

**City of Lake Worth Beach  
Per Diem and Travel Expense Policy  
Procedural Guide  
(authorized by Resolution 01-2022)**

*Issuance Date: 01/04/2022*

*Effective Date: 01/04/2022*

**Purpose Statement:**

As allowed by Resolution 01-2022 (and which may be amended by the City Manager), the City of Lake Worth Beach shall allow travel for business and training purposes that directly benefit City initiatives and activities. Below is a comprehensive procedural guide which implements the City's per diem and travel expense policy and is intended to provide for the reasonable and prudent use of public funds. To be expensed and reimbursable, expenditures must be incurred as a result of necessity pursuant to the official duties of City officers, employees, and other authorized persons as defined in section 166.021(9), Florida Statutes.

All persons seeking reimbursement should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Reimbursement is allowed only when reimbursement has not been, and will not be, received from other sources. If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this procedural guide, then the most conservative course of action should be taken and the reasonable person test employed.

**Scope:**

This procedural guide shall apply to all City employees, City officers and other authorized persons as defined in section 166.021(9), Florida Statutes, which includes the Mayor, City Commissioners, appointed board or Commission members, and City employees who are authorized pursuant to the following procedures to incur travel expenses in the performance of their official duties.

Travel shall include the following categories;

- Class A Travel- Continuous travel exceeding 24 hours away from the City- see below for procedures.
- Class B Travel- Continuous travel of up to 24 hours away from the City and requires overnight lodging- see below for procedures.
- Class C Travel- A day trip whereby overnight lodging is not needed. The City will not cover travel expenses for Class C Travel, except for:
  - fuel reimbursement when using a City vehicle,
  - mileage when the use of a personal vehicle, not covered by a car allowance, is used when a City vehicle is not available,
  - lunch when food is not provided by the sponsoring event

**Procedures:**

- Authorization: All travel must be pre-approved at least ten (10) days prior to the travel event. The City Manager or designee may provide an exception to the 10-day requirement, but the prepayment of certain or all expenses may not occur due to time constraints.

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- An attestation of availability of funds on the Travel Request and Authorization Form must be documented. The Director must attest to the availability of funds for all requests submitted by their department(s) and City boards that they provide lead liaison staff support. The Finance Director shall attest to the availability of funds for the Mayor and City Commissioners.
- The following is the approval hierarchy for travel approval:
  - Department Director for their staff,
  - City Manager or designee for Department Directors,
  - Mayor for City Manager,
  - City Manager for Mayor and City Commissioners,
  - International travel shall follow the aforementioned authorization. All international travel shall also require the approval of the City Commission-majority vote.
- In order to receive authorization, section 1, 2, and 3 of the Travel Request and Authorization Form must be completed.
  - **Section I: Purpose of Travel-** provide a thorough description for the purpose of the travel request, including how the travel will benefit the City.  
*The Conference Agenda and or itinerary must be attached.*
  - **Section II: Travel Estimate and Funds Availability-** in order to approve the travel request, it is necessary to complete section II. Step 1 is to evaluate the proposed expenses as both reasonable and beneficial; while step 2 is to verify the availability of funding sources. Below is an overview of expenses and how they are treated.
  - Reasonable and acceptable expenses are for employees only- the City will not reimburse or pay for any expenses not incurred by a City employee and on behalf of the City. Examples include expenses for spouses and other family members. Examples of qualifying expenses include: registration for workshops, seminars, training and professional development; lodging at single occupancy rates; transportation; food; and sundry travel expenses such as parking, tolls, rental cars, and baggage fees. All travel expenses must be non-personal and business related. Furthermore, all qualifying expenses need to be documented by a vendor's itemized receipt.
  - ***Lodging***
    - Lodging will be paid / reimbursed at event prices or when another location's price is equal to the host facility. Any price differential shall be paid by the employee. Because of availability, or other situations outside the employee's control, the City Manager may provide an exception to this requirement. The reason for the exception should be documented on the request form.
- Lodging will be paid for only for the nights of the event, unless the event starts before 10:00 AM, then the City will pay for the previous night. Additionally, the City will not pay for lodging for the last day of the event unless the conference, excluding social events, extends beyond 6:00PM.
- Only single rates will be paid by the City, any upgrades will be paid by the employee.

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- The City will not pay or reimburse for taxes. To avoid payment of taxes, employee should obtain a copy of the City's Tax-Exempt documentation from the City's Accounts Payable Administrator.
- One day conferences within 70 miles of the employees point-of-origin, the employee's residence or place of work; lodging will not be provided.
- Conferences exceeding one day beyond 50 miles from the employee's point-of-origin, the employee's residence or place of work; lodging will be provided.
- Food
  - Food will be covered as an eligible expense if not covered by the sponsoring event. Food reimbursement cannot be documented via a hotel bill; it must be from an itemized receipt. Furthermore, food expenditures will be disallowed if documented via hotel bill rather than a detailed restaurant invoice.
  - Below are the reimbursement rates for each meal:
    - Breakfast: (12:00 AM – 10:00 AM) \$15.00-only for Class A & B travelers
    - Lunch: (10:00 AM – 2:00 PM) \$15.00-All Classes of travelers
    - Dinner: (2:00 PM – 12:00 PM) \$25.00-only for Class A & B
- Transportation
  - If the employee adds vacation time to an approved trip, any cost differentials in airfare, car rental or lodging must be clearly identified on the Travel Request form and documented. The City will not pay or reimburse for any expenses not directly associated with the event.
  - Transportation expenses must be reasonable and at the base rate; any upgrades shall be paid by the employee.
  - When out of state travel is necessary, the City will pay for the coach fare only. Additionally, the employee is encouraged to book flights at least 30 days in advance to avoid premium airfare pricing.
  - When traveling by air; the city shall not pay for:
    - TSA PreCheck or similar programs and priority airline boarding
    - Preferred seating
    - Bag fees, unless not included in ticket price,
    - Oversize bag fees and other up-charged items.
    - Internet and/or entertainment fees
  - If employee receives a monthly vehicle stipend they must use their personal car unless the request is for out-of-state travel.
  - For those employees that do not receive a vehicle stipend, they can either use a City vehicle or public transportation.
  - If a City vehicle is used, fuel is eligible for reimbursement when following the appropriate City procedures.
  - If a personal car is used, the mileage reimbursement will equal the IRS permissible rate at time of travel. The mileage request must be documented using google maps, or similar application, identifying the point-of-origin

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- the destination, and total mileage. The City will not reimburse for additional mileage.
- When traveling out of state and a rental car is necessitated:
    - The City authorizes reimbursement for the most economic vehicle available. Any upcharges are the responsibility of the employee.
    - The rental agreement must clearly show the date and the points of departure/arrival, as well as the total cost. Drivers must adhere to the rental requirements, and restrictions must be followed. Original receipts are required.
  - When vehicle rentals are necessary, the City requires that collision damage and loss damage coverage be purchased.
  - Parking fees, tolls and other incidental costs associated with the vehicle will be covered when incurred for the trip. Such costs will not be covered for personal use made during time of travel, such as when incurred on a personal excursion.
  - Employees are responsible for fees and or penalties for not complying with the rental agreement. Additionally, employees are responsible for up-charges for not filling the gas tank.
  - Employees are responsible for any penalties and/or violations associated with operating a vehicle, such as; parking violations or moving violations.
  - ***Non-Reimbursable***
    - Reimbursable expenses must be for business purposes and cannot be for personal reasons. Examples include:
      - Laundry
      - Entertainment (e.g., movies, books, magazines, newspapers)
      - Alcohol, tobacco, flowers
      - Personal articles such as clothing, haircuts, personal grooming, and travel insurance
      - Costs incurred by the traveler's failure to cancel travel or hotel reservations timely.
      - Personal telephone calls.
  - ***Section III: Prepayments and Check Requests-*** The City will allow certain prepayments as follows: registration fees, lodging, and airfare. ***Upon the necessary approvals enumerated above,*** department staff may prepay these expenses via city purchase/credit cards or via the accounts payable process. No air, lodging, registration, or other expenses can be charged to a procurement card until the approval process has been completed.
    - Receipts are required for all pre-payments. ***If receipts are not provided, associated payments will be disallowed, staff may become responsible for payment and they may also be subject to disciplinary procedures, including employment termination.***

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- If prepayments are to be made through the accounts payable process, then the department should process based on the appropriate accounts' payable procedures, ***and must include the fully executed Travel Request and Authorization Form*** as part of the accounts payable request and documentation.
- Generally: per diem, prepayment for food, and other sundry travel expenses will not be made due to IRS compliance concerns. The reason for this is, according to the IRS, per diem must be part of an "Accountable Plan." There are three criteria: expenses must be incurred while performing services as an employee; expenses must be accounted for within a reasonable time period; and, the employee must return any amounts received in excess of actual expenses within a reasonable time. If any of these three criteria are not met, the prepayment of per diem expenses then creates a "Nonaccountable Plan." Once a plan is considered a Nonaccountable Plan, wages become subject to Social Security and Medicare taxes.
- To avoid an employee hardship, the City Manager may authorize an exception to per diem prepayments on a case-by-case basis. The per diem amount shall equal the subtotal of "Sundry Travel Expenses" itemized in Section II of the Travel Request and Authorization Form.
- In the event prepayments for per diem are approved, the request shall be processed through accounts payable. The department should process based on the appropriate accounts' payable procedures, ***and must include the fully executed Travel Request and Authorization Form*** as part of the accounts payable request and documentation.
- If a City Purchase or Credit Card is used for any travel expense, including sundry expenses, receipts are required for all expenditures, and further, the employee is responsible to follow all relevant policies and procedures associated with purchase/card activity. ***If receipts are not provided, or other policies and procedures are not followed, associated payments will be disallowed. As such, staff will become responsible for payments. Additionally, they may become subject to disciplinary procedures, including employment termination as determined by the City Manager and HR director.***
- The City will not prepay any personal expenses with the intention of being "repaid" at a later time.

**Section IV: Travel Reimbursement and Expense Report-** The purpose of this report is to identify all the expenses associated with the particular travel did occur and to reconcile activity with required documentation.

- Travel Reimbursements and Expense Reports must be submitted within 30 days after completion of the event's travel.
- To validate expenditures, all activity must be documented/supported by a vendor receipt reflecting good and services provided. A credit card receipt does not suffice for this purpose.

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- If a Travel Reimbursement and Expense Report is submitted after the close of the fiscal year, reimbursements will be disallowed. Furthermore, if reimbursement may not occur, this does not relieve the employee from complying with any remaining policy(s) requirements. If the City Manager deems it appropriate, they may authorize reimbursement for a prior year following prior year bill procedures.
- If a Travel Reimbursement and Expense Report is submitted after the 30-day period, the employee may lose travel privileges and may be subject to other disciplinary procedures as may be determined by the City Manager and Human Resource Director.
- The City will not reimburse for taxes; therefore, employees are encouraged to use the City's tax exemption information. This can be obtained from the City's Accounts Payable administrator.
- The City shall not pay for gratuities.
- Unauthorized and/or nondocumented expenditures will not be reimbursement to the employee. If the employee uses a City Credit or Purchasing Card during travel, they are responsible for following all appropriate procedures.
- If unauthorized or nondocumented expenditures are paid by purchase/credit cards, the expense shall be immediately, within one pay-cycle, reimbursed by the employee either as a withholding from pay, or by direct payment by the employee. In addition to being responsible for reimbursing the City, additional disciplinary procedures may result as determined by the City Manager and Human Resources Director, such as: the forfeiture of the p-card, termination of employment and other disciplinary actions as may be warranted.

In order to provide a suitable audit trail, all travel documents must be retained and filed by employee and then by trip. Documents that need to be compiled in the file include: the approved Travel and Authorization Form, the conference agenda/itinerary, and copies of all receipts. Original receipts should be maintained with the Accounts Payable files following A/P procedures. While the City's Finance Department has the responsibility to validate expenditure and reimbursement requests and to maintain these files, it is the responsibility of the submitting department to submit all required information on a timely basis.

**Below is the Travel Request and Authorization Form including.**

- Section I: Purpose / Benefit
- Section II: Cost Estimate and Funds Availability Attestation
- Section III: Prepayment / Check Request
- Section IV: Reimbursement and Expense Report

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**City of Lake Worth Beach – Travel Request and Authorization Form**

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Department / Division: \_\_\_\_\_  
Travel Dates:  
Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Return Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Destination: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section I – Purpose & Benefit of Travel; attach conference agenda / itinerary**

What is Purpose of Travel: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Define City Benefit: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Section II – Cost Estimate and Attestation of Funds Availability**

Qualified Prepaid Expenses

Registration Fee	_____	Event / conference brochure/itinerary required
Lodging	_____	At conference rate
		CM Exception _____ Date _____
Airfare	_____	Rational: _____
Subtotal	_____	

Sundry Travel Expenses

Baggage	_____	one bag limit
Private Vehicle	_____	Approval: _____ Date _____
Shuttle or Taxi	_____	
Parking	_____	
Tolls	_____	
Rental Car	_____	Approval: _____ Date _____
Gas	_____	
Breakfast	_____	at current rate
Lunch	_____	at current rate
Dinner	_____	at current rate
Other- Specify	_____	List: _____
Subtotal	_____	

Total Estimated Exp \_\_\_\_\_  
=====

Director's Attestation; \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

General Ledger Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Less; Unencumbered Balance \_\_\_\_\_  
Available Funds \_\_\_\_\_  
=====

Director's/Finance Attestation; \_\_\_\_\_  
*see AP&P for responsibility*  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section III – Prepayments / Check Request - if paid by department p-card; receipts required**

Registration Fee	_____	
Lodging	_____	
Airfare	_____	
Total	_____	Dept Director Review: _____
		Date: _____

Per-diem Prepayment	_____	City Manager Approval _____
		Date: _____

Approval/ Authorization, *see AP&P for responsibility*, \_\_\_\_\_

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**Section IV – Travel Reimbursement and Expense Report – Provide for Each Week**

Expense Category	Day 1 <i>Date:</i>	Day 2 <i>Date</i>	Day 3 <i>Date</i>	Day 4 <i>Date</i>	Day 5 <i>Date</i>	Day 6 <i>Date</i>	Day 7 <i>Date</i>
<b>Qualifying prepaid expenses</b>							
Registration Fee							
Lodging							
Airfare							
Subtotal							
<b>Sundry Travel Expenses</b>							
Baggage							
Private Vehicle – <i>see below</i>							
Shuttle, Taxi, etcetera							
Parking							
Tolls							
Rental Car							
Gas							
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							
Other: <i>specify</i>							
Subtotal							
Total Expenses Incurred							
Less:							
Prepaid Expenses							
City P-Card Purchases							
Disallowed Payments (1)							
Subtotal							
Net Reimbursement							

(1) Employee is responsible to reimburse City per procedures

Private Mileage Reimbursement

Google Map Mileage \_\_\_\_\_

Multiply x2 = Total Mileage \_\_\_\_\_

IRS Reimbursement Rate at time of travel \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Total Mileage by IRS rate = Reimbursement \_\_\_\_\_

enter amount above

The employee attests that this Travel Request and Authorization Form, including amounts submitted for reimbursement, are true and correct and that the expenses itemized were both incurred and necessary.

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Director's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Finance Review \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_