

City of Hendersonville

Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for authorization of travel and training expenses by City employees, elected officials, and appointed officials for the purpose of conducting City business, and to establish procedures for reimbursement of the cost of authorized travel and other expenses.

II. General Policy

Training shall be defined as those conferences or sessions that provide certification or a learning environment for employees or board members pursuant and relevant to their current duty stations.

It shall be the general policy of the City to allow Council members and employee travel to training session, seminars, and meetings of professional associations under the following guidelines. Service by Council members in an official capacity as representatives of the City on statewide or regional committees and boards is encouraged and their travel expenses will be reimbursed.

All travel is contingent upon the availability of funds in the proper budgetary account. Travel, which exceeds the budgeted amount, must be approved by the City Manager.

III. Employee and City Official Responsibility

An employee or City official on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, luxury accommodations, and unnecessary or unjustified services are not acceptable under this standard. Employees and City officials will be responsible for unauthorized costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.

IV. Approval Authority

The responsibility for keeping within the travel budget of each activity lies with the approving authority. The authorization of all trips involving use of budgeted funds is as follows:

- A. The Mayor shall authorize the City Manager's travel and training requests.
- B. City Council shall authorize the elected officials training and travel requests. City Council shall authorize the out-of-state travel training requests of Council

members. Travel expenses incurred, as a City representative of a statewide regional committee, to attend a convention, or training related to the role of City Council member will be reimbursed without City Council approval.

- C. The City Manager shall authorize travel and training by the Department Heads and appointed officials. This shall also include the reimbursement of transportation expenses of individuals visiting for employment interviews.
- D. The Department Head shall authorize travel by employees within their department.

V. Procedure

All travel and training outside Henderson County must be authorized in advance. Only those expenses allowed by this policy will be reimbursed.

A. General Procedure

- 1) Travel request and approvals are to be made on the Travel Authorization and Travel Advance Form (Appendix A). Part one is the Finance Copy, part two is the Department Copy, and part three is the Employee Copy.
- 2) Requests for travel should be submitted to the authorizing party.
- 3) The authorizing party will sign and return the employee's copy of the form to the originating individual and will transmit the Finance copy to the Finance Department along with any check requests.
- 4) Upon completion of the trip, the traveler will complete the Travel Expense Report (Appendix B) as explained in Section VI, and route it back to the authorizing party for approval of the expense settlement.
- 5) The settlement will be sent to the Finance Department for processing.

B. Travel Advances

Employees may receive a travel advance for overnight travel to avoid personal inconvenience or hardships. Travel advances will be issued at the discretion of the Finance Director. Advances will be requested on the Travel Authorization and Travel Advance Form, which will be submitted no later than ten working days prior to the travel. Travel advances will not be issued unless the estimated out-of-pocket expenses are at least \$100. Travel advances will be reconciled with travel expenses when the Travel Expense Report is submitted.

VI. Reimbursable Expenses Guidelines

A. Transportation

1) Personal Vehicles

The requesting party may use a personal automobile and be reimbursed on a mileage basis. Personal vehicles shall only be used if a city vehicle is not available, not applicable, or would generate a hardship on the employee. Use of a personal vehicle must be approved in advance, with written justification, to the authorizing party. Carpooling is mandatory even if a personal vehicle is being used, only one traveler will receive reimbursement when a group of employees are traveling to the same destination.

Reimbursement of personal vehicle travel is at the established federal rate and paid to the vehicle owner. No reimbursement will be made for expenses incurred in making repairs or towing of the vehicle.

2) City Vehicles

City vehicles should be used whenever possible for any authorized travel. The requesting party must obey all laws of the jurisdiction in which the automobile is being operated. The vehicle will be used for the purpose of City business only. Reimbursement will be made for repairs, gasoline, oil, parking, tolls and other necessary expenses of the City vehicle. A paid receipt must support all reimbursement requests of this nature. Any employee operating a City vehicle should use the same care that a prudent person would use if operating his/her own personal automobile.

3) Rental Vehicles

A rental vehicle will be used when it is determined that no other mode of transportation is as economical or practical. A rental automobile should only be used for business purposes only. Use of a rental vehicle must be approved in advance on the Travel Authorization and Expense Form. Car rental expense incurred while on City business is reimbursed upon completion of the trip. Rental receipts must be submitted with the expense report for reimbursement.

4) Other Transportation

All necessary bus, train, and air transportation will be obtained at the most economical rate available (e.g., air coach). Reimbursements will be made for actual costs that are incurred and receipt supported.

B. Subsistence

1) Lodging

The City will not pay for out of town lodging for travel within 35 miles of City Hall radius unless it is approved by the City Manager. Lodging costs will be reimbursed at the actual amount incurred. Receipts for lodging expenses must be submitted with a Travel and Expense Form. The lodging rate is limited to the most economical rate that will permit the employee to efficiently conduct his/her town business. Special government rates should be obtained if available.

City travelers are responsible for no-show fees unless emergency or other approved business reasons cause cancellation. Employees should always obtain a cancellation number from the hotel to protect against no-show billings. Funds prepaid by the City, which relate to cancelled arrangements, must be refunded to the City by the traveler.

2) Meals

Meals shall be reimbursed \$35.00 per day for in-state travel and \$45.00 per day for out-of state travel.

Meals may also be reimbursed for other professionals as a guest in the role of instructor / mentor for a one-time occurrence. The amount shall not exceed \$50.00 for both individuals. No alcohol purchases will be reimbursed at any time for any circumstances. If a meal is paid for as part of the registration fee for a conference or convention, a deduction will be made for the flat fee reimbursed as listed in table 1-1.

Employees and City Officials may receive allowances for meals for partial day travel according to the following schedule when the partial day is the day of departure or the day of return. Please use table 1-1 to determine the meal rates for partial day travel.

- ❑ Breakfast – Depart prior to 6:00 a.m.
- ❑ Lunch – Depart prior to 10:00 a.m. (day of departure) or return after 2:00 p.m. (day of return)
- ❑ Dinner – Return after 8:00 p.m. If stopping for dinner would cause the employee to return after 8:00 p.m., when he/she would otherwise have returned before 8:00 p.m., dinner will not be reimbursed.

	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Dinner</i>
<i>In-State</i>	\$6.00	\$9.00	\$20.00
<i>Out-of-State</i>	\$8.00	\$12.00	\$25.00

(Table 1-1)

C. Other Travel Expenses

- 1) A personal "Safe Arrival" telephone call is authorized up to a maximum of \$5.00. An additional call of up to \$5.00 a day is permissible while in an out-of-town status. Any other phone charges, other than as authorized, must be fully detailed and business related. All long-distance calls are to be documented on the Travel Authorization and Expense Report.
- 2) In-room movies and other charges billed to the traveler's hotel room that have no bearing to the legitimate nature of the travel, are the responsibility of the traveler and will not be reimbursed by the City.
- 3) Parking fees and tolls will be reimbursed with proper receipt. These expenses should be itemized under Miscellaneous on the Travel Authorization and Expense Form.
- 4) Gratuities paid for baggage handling at hotels, airports, etc. will be reimbursed at a reasonable and customary rate.
- 5) Tips, Vending Machines, and snacks are included in the per diem meal allowance and are not reimbursable.

VII. Vacation, Spouse Travel, or Traveling with other Governmental Employees

A. Combining Business and Vacation – If an employee wishes to combine a business trip with a vacation:

- 1) The proper approval authority (Section III) must approve the arrangement.
- 2) The City will provide only the reimbursement that covers the actual expenses of the business portion of the trip.
- 3) The employee must specify on the Travel Authorization the dates of the conference or meeting and the total days of the trip in order to compute vacation time.

B. Travel with Spouse and / or Family – Spouses and/or family members may accompany an employee on official trips. However, the City provides reimbursement for only those expenses, which the employee would normally incur if traveling alone.

C. Travel with Someone from another City – If an employee travels with someone from another City in a car owned by that person or his employer, and if he/she shares the cost of the trip he/she can receive reimbursement for their share only if proper receipts are submitted. This method must be approved by proper approval authority (Section II).

VIII. Travel Expense Report

The Travel Authorization and Expense Report should be used to in order to receive a reimbursement from the City. Employees should submit their expense reports no later than ten working days after return from the trip. Expense report lodging receipts must reflect no more than single accommodation rates for employees/officials. The employee will complete the expense report and attach original bills and receipts to support the following expenditures:

- Lodging
- Transportation Costs
- Registration fees (a brochure or program of the conference or event)
- Car Rental
- City vehicle expenditures (repairs, gas, oil, parking, tolls)

If the actual expenses considerably exceed the original estimate, a justification statement must be attached. If the employee received a travel advance it will be noted on the Travel Authorization and Expense form and deducted from the reimbursement.

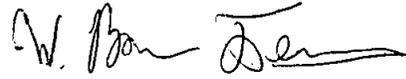
A. Approval and Processing of Travel Expense Reports

1. Reimbursement Requests will be submitted to the authorizing party for approval (Section III). After approval by the authorizing party, the Travel Authorization and Expense Form will be forwarded to the Finance Department.
2. The Finance Department will determine that the reimbursement form has been properly approved, that it is mathematically correct, and that requested reimbursements agree with to submitted receipts and are within limits set by this policy. If an error is found in the reimbursement request, the requesting party will be informed and the error will be corrected before payment is made.
3. Before the reimbursement is made, the Finance Department will determine that an amount sufficient to pay the request has been encumbered for payment, or that there is a sufficient unexpended appropriation in the expenditure line item.

A requesting party submitting a falsified Travel Authorization and Expense form will be subject to disciplinary action. A department head or Finance Clerk who approves a Travel Authorization form which is known to be false amount will be subject to disciplinary action.

IX. Travel Policy Revisions

The City Manager is authorized to make future revisions to this policy, including adjustment of per diem, mileage reimbursements and other monetary approval levels. It is understood that any substantive changes to the policy should only be implemented after first consulting with the City Council.



W. Bowman Ferguson, City Manager

[Approved by the City Council: June 5, 2008]

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