



CITY OF LAWRENCE, KS ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

SUBJECT: City Business Travel and Expenses

PREPARED BY: Finance Department

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 1, 2016

APPROVED BY: Bryan Kidney, Finance Director

SUPERSEDES: January 1, 2012

APPLICABLE TO: City Employees, Elected Officials and Appointed Commission & Board Members

1.0 **PURPOSE**

To establish procedures that will govern the authorized expenses incurred by officials and employees of the City of Lawrence while on official business. These procedures will provide a uniform reimbursement of such expenditures.

The City Manager and department directors are empowered to authorize, within budgetary limitations, reimbursements for travel, meetings, and other occasions to pursue necessary official business of the City.

2.0 **POLICY**

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of every employee and city official (including but not limited to elected officials, appointed commission members and appointed board members) to ensure that expenditures are in the interest of and for the betterment of the City, and are for legal and appropriate City business.
- 2.2 Employees and officials are expected to exercise reasonable judgement to minimize costs by exercising the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise in conducting personal business.
- 2.3 It is the responsibility of those persons approving all requests associated with travel to ensure adequate funding is available and that requests comply with these administrative guidelines.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of each department head to monitor and authorize travel expenditures within their department.
- 2.5 The City Auditor and City officials, including but not limited to elected officials, appointed commission members, and appointed board members are subject to this same policy.

3.0 **GUIDELINES**

3.1 Approval

- 3.1.1 All Business/Travel expenses for personnel below the department director level will be approved by the department director.
- 3.1.2 Business/Travel expenses for elected officials and appointed commission or board members, i.e., Planning Commission, City Commissioners, will be reviewed by the City Manager or Assistant City Manager and submitted to the City Commission for approval.
- 3.1.3 All out of state overnight travel for directors and personnel below the department director level must be approved by the City Manager before travel.
- 3.1.4 Travel authorized for the City Manager in an employment agreement must be approved by the Mayor prior to travel. All travel for the City Manager not included in an employment agreement must be approved by the City Commission prior to travel.
- 3.1.5 Any unauthorized travel may be the responsibility of the individual and not the City.

3.2 Form for Use by City Employee

- 3.2.1 The Finance Department is responsible for making available a Form that will serve as the originating and only source document for travel authorization, travel advances, and travel reimbursements.
- 3.2.2 Other Departmental forms may be attached to the Finance Department Form but will not supersede the Finance Form.

3.3 Travel Authorization

- 3.3.1 The amounts on the authorization Form serve as an agreement on the cost of the trip and must be approved in advance of travel. It is recognized that actual costs may be somewhat different and reasonable variances will be allowed with authorizing person per section 3.1 approvals.
- 3.3.2 Once the Estimated Cost portion is complete, the Form must be submitted to the authorizing person per section 3.1 and kept for reconciling with and turning in post travel.
- 3.3.3 It is not necessary to submit the Form to Finance until completion of trip unless an advance is requested.

3.4 Advances

- 3.4.1 All advances must be approved by authorizing person per section 3.1.
- 3.4.2 Advances are limited to the meal per diem and transportation estimates unless the authorizing person documents a reasonable variance to this should occur.
- 3.4.3 A signed copy of the travel authorization Form will be used by Finance to process the advance. It is the employee's responsibility to pay attention to the claim schedule for processing of the advance. A travel advance will not be issued to the employee earlier than 14 days prior to travel.
- 3.4.4 Advance Funds should not be construed as the authority to expend all funds authorized. Advance funds are subject to reconciliation and may require repayment.

3.5 Travel Completion

- 3.5.1 The Actual Cost section of the Form will be completed after the employee returns and is used for any travel reimbursement. **All costs and** travel times of the trip must be included on the Form, including costs that have already been paid by the City either directly or with a purchasing card, for which the employee is not seeking reimbursement.
- 3.5.2 No travel reimbursements will be processed without the completion of this Form. Receipts for all expenses regardless of who paid must be attached, excluding meal receipts.
- 3.5.3 The approved Form is required to be completed and submitted to Finance regardless if there is any reimbursement due to employee, within a reasonable amount of days from travel completion.
- 3.5.4 No travel advance or reimbursement will be paid to employees who have not completed travel Forms from previous trips.

3.6 Standard Mileage Rates

- 3.6.1 Travel for City business by the use of a personal automobile will be reimbursed at the current rates issued by the Internal Revenue Service; The Finance Department will keep the rates updated and included on the Form.
- 3.6.2 At the City's discretion, if a city vehicle has specifically been made available to the employee for transportation and employee uses their personal vehicle the rate of reimbursement will be fifty percent (50%) of allowed standard rate.

3.7 Special Conditions

- 3.7.1 If an employee is reimbursed for travel expenditures from another organization, the employee will not be allowed a duplicate travel reimbursement from the City of Lawrence. Any such reimbursements must be noted on the Form and deducted from the amount to be reimbursed.
- 3.7.2 Any item or expense not listed in this policy must be noted and approved by the authorizer per section 3.1 prior to travel for inclusion.
- 3.7.3 Non-business related travel prior to or following official business should be noted and itemized on any invoice used for reimbursement. Employee must show difference of costs between personal and business related travel.

4.0 OVERNIGHT STAY

4.1 Reimbursable expenses

- 4.1.1 The City will pay reasonable lodging costs associated with attendance at an authorized business meeting, seminar or conference.
 - 4.1.1.1 The City will not authorize the reimbursement for cost of any traveling companion to travel to meetings. The companion may share a room, but will be required to pay the difference between the single rate and the double/family rate.
 - 4.1.1.2 Government room rates should be requested for lodging if available. If not staying at the conference hotel reasonable explanation needs to be included on request and price differential documented.

- 4.1.1.3 Travel within 60 miles from the employee’s workplace generally will not be reimbursed for overnight stay. Approval for overnight stay within this range must be preapproved by the City Manager.
- 4.1.2 A daily subsistence allowance (“Per Diem”) is established to cover the cost of meals and tips on the meals.
 - 4.1.2.1 Meals are expenses for breakfast, lunch, dinner and taxes on those meals, which are incurred on travel status, and are reimbursable based on per diem rates. Specifically excluded are alcoholic beverage and entertainment expenses and any expenses incurred for other persons.
 - 4.1.2.2 Meal costs will be reimbursed by per diem rates only. Meal costs cannot be charged to any City issued bankcard, including the City P-card. Meals included as part of conference registration should be deducted from the per diem rates. The intent of the policy is for the City not to pay more than three meals per day.
 - 4.1.2.3 Meal per diem is defined as those rates published by the U.S. Government Services Administration (USGSA) (see website below) for the area to which the employee is traveling. If the city or county in which the employee is traveling is not listed, then reimbursement will be at the minimum rate listed on the USGSA website. U.S. Government Services Administration website:
<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>
 - 4.1.2.4 Partial days (including travel days to and from conference) will be paid for breakfast, lunch and dinner depending on when travel takes place. Reasonable reimbursement of the partial day per diem will be based on travel times included on reimbursement form.

Meal	Percent of Per Diem
Breakfast	20%
Lunch	30%
Dinner	50%
	100%

- 4.1.2.5 The City is not required to follow the USGSA Per Diem Rates. Therefore, the City maintains the right to periodically review the rates and/or set its Per Diem Rates. If upon review of the submitted Travel Request and Authorization Form it is determined by Finance that the rate used is not correct the employee and employee’s supervisor will be contacted.
- 4.1.3 Registration fees for City employees and officials attending authorized conferences and training sessions will be paid by the City.
 - 4.1.3.1 Preconference classes that include additional fees and networking dinner/lunches that include additional fees must be pre-approved.
 - 4.1.3.2 Employees are encouraged to register as early as reasonable in order to take advantage of any discounts
- 4.1.4 The most economical means of transportation available with reasonable consideration given to time and distance involved will be paid by the City. No specific mode of transportation is mandatory. Employees are expected to use the most economical means available with reasonable consideration given to the time and distance involved.

- 4.1.4.1 Personal Vehicle Travel for City business by the use of a personal automobile will be reimbursed per section 3.6
- 4.1.4.2 The City will pay for the cost of roundtrip coach airfare. When possible, commercial travel should be planned far enough in advance to take advantage of reduced fares.
- 4.1.4.3 The city will pay the airline charge for one bag. Additional costs for extra baggage, seat upgrades, priority seating and other miscellaneous charges will not be allowed unless there is a legitimate business reasonable.
- 4.1.4.4 If available, the use of a City Vehicles for transportation needs to be approved by the employee's Director or the City Manager when applicable. Allowable expenses include actual expense for gasoline, oil, repairs, and other operating expenses.
- 4.1.4.5 Rental cars and associated reasonable expenditures will be reimbursed when proper receipts are provided and justification is provided for this expense.
- 4.1.4.6 Other Reasonable travel expenditures such as taxi, bus, ride sharing, tolls and parking fees are reimbursable if reasonable and business related.

5.0 LOCAL TRAINING/CONFERENCE (NO-OVERNIGHT STAY)

5.1 Reimbursable Expenses

A daily subsistence allowance ("Per Diem") is established to cover the cost of meals and tips on the meals based on the rates in section 4.1.2.

- 5.1.1 Registration fees for City employees and officials attending authorized conferences and training sessions will be paid by the City.
 - 5.1.1.1 Preconference classes that include additional fees and networking dinner/lunches that include additional fees must be pre-approved.
 - 5.1.1.2 Employees are encouraged to register as early as reasonable in order to take advantage of any discounts.
- 5.1.2 Personal Vehicle Travel for City business by the use of a personal automobile will be reimbursed per section 3.6

6.0 UNAUTHORIZED EXPENSES

- 6.1** Specifically exempted from reimbursement are expenses incurred by attendance at political rallies or events held for the specific purpose of promoting the candidacy of an individual for public office.
- 6.2** Expenditures incurred by non-employee travel companions will not be reimbursed.
- 6.3** Reimbursement will not be made for expenditures which do not involve a public purpose, or those not necessarily incurred in the performance of a public purpose authorized by law, i.e., bar bills, tickets to plays, sporting events, etc.
- 6.4** Entertainment costs (such as movies, personal phone calls, etc) will not be reimbursed.

- 6.5 Laundry services will not be eligible for reimbursement.
- 6.6 Expenses incurred on extra days, either prior to or after the registered event and unrelated to City business, shall not be reimbursed by the City (no Per Diem rate shall be granted for those days).
- 6.7 Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed. Alcoholic beverages and any liquor tax should be removed from the claimed totals submitted on the Travel Expense Statement.
- 6.8 Any unauthorized travel may be the responsibility of the individual and not the City.

7.0 ENFORCEMENT AND REPORTING

- 7.1 The City Manager will have overall responsibility for these administrative procedures. Department directors will be entrusted with the responsibility of enforcing the policy within their department. The Finance Department will ensure the compliance of the specified guidelines before reimbursement.
- 7.2 The City Commission will have overall responsibility for enforcing these procedures for city officials (including but not limited to elected officials, appointed commission members and appointed board members)
- 7.3 The Finance Department will publish a monthly travel summary report on the Finance Department site. At a minimum, the report will include name, department, destination, purpose of travel and costs per category.