reservations.

- a) Travel costs to and from the local campaign site and the Hyatt is the responsibility of each local campaign. Travel reservations WILL BE MADE using the Toys for Tots Purchase Card. Funding comes from the Foundation managed account for each community. Other items associated with the reservation will be made on the Purchase Card as well, i.e., parking and baggage fees.
- b) Of note, sites with Veteran Coordinators that have limited or no funds in the Foundation-managed account should consider attending our virtual sessions to save money, to ensure any/all funds are used to purchase toys/gifts for the 2026 campaign.
- c) New campaign sites will not have funds in their Foundation-managed account; therefore, the Foundation will assist by making funds available on your TFT purchase card. Make travel reservations using the TFT Purchase Card and the Foundation will transfer the cost of the reservations to your account. If you are not in possession of your TFT Purchase Card currently, request your card by contacting the appropriate Regional Campaign Manager.
- d) Billiing and all meals at the Hyatt are paid for by the Foundation.
- e) When RSVP'ing to your appropriate Regional Campaign Manager, indicate if you require the TFT Purchase Card to make reservations.
- f) After receiving this LOI and confirmation from your Regional Campaign Manager confirming your participation in training, make your flight reservations IMMEDIATELY. Funding for the training is from our donors, so we must be conscience about the cost of airline reservations. The sooner you purchase a reservation, the less costly it will be.
- g) Flight reservations MUST be made NLT 28 August 2026. Airline reservations made after 28 August are subject to Chief Operating Officer approval.
- h) Flight reservations will only be made arriving and departing from St. Louis Lambert International Airport (airport code: STL). This airport is closest to the Hyatt and the Foundation coordinated a shuttle. **If you decide to make a reservation at an airport other than STL, your transportation will not be reimbursed nor should the TFT Purchase Card be used for this expense.**
- i) When making reservations via air travel, coach is the **ONLY** authorized travel class. This means that you ARE NOT authorized to upgrade to premium seats with extra leg room if there is an additional cost. If your ticket is for premium seats with extra leg room, you will owe the Foundation the difference between the two fares.
- j) Once you purchase your airline tickets, please provide your specific flight information via your Admin Site found on the Secure Site #2 – Annual Training, Annual Training Travel Itinerary Form (<https://lco-admin.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco->

- [admin/secure-site/forms/training-travel.aspx](#)) in order for the Foundation to better allocate the shuttles, if necessary.
- k) When making air reservations, purchase travel insurance for the ticket. Experience shows that there are always a few Coordinators that need to change their travel plans. The cost of travel insurance is minimal and will prevent losing the entire cost of the trip without insurance.
 - l) For those Coordinators who are unfamiliar with the multiple ways that you can purchase discount airfare, I ask you to do the following:
 - (1) DON'T INITIALLY PURCHASE AIRLINE TICKETS DIRECTLY FROM A TRAVEL AGENT AS THEY ARE ALMOST ALWAYS MORE EXPENSIVE THAN PURCHASING THROUGH AN ONLINE DISCOUNT SITE.
 - (2) Try these websites to price roundtrip airfare from your nearest airport to St. Louis Lambert International Airport (STL): <https://www.kayak.com/>, <https://www.orbitz.com/>, <https://www.travelocity.com/>, <https://www.onetravel.com/cheap-flights>, <https://www.hotwire.com/flights/>, <https://www.cheapair.com/flights/>, etc.
 - (3) **Purchase the least expensive airfare!!!**
 - m) If you arrive and/or depart outside the shuttle windows, use either Uber or Lyft. These companies are less expensive than taking a taxi to/from the Hyatt.
- 14) Driving to/from the Training Conference.
- a) You are authorized to drive your privately-owned vehicle (POV) to the training conference if your site is located within a 300-mile radius of the Hyatt. See Enclosure (2) to see a map with the designated authorized area. There is very limited parking at the Hyatt.
 - b) If you are outside of this area, you will need to contact your Regional Campaign Manager via email to request authorization to drive. Required in that email is a cost comparison between flying and driving. **Daily parking must be included in that cost comparison.** See Enclosure (2) for an example.
 - c) Reimbursement will be less than or equal to the cost of a round-trip coach airfare.
 - d) There is NO RV parking available near the Hyatt.
 - e) The parking garage charges \$40.00 per night for Valet and \$32.00 per night for self-parking. You are authorized to use your TFT Purchase Card for **self-parking** only and as long as it has been approved for you to drive (see instructions guidelines below for approval). **When checking into the hotel you must make them aware that you will have a vehicle in the parking garage, so they add it to your room key to be able to get in and out of the garage.**
- 15) One meal per TRAVEL DAY (10 & 13 September) is authorized. The meals will be charged to your TFT Purchase Card. You are required to retain your itemized receipt (credit slips are not acceptable) for these meals and submit it by attaching it to the Verification in your Logbook.
- 16) Notify your Regional Campaign Manager if you have any dietary restrictions. The Foundation will notify the Hyatt to ensure that your meals are appropriate for your dietary restrictions.
- 17) Notify your Regional Campaign Manager if you require a scooter for medical purposes. The Foundation will rent scooters from the Hyatt; however, to qualify to use a scooter, please provide medical verification to the Foundation.
- 18) **Do not contact the Hyatt. All reservations will be coordinated through the Foundation Regional Campaign Managers.**
- 19) The Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch is a **CASH FREE** hotel, to include payments for alcoholic drinks at the Meet and Greet and Friday's awards dinner. Your Toys for Tots credit card cannot

be used for any purchases at the hotel since the Foundation provides all food and non-alcoholic drinks.

20) Make sure that you always carry your room key. You will need your room key to go up the elevator to your room.

21) Campaign & Coordinator of the Awards Dinner – Etiquette for a 500-plus Attendee Plated Dinner

- a) The Friday evening Recognition Dinner is a formal, plated event serving over 500 guests. As such, individual customizations—such as specific cooking preferences (e.g., “well-done” or “medium-rare”)—are not possible due to the size and format of the event.
- b) Additionally, dietary accommodations can only be honored if they are communicated to the Foundation well in advance of the training. Attendees who fail to notify their Regional Campaign Manager of dietary restrictions prior to the deadline should expect the standard meal and will not be provided a substitute meal at the event.
- c) Please understand that this is standard practice for large-scale banquets. Last-minute requests or attempts to return plated meals during the dinner service disrupt the flow of the evening and place an unreasonable burden on hotel staff who are working hard to serve hundreds of guests efficiently.
- d) We ask for everyone’s cooperation in maintaining professionalism and understanding the logistics of large event service. If you have a legitimate dietary need, you must inform your Regional Campaign Manager no later than Friday, 21 August 2026, so we can coordinate accommodations with the hotel.

4. **Administration and Logistics**

a. **Administration.** Attendance at all scheduled classes, breakout sessions, and official events is mandatory for all attendees.

b. **Logistics.**

1) **Transportation.** Shuttle transportation between St. Louis Lambert International Airport (STL) and the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at The Arch is provided by the Foundation.

2) **Uniform for Military (includes active/reserve LCO Military personnel):**

- a) Service “C” uniform is required for all daytime training sessions (Friday and Saturday).
- b) Service “A” uniform is required for the Friday evening Recognition Dinner.

(1) **Marines recognized as Regional or National Coordinators of the Year will wear Blue Dress “B” for the dinner.**

3) **Attire for Local Community Organization (LCO) Civilian Attendees:**

- (1) Training Sessions (Friday and Saturday): Collared shirt and slacks (or comparable professional attire for women).
- (2) Recognition Dinner (Friday evening):
 - i. Men: Coat and tie (or suit).
 - ii. Women: Tea-length skirt/dress or pantsuit.

5. **Command and Signal**

a. **Signal.** N/A.

b. **Command.**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone</u> (703.649.XXXX)
LtGen Laster, USMC (Ret.)	President & CEO		

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone</u> <u>(703.649.XXXX)</u>
Ted “Migs” Silvester	Vice President, Marketing & Development		
David Cooper	Chief Operating Officer	david.cooper@toysfortots.org	2022
Mike Stuckey	Vice President, Operations	mike.stuckey@toysfortots.org	2041
Valerie Anderson	Deputy Director Operations Accounting	valerie.m.anderson@toysfortots.org	2024
Karen Torrence	Regional Campaign Manager, Region 1 (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, MD, & DE)	karen.m.torrence@toysfortots.org	2026
Jennifer Campeau	Regional Campaign Manager, Region 2 (NC, VA, TN, SC, KY, WV & DC)	jennifer.r.campeau@toysfortots.org	2035
Brianna Roberts	Regional Campaign Manager, Region 3 (MS, AL, GA, FL & PR)	brianna.roberts@toysfortots.org	2033
Tatiana Dingle	Regional Campaign Manager, Region 4 (MI, WI, IN & OH)	Tatiana.dingle@toysfortots.org	2037
Tammy Weatherholtz	Regional Campaign Manager, Region 5 (KS, OK, TX, NM, & CO, LA)	tammy.m.weatherholtz@toysfortots .org	2025
Katherine Barnes	Regional Campaign Manager, Region 6 (AZ, UT, NV, CA, OR, ID, WA, AK, & HI)	katherine.c.barnes@toysfortots.org	2031
Angela Gill	Regional Campaign Manager, Region 7 (AR, IA, IL, MN, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, & WY)	angie.gill@toysfortots.org	2046
Tim Allen	Warehouse and Logistics Coordinator	tim.allen@toysfortots.org	2030
Matt McDonald	Director of IT	matthew.d.mcdonald@toysfortots.o rg	2039
Steven Boone	IT Specialist	Steven.boone@toysfortots.org	2020

For the Marine Forces Reserve (MFR) Unit Coordinators, if you have specific Marine Corps related questions, please contact the National Toys for Tots Program Coordinator – Major Juan Torres via email at juan.j.torres@usmc.mil and by phone at 703.5454845.

Let's have a great training symposium, stay engaged, and take full advantage of this opportunity to connect, learn, and sharpen your skills before the 2026 campaign kicks off—America's children are counting on us!

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Cooper", with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the signature.

David Cooper

Lieutenant Colonel, USMC (Ret)

2026 Annual Toys for Tots Coordinator Training
Program of Events: 11 – 14 September

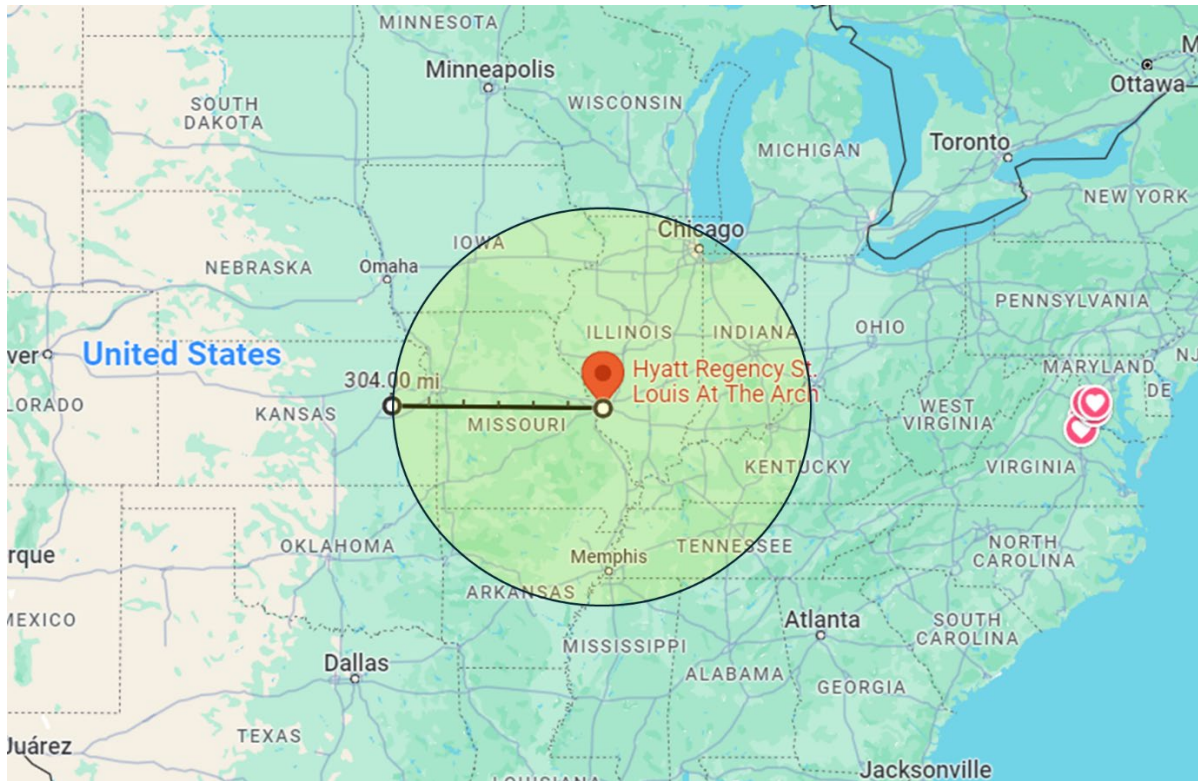
TO BE PUBLISHED

Enclosure (1)

2026 Annual Toys for Tots Coordinator Training

Driving Distance Authorization and Example Email Request

Below shows the approximate 300-mile radius driving distance from the Hyatt Regency St. Louis The Arch Hotel.



Enclosure (2)

2026 Annual Toys for Tots Coordinator Training Driving Distance Authorization and Example Email Request

Subject: 2026 TFT Coordinators Training Conference Flight vs. Drive Cost Comparison

Dear Regional Campaign Manager,

I would like to request approval to drive to the 2026 TFT Coordinators Training Conference. The cost comparison is below:

Flight Information

☐**3:05 pm – 4:51 pm**
American Airlines

nonstop

1h 46m
DFW-STL

☐**9:39 am – 11:32 am**
American Airlines

nonstop

1h 53m
STL-DFW

\$261

Basic Economy
American Airlines

View Deal



\$331

Main Cabin
American Airlines

View Deal



<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Reservation Cost	\$ 331.00	Round trip (DFW-STL) includes taxes and travel insurance
Travel Insurance	\$ 30.00	
Baggage Fee	\$ 50.00	1 Bag at \$25 each way (remember, the MTFTF only authorizes one checked bag!)
Parking Fee	\$ 68.00	Four days at \$17 per day
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$479.00</u>	

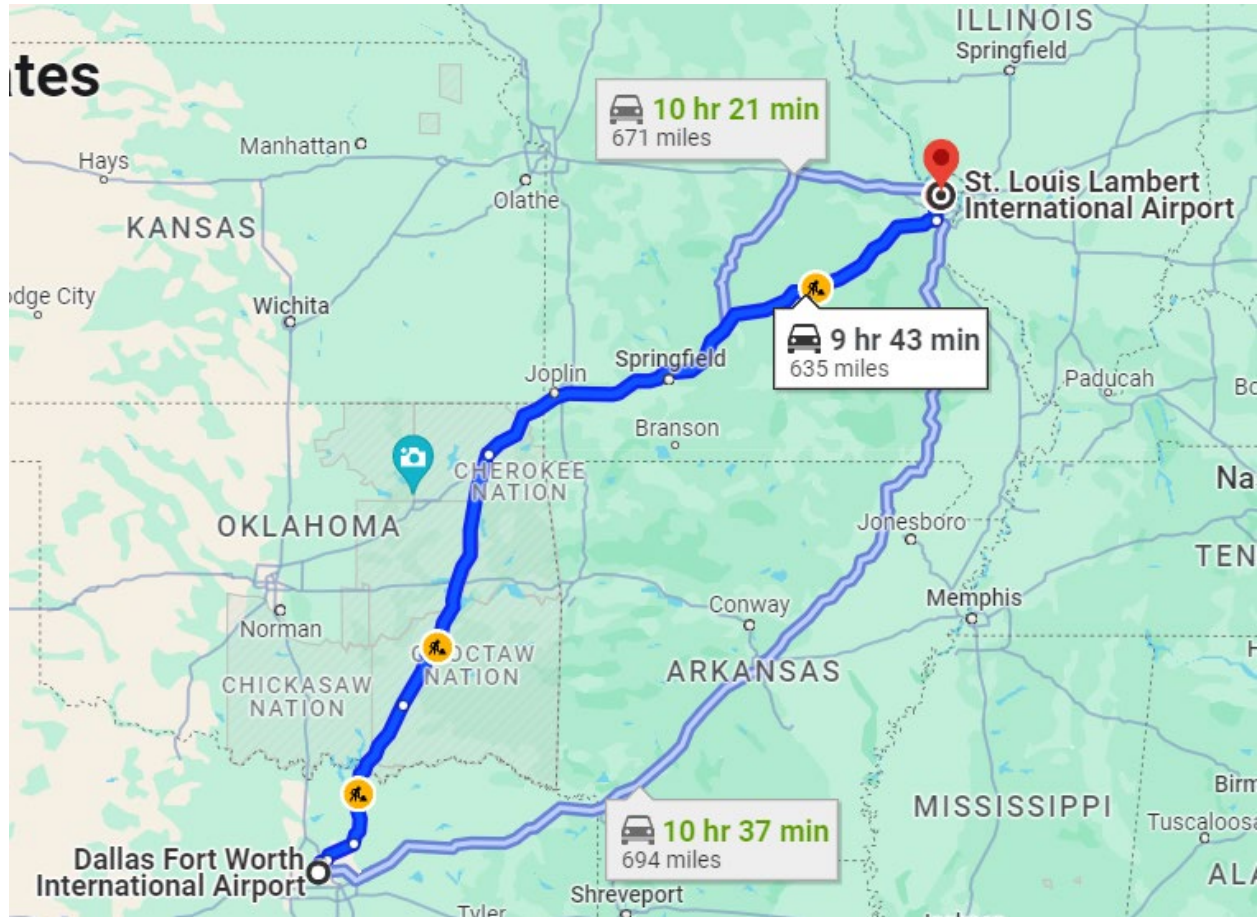
Driving Information

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Gas	\$ 215.30	Using GasBuddy.com (https://www.fueleconomy.gov/trip/) I calculate my fuel cost from Dallas, TX to the St. Louis, MO in my 2019 Jeep Grand Cherokee.
Tolls	\$ 4.40	There are \$2.20 in tolls on this route (verified using TollGuru at https://tollguru.com/toll-calculator)
Hotel Parking	\$ 113.60	Parking fee at the Hyatt is \$32.00 per day for Self Parking. Note that Valet Parking at \$40.00 per night is not authorized and will not be reimbursed.
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$ 333.30</u>	

Enclosure (2)

2

2026 Annual Toys for Tots Coordinator Training
Driving Distance Authorization and Example Email Request



Thanks,
Best Coordinator Ever

Enclosure (2)

2026 Annual Toys for Tots Coordinator Training

Shuttle Plan

To be published at a later date.

Enclosure (3)