

7.01 Travel

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A. Applicability of Travel Policy

It is the policy of the City of Hutchins to reimburse employees and elected officials who are authorized to represent the City at various conferences, meetings, conventions, seminars, and functions as well as employees who must travel to attend required otherwise approved training programs.

The city recognizes that the public interest requires employees to travel at times to conduct City business. The city also recognizes that the public interest is served by the advancement of training and professional development of employees.

Travel for City business is to be arranged to utilize the most economical means available. This policy is applicable to all City employees and elected officials and applies to all travel on City business of 50 miles or more or requiring an overnight stay and to all travel reimbursements, subject to budget limitations and authenticated expenses.

B. Responsibility

Department Head

Responsible for communicating and administering the provisions of this policy to employees and approving all travel requests within their department. Also, we should strive to be proactive in planning for the department's travel needs in the annual budgeting process. It is the responsibility of the Department Head to ensure all travel expenses are accounted for within five (5) business days from the date of return and the Travel Expense Report forwarded to the Finance Department.

Employee

Responsible for all pertinent information on the Travel Expense Report, indicating purpose of travel, location, type of transportation, departure date, return date, estimated expenditure and advanced funds.

Finance Department

Responsible for distributing travel funds in compliance with established policies and guidelines. The Finance Department should take into consideration the departmental travel budget and calculate the amount spent to date and forward the Travel Expense Report to the City Administrator for approval.

City Administrator

Responsible for either approving or denying the request. If the request is denied, the Travel Expense Report will be sent back to the Department Head. If the request is approved, the Travel Expense Report will be forwarded to the Finance Department for processing. The City Administrator or his/her designee must review and approve all expenses incurred in the Travel Expense Report after travel is completed.

C. Authorization Required

All travel requests must be approved by the City Administrator or designee *prior* to their occurrence.

All employees traveling on official City business shall communicate with their supervisor as to where they can be reached while out of the City. All travel requests must be submitted on forms provided for that purpose.

D. Allowable Expenses

1. Registration

The City will cover actual expenses incurred by registering for a conference, seminar, or meeting. An original receipt must be furnished for reimbursement purposes. The city encourages advance payment of fees to take advantage of any discounts available. Recreation expenses included in the registration (i.e., golf, tennis, runs, etc.) will not be covered by the city.

The Department Head will be expected to select the mode of transportation that is most economical to the city considering cost and time consumed.

- i. Normally, when travel is required for City business, a city vehicle or personal car may be used when such travel distance is within a two hundred and fifty (250) mile radius.
- ii. For travel beyond a two hundred and fifty (250) mile radius of the city, air transportation may be approved if more cost-effective.
- iii. Approved travel expenses will be reimbursed as follows:
 - a. When employees use their personal vehicles, all travel mileage will be paid at the most recent IRS rate per mile.
 - b. When city vehicles are used, all expenses incidental to the use of such vehicles (parking, gasoline, oil, repairs, etc.) shall be reimbursed. Receipts will be required.
 - c. The city will pay mileage from the Hutchins City Hall to the address of the facility at which the training, conference or business meeting occurs as depicted in MapQuest.
 - d. When air travel is authorized, employees will book their flight as far in advance as possible.
 - i. Air travel reimbursement shall be limited to “coach” fares.
 - ii. Luggage reimbursement is limited to one (1) checked bag and excludes any excess fees (i.e., overweight).
 - iii. Special consideration is given for fees on necessary city equipment.
 - iv. Flight insurance, express check-in or early boarding charges and in-flight entertainment are excluded.
 - v. Airport parking will be reimbursed. Receipts will be required.
- iv. Travel Pay advances to support official travel:
 - a. Must be greater than \$100.
 - b. Must be requested at least ten (10) business days in advance.
 - c. Must be approved by the Department Head.
 - d. Will not be accepted for more than the anticipated out-of-pocket allowable

- expenses the employee expects to incur.
- e. Unused advances must be returned to Finance with the expense report within five (5) business days after travel is concluded.
- v. Reimbursement will be made for the use of rental cars, taxi or bus fares, etc., provided such necessary expenses are necessary, reasonable, and receipts are provided.
 - a. Approval to rent a car should be obtained prior to the trip.
 - b. Employees are expected to obtain the lowest possible rates for a rental car and shall sign and accept the liability/collision insurance agreement on the contract.
- vi. Alternate routes, which are desirable because of the personal affairs of the traveler, can be used, but only on the traveler's time and with the traveler bearing the additional costs of the alternate route. Mileage and expenses incurred on alternate routes must be shown on the expense account this is turned in for reimbursement or for advancement of funds requested.

2. Meals

Employees will be compensated for meals when the business trip is more than fifty (50) miles *and* requires the employee to stay overnight. The city provides a per diem allowance for meals and incidental expenses while on travel status.

- i. Per diem rates are based on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) domestic per diem schedule.
- ii. Per diem covers breakfast, lunch, dinner, and incidental expenses (tips, minor personal items).
- iii. If meals are included in conference registration or provided by hosts, the corresponding per diem will be reduced.
- iv. No receipts are required for meals when per diem is used.

3. Lodging

Employees are expected to make lodging reservations well in advance whenever possible and to take other actions to ensure lodging is secured at a moderate rate.

- i. Whenever possible, a city credit card should be used in making hotel reservations and paying hotel bills related to city travel.
- ii. Reimbursement of lodging shall be limited to single rates unless two or more employees occupy a single room or are otherwise approved by the City Administrator.
- iii. It shall be the policy of the city to reimburse for only lodging that is economical and practical. Exceptions to this may be granted when the least expensive hotel rooms are unavailable or where conferences are held in or near the hotel.
- iv. Receipts for lodging must be provided to obtain reimbursement.
- v. Reimbursement will not be made for alcoholic beverages, entertainment expenses, or other sundry items not relevant to the public purpose of the trip, except as provided in Section E below.

4. Dependent Expenses

There are no objections to a spouse/family member accompanying an employee on an out-of-

town business trip, however, the city will not be financially responsible for the spouse/family member of the employee. Any additional expenses incurred such as travel, lodging, meals, or any other miscellaneous expenses will be the sole responsibility of the employee. The city will not reimburse the additional expenses.

Exceptions to allowable expenses may be approved by the City Administrator.

E. Travel Expense Report Procedures

Prior to Trip/Travel

1. A travel expense form shall be filled out for all travel. Meeting information and/or brochures shall be attached providing an overview of the meeting/event.
2. The employee will fill out all information pertinent to the request, indicating the purpose of travel, location, type of transportation, departure date, return date, estimated expenditures, and funds required in advance. The report shall then be forwarded to the Department Head for approval.
3. The Department Head will review the request and sign off if the trip is approved. The Department Head shall attach a copy of the page indicating the approved trip and training request for the budget document and note the approved trip.
4. Upon Department Head approval, the request will be forwarded to the Finance Department and budget information will be indicated.
5. Finance will note the department travel budget and how much has been spent to date. Finance will only forward to City Administrator for approval if budgeted funds are available. If budgeted funds are available, the report will then be forwarded to the City Administrator for approval.
6. The City Administrator will note approval or disapproval of the request. If the request is disapproved, it will be sent back to the Department Head. If the request is approved, it will be forwarded to Finance for processing the advance or payment required. Finance will then return the approved form to the employee.
7. Employee travel will be approved by the City Administrator and Finance Department. Department Head travel must be approved by the City Administrator.

Upon Completion of Trip/Travel

1. The employee will fill out all the pertinent expenditure information within five (5) days after returning from the trip. Expenditure reports shall be submitted on forms provided for that purpose.
2. All meeting/event expenses will be indicated on the expense form. All applicable receipts must be included with the report, including registration and airfare.
3. The employee will certify that the expenses are correct and will sign off on the report. The report will be forwarded to their Department Head for approval.
4. The Department Head will review the report, sign off and forward the Travel Expense Form to the City Administrator for approval.
5. The City Administrator will review the report, sign off and forward it to Finance for processing and filing.