



Elected and Appointed Officials' Travel Policy

The Town of Haymarket encourages the elected and appointed officials to participate in conferences, meetings, training programs, and municipal events that enhance their ability to serve the community. Training, continued learning and networking events aim to strengthen knowledge, improve effectiveness in performing official duties, deepen understanding of municipal operations and governance, support sound decision-making, and ensure professional representation of the Town at regional, state, and national levels. Participation in such activities is considered part of an official's responsibilities when the event is in support of the Town's goals and initiatives.

While the Town values ongoing professional development, all training and travel must be balanced with available resources. Approval is dependent on the appropriated budget, scheduling demands, and operational considerations. All requests will be evaluated based on funding availability, alignment with Town priorities, conflicts with scheduled meetings or obligations, relevance of the event to the official's responsibilities, and the overall fiscal impact on the Town. Approval is not guaranteed; the Town Manager and/or Town Council may also consider the direct benefit to the Town, the official's availability, applicability of the material to current or upcoming Town needs, prior participation in similar opportunities, and the official's adherence to Town policies.

Training and Travel will be approved by the Town Manager.

To ensure fair and equitable access to training and representation opportunities, the following principles apply:

First-Time Priority:

If there is large interest amongst the elected and appointed officials to attend the same training, convention or networking opportunity, the Town will give priority to those members who have not attend the training/event previously. Consideration shall be taken if the official is a board or committee member of the organization hosting the event. For example, a Councilmember is an

active committee member for a Virginia Municipal League (VML) committee and their attendance is preferred or required at the meeting.

Annual Conference Attendance:

In consideration of annual trainings and conferences, all elected officials who are eligible to attend will be encouraged to register and attend. If attendance is restricted due to funding availability, the Town will encourage members who have not attended in the past year to have priority. For example, if all seven councilmembers want to attend the Annual VML Conference but funding is limited to four members attending, the Town will prioritize the members who did not attend the year prior.

Annual conferences offer a wide range of educational opportunities, training and networking events. These conferences change annually to reflect the ever-changing government climate. It shall be noted that all elected officials would benefit from the attendance of the annual conference. If a member is excluded from attendance due to budgetary constraints, they may request the Council discuss an amendment to the budget to appropriate additional funds for training purposes. The Councilmember will be responsible for championing the discussion at the appropriate Council meeting.

1) TRAVEL AND TRAINING APPROVAL PROCESS

- a) The elected/appointed official shall complete a Travel and Training Request Form (attached) prior to attending the program. This form should be submitted to the **Town Manager** for approval as soon as the conference/training opportunity is announced. In no case should the form be submitted later than 10 days before the departure date. In the occurrence that the Town Manager is unable to provide the review and approval of requested training, the official may submit the request to the Mayor.
- b) All conferences, seminars, courses, meetings, etc. must be directly related to the performance of the official's assigned duties. When requesting approval of the training or conference, the official must provide a written statement on the applicability of the training, purpose of the conference and all relative details outlining the linkages to the official's job requirements and knowledge.
- c) The official shall submit an estimate travel and training cost with the approval request. The estimate shall include the conference or training fees, estimated mileage reimbursement or other travel arrangements, the hotel arrangements as applicable and any other foreseen costs. The requested funding for the expenditure must be approved in the adopted budget prior to attending the program. Failure to obtain prior approval when traveling could result in the employee not being reimbursed for travel expenses. The Town Manager may deny travel and training expenses even if they are applicable to the official's position based on the lack of available funding.

d) All hotel reservations, conference registrations and other items should be paid in advance by the Town following approval from the Town Manager. This payment will be made by check or credit card and will be completed prior to your arrival when possible. However, if needed, the official can check out a Town credit card to cover any expenses through the Town Treasurer. The official has the option of covering such expenses and obtaining reimbursement once they return from approved Town travel. For reimbursement, all receipts are required and subject to approval.

2) MEALS AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSES

a) The funds for meals and incidental expenses (meals tax, tips and other related items) while traveling are provided through a per diem (per day) allowance. **Receipts are required for per diem reimbursement.** The amount of per diem **shall follow the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) max per day per diem rates for reference.**

b) Upon return from travel, the official shall submit receipts and the itemized reimbursement form for all meal expenses. The Town will reimburse the official for approved expenditures up to the maximum per diem rate. The approving body shall give consideration during the review of the following; location of travel, dietary restrictions and other extenuating circumstances.

c) In the event that meals are provided as part of the registration or conference program, the official are not eligible for a full per diem. Officials shall submit receipts and the itemized reimbursement form documenting all meal expenditures that were not covered by the event. Any dietary restrictions shall be noted to the Manager during the approval discussion so that management is informed of possible additional expenses. This applies to conferences such as the VML conferences, where meals are included in your registration. Official shall note in reimbursement form which conference days did not include all meals, such as Day 1 of the conference or the last day.

d) Prior to travel or training related business meetings, the employee may request permission to expense a business meal. Officials may further request expensing the meals of other guests or individuals. Management shall consider the nature of the meeting, the number of individuals attending the meeting and the requested location of the meeting.

e) At no time shall an official file a reimbursement for alcohol purchases. The Town of Haymarket does not reimburse employees or other Town members for the expenditure of alcohol.

3) TRANSPORTATION TO CONFERENCES

a) When travel is authorized and performed in a privately owned vehicle, round trip mileage is calculated to and from the Town Hall at a IRS **standard mileage rate**. Parking fees are also included as a reimbursable item. Receipts and an itemized reimbursement form shall be submitted for all mileage expenses, road tolls, and parking fees. A map print out with the documented mileage shall be attached to the reimbursement form.

b) If a rental car is needed for the conference travel. The Town will allow with Town Manager approval for a Standard/Mid-Size (Sedan) or if traveling with more than 2 Council members a Mid-Size SUV category vehicle. If vehicle rental is upgraded to higher class than Standard/Mid-Size (Sedan), the official would be responsible for the additional cost for upgrade.

4) AIR TRAVEL

a) When Town business requires officials to travel outside of the State for business, air transportation can be approved by the **Town Manager**. It is important to note that the Town encourages vehicle transportation to any location within 300 miles of the Town Office. In addition, the Town encourages officials to take advantage of the numerous training and conference opportunities that exist within the State rather than travelling outside of the State for opportunities. If air travel is required and approved, this travel is at the coach rate only. If first-class travel is arranged, the official will pay in advance the difference between the coach rate and first-class travel. If a spouse or guest is traveling with the official, airfare for the officials' spouse or guest must be paid by the official. When possible, air travel arrangements should be made at least 21 days in advance in order to take advantage of the lowest fares.

b) Expenses to and from airports, such as airport car service (Lyft / Uber), rental car, taxi cab or bus transportation are qualified expenses.

5) HOTEL ROOMS

a) The Town pays for the single room rate, unless a room block rate has been offered by Conference hosts. If the double room rate is cheaper than the single room rate, the double room rate may be booked. No room upgrades for traveling spouse, family or guests will be covered by the Town. The official shall pay in advance for any room upgrades.

c) Officials should stay at the designated Conference Hotel at the negotiated block rate. If multiple Conference Hotels are offered, officials may choose among them, considering cost and proximity. If no Conference Hotel is provided, select a hotel that meets U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) per diem rates, which may require using a government rate. If no hotel is available at the per diem rate, the Town Manager may grant exceptions.

If the Conference Hotel is full, choose a hotel that meets GSA per diem rates or is comparable to the block rate. Officials may select a different hotel than the Conference Hotel, provided it is not

more expensive. If the chosen hotel exceeds the Conference Hotel rate, the official is responsible for the difference in cost.

d) No overnight reimbursements will be paid if the meeting is for the duration of one day and at a location that does not exceed 100 miles one way from Haymarket. However, if there are circumstances of an early class/conference, the **Town Manager** can approve in advance the overnight reimbursement.

6) EXPENSES FOR SPOUSE, FAMILY OR GUEST

It shall be noted that the Town of Haymarket expects all training and town-related events to be considered working events. In the event that a spouse or guest accompanies an official, the following shall apply and be considered.

- a) All expenses incurred by a traveling spouse, family or guest will be paid for by the official in advance or during the trip with regard to meals and other such expenses. No expenses incurred by the spouse, family or guest shall be reimbursed by the Town of Haymarket.

- b) **In rare occurrences, a spouse or guest may attend celebration dinners or award ceremonies to support the Town official, these circumstances shall be discussed and approved by the Town Manager prior to travel. Examples of such would be a town official receiving a Certificate of Completion for an Institute, an award for a VML related honor or the Mayor's dinner at the VML conference.**

7) CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION

Elected and appointed officials are expected to participate fully in conferences, meetings, and training events when attending on behalf of the Town. While officials do not receive compensation or paid work hours for attending educational programs, these events are considered part of their public service responsibilities. To ensure consistency and accountability, the following guidelines apply:

a) Attendance and Participation

Officials are expected to attend all scheduled conference or training sessions that relate to governance, municipal operations, leadership, or other topics that support effective service to the Town. This includes:

- Scheduled conference sessions
- Training workshops and seminars

- Official networking events that are part of the conference agenda
- Town-sponsored or required group functions (e.g., VML conference dinner)

Activities that are optional, recreational, or social in nature—such as fitness classes (e.g., yoga or Pilates), late-night entertainment, or unrelated social gatherings—are not required and are not considered part of official participation.

b) Travel Schedules

Officials should plan travel in a way that allows timely participation in required conference events. Travel delays outside the official's control should be noted if they impact scheduled sessions.

Since officials are not compensated, travel time is not counted as work time, but officials are expected to attend all essential conference activities for which the Town has paid registration or travel expenses.

c) Spouses, Family Members, and Guests

Spouses, family members, and guests may accompany officials at their own expense but:

- Must not interfere with the official's participation in required conference activities
- Any additional hotel nights, personal travel days, or added costs for companions must be paid entirely by the official
- Personal extensions of a trip must be clearly separated from Town-related travel

d) Questions About Required Attendance


If an official is uncertain whether a session, event, or networking activity is considered essential to their public responsibilities, they should consult the Town Manager or Mayor before or during the conference for guidance.

e) Review of Participation

The Town Manager or Mayor may request additional information, agendas, or documentation if there are questions about an official's attendance or participation in conference activities paid for by the Town.

8) Restriction of Conference and Training Opportunities

The Town funds conferences and training opportunities for the Town Officials to work towards certifications, continued education, and networking opportunities. The Town Manager, Mayor and Town Council reserve the right to restrict conference and training opportunities for officials that misuse Town Funds, conduct themselves in an unprofessional manner or take advantage of

offsite training opportunities. This list is not exhaustive and may include other performance actions. The Town Manager, Mayor and Town Council shall take all appropriate actions as stated in the  of Haymarket Employee Manual to document the actions and provide corrective action.