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<p>Policy Name:</p>			<p>Date Adopted by Council :</p>	<p>May 05,2022</p>

## I. Purpose

It is the policy of the City to authorize employees, elected officials, and appointed officials to conduct City business and to establish procedures for reimbursement of the costs associated with travel. Employees, elected officials, and appointed officials are encouraged to attend trainings, conferences, and meetings of professional associations.

## II. Applicability

1. All employees that are required to be away from the City in order to engage in an environment pursuant and relevant to their current position **or their next level position.**
2. All elected officials that are required to be away from the City in order to engage in an environment pursuant and relevant to their current position **or their next level position.**
3. All appointed officials that are required to be away from the City in order to engage in an environment pursuant and relevant to their current position **or their next level position.**

## III. General Policy

Training shall be defined as those conferences or sessions that provide certification or a learning environment for employees, elected officials, and appointed officials pursuant and relevant to their current City position **or their next level position.**


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

All travel and reimbursement ~~is~~ **are** contingent upon the availability of funds in the proper budget account and no travel or reimbursement will be permitted without the employee completing a Travel Authorization, Per Diem, and Expense Reimbursement Form, referred to as the Travel Form for the remainder of this policy.

Abuse of this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## IV. Employee and City Official Responsibility

An employee or official on City business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a sensible person would exercise if traveling on personal business and spending

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personal funds. The following conduct is discouraged and may result in the denial of travel authorization and reimbursement in the future:

- Excess costs
- Circuitous routes
- Luxury accommodations
- Unnecessary and unjustified additional services

## V. Approval Authority

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


1. The Mayor shall authorize the City Manager's travel and training requests.
2. City Council shall authorize the elected officials training and travel requests. City Council shall authorize the out-of-state travel requests of Council members. Travel expenses incurred as a City representative of a statewide regional committee, to attend a convention, or to attend a training directly related to the role of the City Council member will be reimbursed without City Council approval.
3. The City Manager or their designee 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.
4. The department head or their designee shall authorize travel and training by employees within their department.

## VI. Procedure

All travel and training should be authorized in advance. Only those expenses allowed by this policy will be paid for by the City.

### General Procedure

1. Requests for travel should be submitted to the authorizing party in advance of all travel. The authorizing party will review all documents to ensure all travel expenditures are documented, substantiated, are allowed by this policy and are within available budget.
2. All expenditures related to each travel event should be included on the Travel Form. This includes deposits or other costs incurred in advance on a City Purchasing Card.
3. Travel Forms should be submitted to the Finance department for processing no later than Wednesday of the week prior to travel.

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## VII. Reimbursable Expenses Guidelines


### A. Personal Vehicles

Personal vehicles should only be used if a City vehicle is not available, not applicable, or not economical and practical. Use of a personal vehicle must be approved in advance by the department head with written justification on the Travel Form. Employees who choose to use a personal vehicle when a City vehicle is available, applicable, or economical and practical, will be reimbursed at one half of the current IRS standard mileage rate. If a city vehicle is not available, the requesting party may use a personal automobile and be reimbursed at the current IRS standard mileage rate. The IRS standard business mileage rate is updated annually at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) . If more than one employee is attending the same event, carpooling is mandatory even if a personal vehicle is being used, unless the authorizing party determines that it is not economical or practical. When a group of employees or officials are traveling together to the same destination, only one traveler will receive reimbursement.

No reimbursement will be made for expenses incurred in making repairs or towing a personal vehicle.

### B. City Vehicles

City vehicles should be used whenever possible for any authorized travel. The employee requesting the City vehicle must sign a check-out form before travel and sign the form when the vehicle is being returned after travel. The requesting party must obey all laws of the jurisdiction in which the automobile is being operated. The City will not reimburse any expenditures related to any law enforcement fines or fees incurred traveling on City business. The City vehicle will be used for City business and activities only. Non-City employees will not be allowed to ride in City vehicles. ~~Reimbursement will be made for repairs, gasoline, oil, parking, toll fees, and other unavoidable expenses of the City vehicle. A paid receipt must be included to support all reimbursement requests. Fuel for City vehicles should be purchased with the City Fleet fuel card.~~ A City Purchasing Card may not be used unless there is an emergency. ~~In the event the city vehicle breaks down and repairs are required or a rental car is required to complete the authorized travel, the City Purchasing Card is permissible to use. The employee's immediate supervisor shall be notified at the earliest possible time. In the event a Purchasing Card was not distributed to the employee, reimbursement will be made for repairs, gasoline, oil, parking, toll fees, and other unavoidable expenses of the City vehicle. A paid receipt must be included to support all reimbursement requests. Fuel for City vehicles should be purchased with the City Fleet fuel card.~~ Any employee or official operating a city vehicle should use the same care that a sensible person would use if operating his or her own personal vehicle. ~~It is recommended that the employee attending training/conference or one employee from the group attending training request a temporary P-card from the Finance department prior to traveling to the training/conference.~~

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### C. Rental Vehicles

A rental vehicle may be used when it is determined that no other transportation is cost-effective, practical, or possible. A rental vehicle will be used for City business and activities only. Use of a rental vehicle must be approved in advance on the Travel Form. Additional vehicle rental expenses incurred while on City business may also be reimbursed upon completion of the trip with the proper documentation on a supplemental Travel Form for reimbursement. City employees and officials are covered under City insurance when renting a vehicle. Additional insurance is not needed and will not be reimbursed.

### D. Airfare

Generally, the lowest priced coach class airfare should be purchased. Other classes may be approved if additional documentation is provided detailing better rate, lack of availability, or necessity because of disability or other special need.

Air travel should be paid for with a City Purchasing Card. Airfare purchased with personal funds will not be reimbursed until after travel is completed. Airfare purchased with “miles” or “points” will not be reimbursed.

One checked bag is approved per City-authorized traveler unless excess fees are due to a valid business purpose.

Travel to the airport is reimbursable and should be the most practical and economical method available. Personal vehicle travel to the airport will be reimbursed at the IRS standard business mileage rate at the time plus parking.


If parking at the airport, only the economy lots are approved for reimbursement.

### E. Other Transportation

All necessary air, bus, taxi, train, or similar transportation must be obtained at the most cost-effective rate available for the economic benefit of the City. Reimbursements will be made for actual costs that are incurred and receipt supported with the completion of a supplemental Travel Form.

### F. Accommodations

The City will not pay for out of town accommodations for travel within a 60 mile radius of City Hall unless approved by the City Manager or their designee. Lodging costs in the host city may be claimed from the night before the authorized event starts through the night before it ends, unless timely return transportation is not possible, thereby necessitating additional lodging costs. Employees must provide documentation as to the purpose of being away from the City for the business benefit of the City for every day that travel is being requested. Going to an event earlier than necessary or staying later than necessary will not be paid for by the

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City. Accommodations costs will be reimbursed at the actual amount incurred. Reservation confirmation for accommodations must be submitted with the Travel Form in advance of travel, including reservations made with a City Purchasing Card. Employees and officials are limited to reserving the most cost-effective accommodations that will permit the employee or official to conduct his or her City business. Special government rates should be obtained if available.

City employees and officials are responsible for any no-show fee incurred unless an emergency or other department head approved business reason causes the cancellation. Employees should always obtain a cancellation number from the accommodations entity to protect against no-show billings. Funds prepaid by the City, which relate to canceled arrangements, must be refunded to the City by the employee or official.

No room incidentals are to be paid for by the City or charged to a City Purchasing Card. Miscellaneous expenses are not considered part of a per diem reimbursement; therefore, substantiation is required. The City will require actual receipts or written certification as substantiation. Miscellaneous expenses include cab fares outside of travel to and from the event site, fax, telephone, copy charges, and other business related expenses. Any expense not in line with this policy will be paid for by the employee. ~~In the event that~~ If any unauthorized travel charge is incurred on a City Purchasing Card, the City may deduct the expense from the employee's next payroll check.

#### G. Meals


##### Per Diem

Employees and officials traveling on overnight City business may receive a per diem for meals for travel according to the following schedule:

- 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 or official to return after 8:00 p.m. when the employee or official would have otherwise returned prior to 8:00 p.m., dinner will not be reimbursed.

Per Diem*	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total
	\$14	\$16	\$30	\$60

If a meal is included as part of a registration fee for an event paid requiring overnight travel, a deduction from the per diem will be made accordingly. Employees and officials will receive

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a per diem or reimbursement for breakfast if no hotel continental breakfast is included in their hotel registration or if they choose to eat breakfast elsewhere.

If travel is unexpectedly extended, the traveler must submit a new per diem request for approval upon return and will be reimbursed at the per diem rate.

#### H. Other Travel Expenses

Any phone charges, unless previously authorized or fully-detailed and business related, are not permissible for reimbursement.

In-room movies or entertainment that are billed to the employee's or official's room that have no relation to the legitimate nature of the business travel are the responsibility of the traveler and will not be reimbursed by the City.

Parking fees and tolls will be reimbursed with proper documentation and receipts. These expenses should be included under "Other" on the Travel Form.

Gratuities paid for luggage handling at hotels, airports, or other similar areas will be reimbursed at a reasonable and customary rate.

Tips, vending machine purchases, and other similar expenses are included in the per diem meal allowance and will not be reimbursed by the City.

Reimbursement for purchases paid by the traveler with their own funds, or their personal debit or credit card, will not be reimbursed until travel is complete.

### **VIII. Vacation, Familial Travel, or Traveling with Other Employees and Officials**

#### A. Combining Business and Vacation

If an employee wishes to combine a City business-related trip with a personal vacation, the department head must approve the arrangement in advance. The City will only reimburse the portion of the trip that was for City business and activities.


The traveler must clearly detail and provide documentation of which expenses will be for the business portion of travel. The employee must specify the dates of the City business or activities and the total days of the trip in order to document work hours.

Great care must be exercised to ensure that the traveler does not, in appearance or fact, have personal gain at the expense of the City.

Any discounts received due to extended or combined travel, such as free days, discounted rates, etc., must be applied to the business portion of the travel.

It is the responsibility of the approving authority to ensure travel combining business and vacation meets all requirements of this policy.



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#### B. Travel with Spouse or Family

Spouses and family members may accompany an employee or official on City business-related trips. However, the City provides reimbursement only for the employee's or official's expenses. Spouses and family members are not allowed to travel in City vehicles. Any additional expenses that the employee or official would not incur if traveling alone will not be reimbursed. Employees are required to put all expenses that are incurred due to spouse and family travel on a personal debit or credit card and they will be reimbursed only for their portion of the business-related costs upon return from travel. Employees must provide documentation of costs associated with single-person travel and documentation of actual costs incurred. No purchase is to be put on the employee's City Purchasing Card that is over what the City would pay for a single employee traveling.


#### C. Travel with Someone from Another Organization

If an employee travels with someone from another organization in a vehicle owned by that person or his or her employer, and if he or she shares the cost of the trip, he or she can receive reimbursement for their share only if proper documentation and receipts are submitted. This method must be approved by the proper approval authority. A waiver may be required. Employees are reminded that City insurance provides less coverage for City employees not traveling in City vehicles. More detailed information can be found on the North Carolina League of Municipalities website or in the Human Resources Department.

### **IX. Travel Expense Report**

The Travel Form must be used regardless of the employee's intention to be reimbursed for payments or not. All expenditures related to each travel event, including any expenditures for travel paid for in advance on a City Purchasing Card must be detailed and documented on a Travel Form. Travel Forms should be completed prior to travel. However, employees may submit supplemental expense reports for any additional costs incurred to be reimbursed no later than ten working days after return from the trip. Expense report accommodations receipts must reflect no more than single accommodation rates for employees and officials. Employees who travel with non-City employees must also provide documentation for what was paid during the business portion of the travel. The employee will complete the expense report and attach original bills and or receipts to support the following expenditures:

- Accommodations
- Transportation Costs
- Registration Fees (a brochure, agenda or program from the event detailing all days included in the event)

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- Car Rental Fees (when applicable)
  - City Vehicle Expenditures (repairs, gas, oil, parking, tolls, etc.)
- A. Approval and Processing of Travel Expense Reports

Reimbursement requests must be submitted to the department head for approval in advance of travel. After approval by the department head, the Travel Form will be forwarded to the Finance Department in advance of travel.

The Finance Department will determine that the reimbursement form has been properly approved, that it is mathematically correct, and that expenses agree with submitted documentation and 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. Any expenses found to not be in line with this policy will be paid for by the employee.

Before the reimbursement is made, the Finance Department will determine that an amount sufficient to pay the request has been accounted for or that there is a sufficient unexpended appropriation in the expenditure line item.

An employee submitting a falsified Travel Form knowingly will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. A department head who approves a Travel Form which is known to be falsified will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **X. Travel Policy Revisions**

The City Manager is authorized to make future revisions to this policy, including an adjustment to the per diem rate for meals while traveling, mileage reimbursements, and other monetary matters. It is understood that any substantive changes to the Travel Policy should only be implemented after first consulting with the City Council.