

# ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

## City of Independence, Missouri



Number AP-19-01

Effective Date February 01/2019

## TRAVEL POLICY

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### 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures to govern authorized expenses for employees and officials of the City of Independence while traveling on official City business. These procedures will provide a uniform reimbursement of such expenditures.

The City Manager and department directors are responsible for authorizing, 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 to ensure that expenditures are in the interest of and for the betterment of the City and are for legal and appropriate City business. It is also the responsibility of the City Employee to ensure that they have a current Tax Exempt Certificate and to not pay sales tax as appropriate.
- 2.2 Employees and officials should travel as economically as possible and are expected to exercise reasonable judgment to minimize cost.
- 2.3 It is the responsibility of those personnel approving all requests associated with travel to ensure adequate funding is available and that requests comply with this administrative policy.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of each department director to monitor and authorize travel expenditures in their department.
- 2.5 All City officials, including but not limited to elected officials, appointed councilmembers, city council employees, and appointed board members are subject to this same policy.

- 2.6 The approval and review process for travel of the City Council and their staff will be determined by separate action of the council and be incorporated into this administrative policy.

### **3.0 Guidelines**

#### **3.1 Approval**

- 3.1.1 All travel expenses for personnel below the department director level will be approved by the department director. When a department director is away from the office another person shall be designated to approve travel requests. If there is no designee within the department, travel requests will be reviewed by an Assistant City Manager.

3.1.1.1 At the department director's discretion, departments may require additional levels of approval, such as an employee's supervisor, prior to requesting the director's approval.

- 3.1.2 All travel expenses for department directors will be approved by The City Manager or his designee.
- 3.1.3 All travel expenses for staff in the City Manager's Office will be approved by their direct supervisor.
- 3.1.4 Travel 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 Council prior to travel.
- 3.1.5 All travel expenses for city officials will be reviewed by the City Council or Assistant City Manager and submitted to the City Council for approval as determined in section 2.2.6.
- 3.1.6 Any unauthorized travel may be the responsibility of the individual and not the City.

#### **3.2 Travel Authorization Form**

- 3.2.1 The Finance Department is responsible for making available a Travel Authorization Form (TAF) 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's Travel Authorization Form but will not supersede the TAF.

#### **3.3 Travel Authorization**

- 3.3.1 Travel Authorization Form must be prepared and approved per Section 3.1 fifteen (15) working days in advance when possible to allow for careful planning of expenses. The amounts on the form serve as an agreement on the cost of the trip. It is recognized that actual costs may vary slightly; reasonable variances will be allowed with the authorizing person per Section 3.1.
- 3.3.2 Once the Estimating Section is complete, the TAF must be submitted to the authorizing person per Section 3.1 and kept for reconciling and turning in post travel.
- 3.3.3 The TAF does not need to be turned into the Finance Department until the trip is complete unless an advance is requested.

#### **3.4 Advances**

- 3.4.1 All advances must be approved by the 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 reason for approving a variance.
- 3.4.3 A signed copy of the TAF will be used by the Finance Department to process the advance. It is the employee's responsibility to pay attention to the claim schedule posted on the finance page of CityNet for processing the advance. A travel advance will not be issued to an employee earlier than 14 days prior to travel.
- 3.4.4 Advance funds should not be construed as the authority to expend all the 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 TAF will be completed after the employee returns to work and is used for any travel reimbursement. All costs and travel times of the trip must be included on the TAF, including costs that have already been paid by the City either directly or with a purchasing card and not subject to employee reimbursement.
- 3.5.2 No travel reimbursements will be processed with the completion of the TAF. Receipts for all expenses except meal receipts, regardless of who paid, must be attached.
- 3.5.3 The approved TAF is required to be completed and submitted to the Finance Department even if there is no reimbursement to the employee.
- 3.5.4 The TAF must be submitted through the authorizing person (see Section 3.1) ten working days upon an employee's or official's return when possible. Allowances will be made when an employee has scheduled personal time which falls within this ten-day period after the trip's completion.

- 3.5.5 No travel advances or reimbursements will be made to employees who have not completed TAFs from a prior trip.

### **3.6 Standard Mileage Rates**

- 3.6.1 Use of a personal vehicle for travel for City business to an authorized travel event will be reimbursed at the current rates issues by the Internal Revenue Service. The Finance Department will keep the rates updated and the included on the form.
- 3.6.2 At the City's discretion, if a City vehicle has been made available specifically for the employee's use for travel and the employee uses their personal vehicle instead, the rate of reimbursement will be 50% of the allowed standard rate.
- 3.6.3 63 miles round trip is used in calculating the mileage reimbursement due to the employee for travel to Kansas City International Airport

### **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. Any such reimbursements must be noted on the TAF and deducted from the amount reimbursed by the City.
- 3.7.2 Non-business-related travel prior to or following official business should be noted and itemized on any invoice used or reimbursement. Employee must show difference of costs between personal and business-related travel.
- 3.7.2 Any item or expense not listed in this policy must be noted and approved by the authorized person per Section 3.1 prior to travel.

### **3.8 Time Compensation**

- 3.8.1 The City will follow minimum guidelines of FLSA. It is up to the department policy on travel time compensation

## **4.0 Non-Local/Overnight Travel**

Non-local travel is defined as a distance outside of a 125-mile radius from Independence or travel requiring an overnight stay.

### **4.1. Transportation**

- 4.1.1 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. Diligence must be exercised to ensure employees are traveling in the most economical manner.

- 4.1.2 Personal vehicle. Travel for authorized City business using a personal vehicle will be reimbursed per Section 3.6.
  - 4.1.2.1 Employees who receive a car allowance will receive mileage reimbursement from the point of origin for business related travel that is in excess of fifty (50) miles round trip.
- 4.1.3 Airfare. The City will pay for round-trip coach/economy airfare.
  - 4.1.3.1 When possible, air travel should be planned for enough in advance to take advantage of reduced fares.
  - 4.1.3.2 Employees should obtain several economy airfare estimates to provide to the authorizing person (Section 3.1).
  - 4.1.3.3 Baggage. The City will pay the airline charge for one bag. Additional costs for extra baggage, seat upgrades, priority seating, and/or other miscellaneous charges will not be allowed unless there is a legitimate business reason that is documented in the TAF.
- 4.1.4 Car Rentals. Rental cars and associated reasonable expenditures will be reimbursed if justification is provided and this expense is approved.
  - 4.1.4.1 Car rentals must provide an economical benefit to the City and not used for personal convenience.
  - 4.1.4.2 To determine if a car rental is appropriate, the estimated total cost of the car rental plus estimated parking and fuel costs must be less than the estimated cost of other ground transportation or airfare.
  - 4.1.4.3 Justification for car rental expenses must be included on the TAF.
- 4.1.5 Transportation to Airport/Parking
  - 4.1.5.1 If an employee uses a paid service to drop-off/pick-up at the airport, the employee will be reimbursed. The reimbursement will be linked by an amount equal to the lowest parking rate and other expenditures which would have been incurred.
  - 4.1.5.2 Reimbursement for airport parking shall not exceed the lowest daily parking rate. Exceptions to the daily allowed parking rate will be allowed when a City vehicle that is equipped with highly specialized equipment is parked in a more highly secured airport parking area.
  - 4.1.5.3 If the employee is dropped off and picked up by a non-paid service, mileage will be reimbursed per Section 3.6.
  - 4.1.5.4 Parking charges will be reimbursed for the days of business related travel.

- 4.1.6 Other transportation expenses, such as taxi, bus, ride-sharing, tolls, and parking fees are reimbursable if reasonable and business-related.

**4.2 Meals**

- 4.2.1 Meal Per Diem. A daily meal per diem will be provided to cover the cost of meals for travel over 250 miles round trip.

- 4.2.1.1 The meal per diem is defined as those rates published by the US Government Services Administration (USGSA) and can be found in the M&IE Total at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287> If the employee's destination city or county is not listed, reimbursement will be at the minimum rate listed on the GSA website.

- 4.2.1.2 Partial day meal per diem (including travel days to and from a destination) for breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be paid depending on when travel takes place. Reasonable reimbursement of the partial day per diem will be based on travel times and your normal work schedule included in the TAF.

<b>Meal</b>	<b>Percent of Per Diem</b>
Breakfast	20%
Lunch	30%
Dinner	50%

- 4.2.1.3 Meal costs will be reimbursed by per diem rates only. Meal costs covered by the per diem cannot be charged to any City issued bank card, including the p-card.

- 4.2.1.4 Meals included in a conference registration should be deducted per the partial day rate (Section 4.2.1.2). The intent of the policy is for the City to not pay for more than three meals per day. It is the responsibility for the employee, to be checked by the employee's supervisor, to note any exceptions that may be caused by schedule conflicts or health restrictions on the travel reimbursement forms.

- 4.2.1.5 If upon review of the submitted TAF, the Finance Department determines that the incorrect per diem rate was used, the employee's supervisor and department head will be contacted.

**4.3 Lodging**

- 4.3.1 The City will pay the actual cost of lodging at the single occupancy room rate for travel associated with an authorized business meeting, seminar, or conference. A receipt showing the actual costs incurred must be provided. Employee is not limited to a conference hotel and alternative lodging is allowed (ie. Airbnb, VRBO, etc). However, the amount of charges allowed plus any additional transportation expenditures associated with the location may not be more than what would have been charged at the conference hotel. This calculation must be documented. Exceptions can be made for overbooked hotels if properly documented.

- 4.3.2 Charges for other hotel services, such as parking or meals, must be separately reported.
- 4.3.3 The City will not authorize the reimbursement for cost of any traveling companion. The companion may share a room but will be required to pay the difference between the single rate and double/family rate.
- 4.3.4 Government room rates should be requested for lodging, if available. If not staying at the conference/event hotel, explanation needs to be included on request and the price difference documented. Any amount above conference/event hotel must be authorized and explained.
- 4.3.5 Travel within 60 miles from the employee's workplace will not be reimbursed for overnight stay. Overnight stay within this range must be pre-approved by the City Manager.

#### **4.4 Other Reimbursable Expenses.**

- 4.4.1 Extended Trips. Employees or officials will be allowed, at City expense, one round trip home for each four (4) week work assignment away from Independence. The City will only pay for the actual cost of the round trip. The round trip home can be made at any time during the four (4) week period subject to business agenda and department director approval. The City Manager may approve more frequent trips home, at City expense, if requested prior to the commencement of travel.
- 4.4.2 Laundry. Employees will be allowed reasonable laundry services at City expense for each five (5) consecutive days such employees are away from their homes overnight on City business.

#### **5.0 Local Travel**

Local travel is defined as a distance within a 250-mile radius from Independence or travel not requiring an overnight stay.

- 5.1 For local travel, no Travel Authorization Form will be required if the only costs incurred will be meals and mileage. Approval for local travel is required per Section 3.1.
- 5.2 Employees expecting reimbursement for mileage incurred for attendance at meetings and seminars will be expected to comply with the procedures for "Reimbursement for Use of Personal Motor Vehicles on City Business". The procedures are available on the intranet and should be reviewed prior to commencing the travel.
  - 5.2.1 An employee who uses a personal vehicle for local travel 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 that do not involve a public purpose.
- 6.4 Purchase of alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed. Alcoholic beverages and any liquor tax should be removed from the claimed totals submitted on the Travel Authorization Form.
- 6.5 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.
- 6.6 Any unauthorized travel will be the responsibility of the individual, 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 Council will have overall responsibility for enforcing these procedures for City officials (including, but not limited to, elected officials, appointed councilmembers, city council employees, 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 cost per category.
- 7.4 The Finance Department will conduct internal audits to ensure compliance with the City's travel policy. Any exceptions noted will be communicated to the employee, the employee's supervisor, the department director and, when appropriate, the City's Manager's Office. Any exceptions which are noted that will result in a monetary adjustment will be communicated to the employee. Any exceptions that are deemed to be a serious violation can result in a loss of travel privileges for the employee or possible disciplinary action taken by the employee's supervisor or department director when it is appropriate.