

## Section 9.05 Expense Reimbursement

### **Relocation and moving**

In unique situations, the City Council may authorize reimbursement for all or a portion of relocation expenses for a new hire selected from outside the Grand Rapids area. The Council will determine the types of relocation expenses and the maximum amount allowable on a case-by-case basis prior to the appointment being made, subject to IRS guidelines.

### **Training**

Employees attending approved courses, trade shows, benchmarking trips or seminars where they have been selected to attend by their Department Head will receive pay for the conference hours scheduled for that day. Tuition will be paid in advance. Mileage and normal business meal expenses will be reimbursed, according to the City's Travel (mileage, lodging, and meals) policy.

### **Travel (mileage, lodging and meals)**

The City shall reimburse employees for reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as authorized in the department budgets or on a case-by-case basis, according to the City's Travel (mileage, lodging, and meals) policy.

If you are required to travel during the course of your job, mileage you accumulate on your personal vehicle will be reimbursed. A travel expense form should be completed and signed by your Department Head in order to claim such expenses. Reimbursement claims are to be submitted within two (2) weeks of returning from the trip.

Employees shall make every effort to find adequate lodging at reasonable expense.

### **Per Diem Standard**

- Meal reimbursement rates shall be based on the federal per diem rates established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for applicable travel location. <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>
- The applicable per diem rate will be the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) rate in effect at the time of travel.
- Employees are responsible for verifying the applicable federal per diem rate for their travel destination. <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

## **Meal Reimbursement**

1. Employees will be reimbursed for actual meal expenses incurred, not to exceed the applicable federal per diem rate.
2. The City will not reimburse meal expenses that exceed the federal per diem rate for the travel location.
3. If an employee's actual meal expense is less than the maximum per diem rate, reimbursement will be limited to the actual amount spent.
4. Per diem amounts are not provided as a flat allowance unless otherwise authorized; reimbursement is based on actual expenses.
5. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

## **Partial Day Meal Allowances**

For partial-day travel, the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) per diem will be prorated by meal, consistent with federal guidance.

- Eligibility Based on Travel Time
- Eligibility for meal reimbursement is based on the employee's departure from and return to their normal work location or residence, whichever is applicable.
- Breakfast. Employee must depart before 6:00 a.m.
- Lunch. Employee must be in travel status over the normal lunch period (generally between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.).
- Dinner. Employee must return after 7:00 p.m.

To qualify for any meal reimbursement, the employee must be in travel status for a minimum of 10 consecutive hours, unless overnight travel is required.

## **Overnight Travel**

For overnight travel, employees are eligible for meal reimbursement based on the applicable per diem rate, subject to the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) per diem rate(s) and the guidance listed below.

## **Receipts and Documentation for Overnight Travel**

Receipts are required to receive the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) per diem rate(s).

Expenses for meals are reimbursed only under the following guidelines:

1. Breakfast may be claimed only if the employee/elected official is on assignment away from home, in overnight travel status or departs from home on assigned travel before 6:00 AM.
2. Lunch may be claimed if you are in travel and work status away from home.

3. Dinner may not be claimed for reimbursement unless the employee/elected official are in travel status and/or City business caused them to return home after 7:00 PM or to be away from home overnight.
4. Times of departure and return must be indicated for all meal reimbursement requests.
5. There shall be no reimbursement for the costs of any meal where the cost of such meal is included in the lodging, transportation or conference costs.
6. Itemized receipts are required within the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) per diem rates.
7. The cost of a meal includes tax and a reasonable gratuity (up to 20%) but does not include alcoholic beverages.
8. An employee may choose to attend a meal that is served in conjunction with a conference or seminar but is not included in the registration fee. The employee will be reimbursed per the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) per diem rates or may choose to have the City pay the cost directly with the registration fee.
9. The City will not reimburse employees for meals connected with trainings or meetings within City limits, unless the training or meeting is held as a breakfast, lunch or dinner meeting.

A full reimbursement, over the maximum defined, may be authorized if a lower cost meal is not available when attending out-of-state banquets, training sessions, or meetings of professional organizations.

## Section 20.04 Compensation for Travel & Training Time

Time spent traveling to and from, as well as time spent attending a training session or conference, will be compensated in accordance with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

Travel and other related training expenses will be reimbursed subject to Section 9.05, Expense Reimbursement, Travel (mileage, lodging and meals).

## Section 20.06 Travel & Meal Allowance

If employees are required to travel outside of the area in performance of their duties as a City employee, they will receive reimbursement of expenses for meals, lodging and necessary expenses incurred per City policy. In no case will City funds be used to pay for, or reimburse, for events sponsored by or affiliated with political parties.

The City will not reimburse employees for meals connected with training or meetings within City limits, unless the training or meeting is held as a breakfast, lunch or dinner meeting. The City will also not reimburse employees for the costs for travel of family members.

Employees who find it necessary to use their private automobiles for City travel and who do not receive a car allowance will be reimbursed at the prevailing mileage rate as established by the City Council, not to exceed the allowable IRS rate.

Expenses for meals, including sales tax and gratuity, will be reimbursed according to Section 9.05, Expense Reimbursement, Travel (mileage, lodging and meals). No reimbursement will be made for alcoholic beverages.

A full reimbursement, over the maximum defined, may be authorized if a lower cost meal is not available when attending out-of-state banquets, training sessions, or meetings of professional organizations.