

City of Lakeway

Travel Policy

Purpose: To establish and standardize a policy on travel and authorized travel reimbursements.

Applicability: This policy applies to employees, volunteers, elected and appointed City officials.

Effective Date: March 1, 2014

1. PURPOSE

- A. This policy replaces all previously issued travel policies, including those previously used by individual departments within the City.
- B. Employees must exercise good judgment to travel at the lowest reasonable cost to the City. This includes scheduling travel at the lowest net cost to the City, such as group travel by automobile, picking a conference with the closest destination, and other common sense decisions.

2. GUIDELINES

- A. Approval-Employees must obtain approval from their Department Head prior to any travel that requires reimbursement. If an employee uses a City vehicle for an out-of-town delivery or pick-up and has no other reimbursable expenses, completion of a *Travel Expense Report* (hereinafter referred to as "Form") is not necessary. Department Heads must have the City Manager or Deputy City Manager's written approval for travel other than day trips.
- B. Travel To and From Business Locations-If travel can be safely accomplished the same day, i.e. coordinating with the start of a school, conference, seminar, etc., the City's net cost would be lower. However, prior day travel is permitted if necessary to accommodate an early start time of City business. Similarly, if the reason for travel does not end until after a full day's business, the traveler is authorized to stay overnight before returning. Prior day travel or layover for golf tournaments, athletic or other social events is not authorized for reimbursement.
- C. Form for Use by Traveler-The Form serves as the originating and only source document for travel authorization, travel advances, and travel reimbursements. An agenda for each conference, education opportunity, or school must be attached to the Form. Payments that can reasonably be directly billed or charged to the City should be so billed or charged. Departments are encouraged to arrange direct payments for items such as registrations, lodging, and airfares.

D. Advances

1. Advances are not available for Day Travel (no overnight stay). The Department Head must approve advances for multiple day travel.
2. Advances are limited to the meal *per diem* total, mileage, and cannot exceed estimated travel costs authorized.
3. When an employee's meal *per diem* and/or mileage is approved by the Department Head, the completed Form will be used by the Finance Department to process the advance. The travel advance check will be available for pick-up on Thursdays. The Finance Department must receive travel advance requests two weeks before the travel departure date.

E. Travel Completion

1. The Actual Expenses Incurred portion of the Form will be completed after the employee returns and is used for any travel reimbursement request. All costs and travel times of the trip should be included on the Form, including costs that have already been paid by the City, for which the employee is not seeking reimbursement.
2. No travel reimbursements will be processed without the completion of this Form. Receipts for all expenses must be attached, excluding meal receipts.
3. Travel Forms must be completed within thirty (30) days of travel.
4. No travel advance or reimbursement will be paid to employees who have not completed travel Forms from previous trips.
5. Department Head's approval is required prior to any expenditure of funds.

F. Standard Mileage Rates- Mileage reimbursement will be calculated based upon the current rates issued by the Internal Revenue Service; staff in the Finance Department updates this rate periodically on the Form. A City vehicle should be used whenever feasible and is strongly encouraged for day travel.

G. Special Conditions

1. If an employee is traveling as an officer or board member or a presenter to a particular organization, and the organization is paying part or all of the travel, the employee will not be allowed a duplicate travel reimbursement from the City of Lakeway. Any expenses covered by the organization will be deducted from expenses requested by the employee.

2. Additional weekend stay can be reimbursed only if the savings are warranted from Saturday stay-over deals (*e.g.*, airfare), and only with advance approval from the Department Head.

H. Reimbursable Expenses- Any item or expense not listed in this policy must be noted and approved by the Department Head prior to travel for inclusion.

3. OVERNIGHT/EXTENDED STAY

A. The following expenses are reimbursable (if not already paid by the City):

1. Airfare or other public transportation costs-Tickets should be the least expensive available (*e.g.*, coach class on an airline).
2. Roundtrip mileage to airport-Roundtrip mileage to AUS will be limited to 60 miles.
3. Standard mileage-Employees will include a map which contains directions, with mileage, from City Hall to their final destination.
4. Parking-Employees will be reimbursed for airport satellite parking costs only, unless the Department Head approves parking at closer, more expensive lots.
5. Airport service, if employees choose not to drive.
6. Taxi, shuttle, or bus fare from the destination airport to the registered hotel and back, and for other necessary trips during stay.
7. Lodging-See Section B below.
8. Only those Conference registration expenses which are authorized by the Department Head. Employees must register for early registration when possible. Employees will also include a conference itinerary or agenda.
9. Meals-See Section C below.
10. Tolls-If the employee uses a personal TxTag for toll road travel, the City will reimburse without a receipt, at the published TxTag rates. Employees must provide the booth locations along the designated route.
11. Rental car expenses if necessary, at the lowest possible rates, with advance Department Head approval.
12. Gratuities-Tips for porters, bellhops, or cab drivers will be reimbursed. A receipt is not required.

B. Lodging- Reimbursement for lodging will be reasonable and customary, actual room rate for single occupancy, plus actual taxes paid. A government rate should

be requested whenever possible. Employees shall, if possible, present the City's sales tax exemption certificate at registration. Employees should stay at the conference hotel when possible to avoid other transportation charges.

C. Meals

1. Meals are expenses for breakfast, lunch, dinner, taxes and tip on those meals, which are incurred on travel status, and are reimbursable based on *per diem* rates. Specifically excluded are alcoholic beverages, entertainment expenses, and expenses incurred for other persons.
2. Meal costs will be reimbursed by *per diem* rates only. Meal costs cannot be charged to any City issued credit card. Meals provided by the conference will be deducted from the *per diem* rates. The current *per diem* rate is set at \$45.00 per day. This rate is reviewed annually by the Finance Department.

4. **PARTIAL DAY TRAVEL**

Partial day meal reimbursements will not be allowed unless an overnight stay is required. However, if an employee must travel a partial day either to or from their destination, the following meal allowances will be used:

Breakfast	If employee departs prior to 7:00 a.m. or returns after 9:00 a.m.	\$10
Lunch	If employee departs before 11:00 a.m. or returns after 1:00 p.m.	\$13
Dinner	If employee departs before 6:00 p.m. or returns after 7:00 p.m.	\$22

Meals for partial day travel will be reimbursed at the *per diem* rate listed above. No receipts are required. Specific travel times must be listed on the travel Form to receive reimbursement.

If an employee charges any meal expenses to the room, the employee must pay for these expenses **prior to check-out** with personal funds. City issued bank cards shall not be used to purchase any meals or other room service amenities at the appointed place of lodging.

5. **DAY TRAVEL - NO OVERNIGHT STAY**

Overnight stays are not allowed within a 30 mile radius of City Hall or the employee's home, if applicable.

A. The following expenses are reimbursable:

1. Roundtrip mileage for privately owned vehicle, when a City vehicle is not available and when approved in advance by the Department Head.
2. Tolls.
3. Only those Conference registration expenses which are authorized by the Department Head. Employees must register for early registration when possible.

6. **NONREIMBURSABLE COSTS**

A. The following costs are NOT reimbursable for any City funded trip:

1. When two (2) or more employees travel in the same personal vehicle, mileage reimbursement will be paid to the employee who provides the vehicle; passengers cannot claim mileage.
2. More than one (1) round trip to the airport.
3. Alcoholic beverage costs.
4. Lodging and meals provided by family/friends.
5. Extra transportation costs incurred while employee is not in actual attendance at conference (*e.g.*, for sight-seeing, shopping, golfing, etc.).
6. Additional costs for spouse or other non-City employees.
7. In-room movies, personal telephone calls, or other in-room amenities at lodging.
8. Repair costs for privately owned vehicles.

The Department Head may authorize exceptions for compelling reasons on a case-by-case basis. The reason for the exception shall be submitted in writing to the City Manager or Deputy City Manager.

THIS POLICY SPECIFICALLY REPEALS AND REPLACES PRIOR CITY POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDA RELATIVE TO TRAVEL.

REFERENCES

IRS Publication 463-Travel, Entertainment, Gift and Car Expenses