

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION AND REIMBURSEMENT OF CITY COMMISSIONER EXPENSES

PURPOSE

This purpose of this policy is to establish procedures relative to business-related expenses and City-endorsed travel incurred by the City Commission members.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to the Mayor and City Commissioners.

IN GENERAL

A person engaged in travel for the benefit of the City has a responsibility to keep accurate, substantiated cost records, original receipts and to submit requests for reimbursement that are in accordance with this policy. The City Commission shall be entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary business-related expenses that are not directly billed to the City to include but not limited to dinners, luncheons, breakfasts, and expenses associated with transportation and travel.

NOTE: Gifts related to reasonable travel expenses for the City Commission are exempt from the restrictions of the ethics laws if the gift is related to officially designated negotiations, economic development activity, or trade promotion or fact-finding missions or trips and the payment of expenses have been approved by the City Commission (OAR 199-005-0020).

Travel Expense Reimbursement

The City will reimburse the City Commission for reasonable business travel expenses incurred while on a trip related to official City business.

Travel in the interest of the City can usually be anticipated and is a regularly budgeted item. For travel to be approved, funds must be available in the Commission's budget. In those instances where budgeted funds in this appropriation are inadequate, a formal budget adjustment must be requested.

Travel by City Commission members does not require prior approval by the City Manager.

The traveler must complete Part A of the Travel Authorization form (anticipated expenses) prior to travel which provides a record of the travel and offers a per diem check in advance. The form is submitted to the City Manager's Office at least two weeks prior to the proposed travel date. Accounts payable will review budget appropriations and, if in order, will cut the per diem check.

In emergency situations, when the Travel Authorization form cannot be submitted two weeks in advance, the Travel Report is submitted with a memo describing the emergency.

Advancing money for travel does not constitute approval of spending the entire advance; only actual and necessary expenditures will qualify for reimbursement. An advance cannot be obtained if a previous advance has not cleared repayment or a new Travel Report form for actual expenses has not been received

Part B of the Travel Authorization form (actual expenses) must be completed following the travel listing actual expenses.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

A. **Transportation.**

1. Air Travel. Air travel will be considered a standard cost for reimbursement purposes. First class air passage will not be considered. Air travel shall be utilized only when the cost is a savings over mileage expense and other expenses incurred when traveling by car.

Travel arrangement should be made as far in advance as possible to take advantage of the most economical rate.

2. Personal Vehicle. Mileage will be reimbursed when a Commissioner's personal vehicle is used for City business, except mileage will not be reimbursed for travel to and from regularly scheduled Commission meetings requiring the attendance of all Commissioners. Mileage shall be reimbursed at the current IRS rate. Commissioners traveling by personal automobile on City business are required to carry, at the Commissioner's expense, public liability and property damage insurance at the minimum required by law.
3. Travel in City Vehicles. Travel in City owned vehicles might be approved under certain circumstances. When traveling in a City vehicle, receipts for gas, oil and other supplies purchased enroute will be required. The cost of gas, oil, etc. for the City vehicle should be entered under "Other" in the "Transportation" section on the Travel Authorization form.
4. Taxi, Shuttles and Rental Cars. Taxi expenses are considered reimbursable expenses when shuttle services do not effectively meet the needs of travel. Shuttle service available through the airport and/or conference is encouraged when available. A rental car may be permitted when it is in the best interest of the City.
5. Parking. The City will reimburse a business related parking expense. On trips of more than one (1) day duration, long-term economy parking must be used. An original parking receipt will be required for reimbursement.

- B. **Lodging.** All business-related lodging expenses will be reimbursed following the domestic per diem rates established by the US General Services Administration for the travel destination. Accommodations should be appropriate for the purpose of the trip. Receipts for all lodging costs shall be obtained. If members of the family accompany the Commissioner, the reimbursable lodging cost shall be that of a single room. When requested, most hotels and motels will furnish a receipt for a single room when a double room is used but desire reimbursement for a single room. If such an arrangement cannot be made, the price of a single should be noted on the receipt for actual lodging costs. If the room is not shared with another City employee, the single room rate must be available in the supporting documents included with the Travel Authorization form.

The final hotel bill must reflect that the bill has been paid in full (either showing a zero balance or accompanied with a credit card receipt). This must be an itemized statement indicating daily room charges, meals (without room service charges), telephone calls, etc., if applicable.

- C. **Meals.** All business-related expenses for meals, including tips, will be reimbursed following the domestic per diem rates established by the US General Services Administration. Receipts must be attached to Part B of the Travel Authorization form.

Original receipts must be submitted to be reimbursed for actual costs or expenses exceeding the per-diem rate schedule. If original receipts are not available, meal expenses will automatically be reimbursed on a per-diem basis.

D. **Other Miscellaneous Travel Expenses.**

1. Phone and Fax Charges: Expenses incurred for phone and fax charges will be allowed only when necessary for City business.
2. Registration Fees: Fees for meeting or convention registration will be paid in advance by the City. To request advance payment for registration fees, complete the tuition section of Part A of the Travel Authorization form
3. Tips: Expense for tips should be included with the transportation, lodging and meal expenses. Gratuities are not reimbursable individually.
4. Alcoholic Beverages: Expenditures for alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

E. **Direct Pay Expenses.** Expenses that can be directly paid by the City such as airfare and conference registration fees should be arranged in advance with the City Manager or designee.

REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

To apply for reimbursement, complete Part B of the Travel Authorization form **within 60 days** of the trip with actual expenditures totaled, original receipts attached, and signature of person requesting reimbursement. Submit the form to the City Manager's Office, who is responsible for reviewing the request for proper documentation and reasonableness of expenses.

After review, the Travel Authorization form will be submitted to Accounts Payable for processing.

If any portion of the travel advance is unspent, the unspent portion must be repaid when the Travel Authorization form is submitted. The Accounts Payable staff is responsible for following up on delinquent travel advances.

A representative of the City is expected to use good judgment in the nature of expenses incurred in traveling. Expenses for family members who accompany a City Commissioner on a trip are not reimbursable. The expense report should be prepared to reflect only the actual and necessary expenses related to the person authorized to make the trip and the level of expenses in all categories must be appropriate and reasonable.

Other Expense Reimbursement

General business expenses will be considered for reimbursement that are required for the performance of Commissioner duties. Examples of expenses not reimbursed are meals with constituents, meals with other commissioners, or other activities where there was an alternative to avoiding the expense.

At the end of each month, Commissioners shall itemize all other non-travel expenses that are not directly paid by the City on a Commission Expense Statement. The statement shall be forwarded to the City Manager's Office within seven (7) days following the last day of each month. The City Manager will approve and authorize reimbursement for the Commission Expense Statements which meet these guidelines and that do not exceed the budgeted amount for Commissioner expenses. Expenses which exceed these amounts shall be forwarded to the City Commission for approval and reimbursement authorization. All approved expenses will be forwarded to the Finance Department for reimbursement.

