

CITY OF WESTLAKE, FLORIDA

TRAVEL AND MEAL EXPENDITURE POLICY

This section provides guidance on authorized expenditures for elected officials and all departments under the authority of the City Council. This section shall cover those costs incurred for travel and meal expenses by any elected official, or City contracted employee who travels on City related business.

A. APPROPRIATION

In conjunction with the annual budget process, the City Council shall authorize appropriations for travel and meal expenses consistent with the annual adopted operating budget.

B. EXPENDITURE APPROVAL

The City Manager is authorized to approve appropriate travel expenses for elected officials and City contracted employees. All expenditures relating to travel and meals shall be processed consistent with procurement/purchasing guidelines. The Finance Department shall only process transactions for payment based upon the proper approval for the dollar amount of the expenditure, including adequate documentation, received either electronically or in writing.

While receipts in the prescribed form are required for most payments or reimbursements pursuant to this policy, it is recognized that unexpected circumstances may arise such as loss of receipts, or unavailability of receipts, which require an alternative procedure for documentation of reimbursable expenses. In those isolated situations where receipts are not available, a statement must be prepared by the Traveler and included in the travel authorization & expense report. Such certification may then be presented instead of the unavailable or lost receipt.

C. MOST COST EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT METHOD

Authorized travelers are required to use the most cost effective and efficient method of travel available to the City.

D. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTED REIMBURSEMENT CLAIMS

The Finance Department shall review expenditure documents for compliance and appropriateness with all City policies and procedures. Expenditure reimbursement requests that are not in compliance with these policies and procedures shall be returned

to the originating department with Finance Department recommendations for changes (e.g., travel issues, cellular phone use). In the event the department does not agree with the Finance Department's recommendations, the City Manager shall make the final decision regarding whether to authorize the reimbursement.

E. TRAVEL EXPENSES

The City shall reimburse/pay expenses incurred by elected officials and contracted employees for travel relating to official City business. Official business shall be deemed that which has been approved prior to the expenditure being incurred on a City of Westlake's Travel Authorization form. Travel authorization forms are required for any travel exceeding 50 miles of the municipal boundaries of Westlake.

All requests for domestic travel by elected officials and contracted employees shall be submitted no later than sixty (60) days prior to the scheduled date of departure, to allow sufficient time for review, approval, and cost-effective travel arrangements.

1. Lodging: hotel/motel charges shall qualify for reimbursement when they exceed a 50-mile radius of the from the City of Westlake. All traveling personnel shall minimize the expense associated with hotel/motel costs by procuring a government rate for qualified stays. Lodging expense shall be benchmarked against the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) approved per-diem rate of reimbursement. When the GSA rate is exceeded by 20% or more, additional justification shall be required from the traveler. When traveling in the State of Florida, all travelers must use the tax-exempt certificate issued to the City. Sales and occupancy taxes charged for lodging within the State of Florida do not qualify as eligible reimbursable travel expenses under this policy. Per diem rates can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> .

2. Transportation: approved modes of transportation include vehicle, air, rail, or ride share and public transportation. The method selected by the traveler shall be subject to the most economically feasible, taking into consideration the value of time. Generally, the City will not reimburse for the use of a personal vehicle within 20 miles of the City of Westlake municipal boundaries.

i. Rental Cars: Expenses associated with rental cars, i.e. rental expense and fuel will be paid at cost, with receipts provided. Elected officials and contracted employees shall rent mid-size or smaller vehicles, or an appropriate vehicle size based upon the number of individuals needing transportation. Expenses associated with exceeding this car class will be the responsibility of the traveler. Elected officials and contracted employees should accept additional insurance coverage offered by rental car companies since the City's insurance coverage is not applicable to car rentals.

ii. Air/Rail: transportation provided by major airlines or railroads shall be paid at cost to the traveler. Travel will be limited to coach/economy classes of service. In the event the traveler chooses a class higher than coach/economy (business or first class) or to extend the trip and change departure or arrival dates, the difference of the expense shall be the responsibility of the traveler. Any reduction in the expense associated with transportation costs as a result of extended or modified travel dates for personal benefit shall not be provided back to the traveler.

iii. Ride Share/Shuttle: expenses associated with local transportation will be deemed eligible expenses as long as receipts are provided with point-to-point explanations for this mode of transportation. Such documentation should accompany receipts.

iv. Tolls: toll expenses associated with approved travel will be reimbursed at cost with receipts provided.

v. Mileage: miles traveled in personal vehicles shall be reimbursed at the rate designated by the Internal Revenue Service. Mileage shall be calculated using the elected official or contracted employee's place of work as the origination point, so long as the elected official or contracted employee reported to work prior to departing to the destination. In the event the elected official or contracted employee does not report to work prior to traveling to the destination, mileage shall be reimbursed from the elected official or contracted employee's origin, less their normal commute to the workplace. Expenses associated with the elected official or contracted employee vehicles such as fuel, oil, tires, etc. (deemed normal wear and tear) shall not be subject to reimbursement and will be the responsibility of the traveler. Miles traveled in City-owned vehicles shall not be subject to reimbursement to the traveler. However, expenses associated with travel in City vehicles such as fuel, oil, tires, etc. shall be the responsibility of the City, and necessary purchases should follow normal purchasing guidelines and processes.

3. Meals/incidentals: expenses associated with meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) shall be governed by Section 2-58 of the Code of Ordinances as amended from time to time, and incidentals (snacks, tips, miscellaneous) shall be administered on a per diem basis by City. Per diem amounts will be derived from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), which can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> . Per diem will be advanced to the elected official or contracted employee prior to travel. Receipts will

not be required on incidental or meal expenses. First & Last day of travel per diem amounts will follow GSA rates. Overages of meal expenses will be the responsibility of the elected official or contracted employee, while any savings may be retained by the elected official or the contracted employee.

Alcoholic beverages are not allowable reimbursable expenses and will not be reimbursed pursuant to the City's Personnel Policies.

The City shall not reimburse elected officials or contracted employees when breakfast, lunch or dinner is provided by the host conference.

4. Program/Seminar/Conference Fees: charges relating to the traveler's attendance to the particular event (training, conference, seminar, etc.) shall be paid by the Town. The Town should budget for seminars and conferences during the budgeting process. If a conference or seminar has not been previously budgeted for, approval for a budget amendment from the Town Manager will be required prior to registering for the event.

5. Laundry/Dry Cleaning: when travel is scheduled for more than five consecutive days, reimbursement for laundry and dry-cleaning expenses will be allowed. Expenses shall be paid at the cost of the services provided.

Dependents/spouses accompanying elected officials or contracted employees on official business shall not be eligible for reimbursed expenses by the City. If a dependent or spouse accompanies an elected official on an authorized business trip, only those expenses that can be directly attributed to the elected official will be reimbursed. Per diem used for expenses other than those directly attributable to the elected official will be allowed; however, the per diem amount will not be increased because of dependent/spouse travel.

The City Council, City Manager, and Department Directors of the City shall be allowed to conduct official City business while on travel. The submission of expenses related to such official business will be required in order to receive reimbursement. Such items may include expenses associated with meetings or business meals outside of the scope of the purpose of travel.

F. NON-TRAVEL MEALS

Expenses related to the furnishing of meals, snacks, or food should be limited to the following circumstances:

1. Meetings hosted by the City Council or City Manager or his or her designee;
2. A meeting during regularly scheduled business hours required by law or which is anticipated to last more than four (4) hours and which is scheduled through normal meal times;

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3. A business meal with someone other than another elected official or contracted employee in order to discuss a specific item of City business; and

4. Meals that are an integral part of a scheduled meeting at which the individual is required to attend.

Receipts provided for meals within this category should detail the nature of the meeting and the people who were present for discussion.

G. TRAVEL AND TRAINING FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

A travel and training budget for elected officials should be established during the annual budget process. Travel and training should be approved by the City Council prior to attendance if practical.

H. SUBMISSION OF EXPENSES

All expenses relating to travel shall be submitted to the City Clerk no later than ten (10) calendar days after return from the trip. Non-travel meals shall be submitted no later than seven (7) calendar days from the date of occurrence.