



# Standard Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual

Title: **FINANCIAL POLICY**

Date of Version: **March 21, 2022**

Section: **TRAVEL AND TRAINING POLICY**

Resolution No.: **2022-154**

## **SECTION 1 – GENERAL PURPOSE**

Whenever an employee travels on behalf of the City, whether it is for business or training, the policies and procedures stated herein shall apply. It is the expressed purpose of these policies and procedures to provide the employee with reasonable travel accommodations and related expenses, while maintaining a prudent spending policy. It is each employee's responsibility to learn and abide by these rules. The policies and procedures found in this manual supersede all previous policies, directives and rules governing City travel and training.

## **SECTION 2 - GENERAL POLICIES**

Budget appropriations for travel and training should be reviewed by the Department Director prior to requesting travel approval. Travel and training requests that exceed budget balances will not be automatically approved and will require substantial justification to merit approval.

Employees are expected to seek the most reasonable prices available for lodging, meals and fares, considering location and services. Employees should take advantage of early discounts and ensure that reservations are available. Authorization should be submitted at least one month in advance of the early discount deadline or every effort should be made to receive the early registration discount, if available. Employees should stay at conference hotel when possible to avoid other transportation charges. A government rate should be requested. Rental cars shall only be approved if other transportation, such as rideshare, taxi, or Uber/Lyft, is more expensive during the stay at the destination. Documentation of cost savings must be attached to the **Travel and Training Form**. Before training and/or conference travel occurs, the appropriate approvals must be obtained. Forms for acquiring the approvals are described below.

Expenses submitted for reimbursement must be accompanied by an itemized receipt for the expense (i.e. meal receipts should be the detailed receipt, not the credit card copy showing only the total spent). Without a proper receipt, the reimbursement may not be approved unless extraordinary circumstances prevail. Advances made to the employee must be supported by attaching receipts to the post travel expense report.

If at any time en route, during or returning from a City business trip, a weather emergency, natural disaster, threat to national or regional security, or other circumstances occur that are

outside the control of the employee, and deviations from the planned travel itineraries result, the employee is expected to utilize rational judgement in regards to their personal safety given the situation. Any expenses incurred by an employee in one of the above situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if they are reimbursable or personal expenses. Communication of any emergency situation should be directed to the employee's supervisor or Department Director as soon as possible.

Expenses for entertainment, alcohol, non-City employees, including spouses, and for any expense deemed wasteful or extravagant will not be reimbursed. Costs incurred above the applicable expense ceilings will not be paid and are the responsibility of the employee, unless prior approval from the City Manager's Office is obtained.

If an employee combines business with personal travel, or if an indirect route is taken as a result of personal travel, only the business portion of the trip is reimbursable. This amount may not exceed the amount of reimbursable expenses which would have incurred had the trip been strictly for business purposes.

When traveling in a group, payment and accounting of registration fees, meals, transportation and lodging can be consolidated and either advanced or reimbursed to one person in the group.

Requests for advancements and reimbursements shall be made on the proper forms and include all documentation as required. The forms must be fully completed including the brief narrative report on the purpose for the training or travel.

For the purpose of this policy manual, a full day is when departure for the business trip occurs prior to 8 a.m. and return is after 5 p.m.

### **SECTION 3 - APPROVALS**

To attend any training seminar or conference requiring travel expense, an employee must first obtain approvals from his/her Department Director. Both the Human Resources Director and the City Manager's Office must also review and approve the request. The **Travel & Training Form** must be completed and submitted for signatures. An employee must attach conference or training registration forms and supporting materials to itemize the travel costs.

### **SECTION 4 – ADVANCES**

An advance of funds for actual or estimated travel expenses will be made upon proper application for such on the **Travel & Training Form**. Travel expenses eligible for advanced funding include registration, lodging, mileage, public transportation (air, rental car, taxi, shuttle, Uber/Lyft, rail or bus), and meals within the daily expense ceiling. Incidental expenses are considered reimbursable and will not be advanced. None of the funds advanced may be used for any purpose other than those applied for on the form, even if the employee intends to subsequently reimburse the City those funds. For example, the employee may not use the advance for entertainment or similar personal expense even if they intend to repay the City. **An advance**

**must be requested a minimum of five working days prior to its issuance.** Except for registration fees, advances for expenses less than \$30 will not be made. Additionally, no advances will be made to those employees who have a City-issued purchasing card.

## **SECTION 5 – REIMBURSEMENTS**

A report/reimbursement of actual travel expenses must be submitted on the **Travel & Training Form** within 10 working days of the end of the trip. To receive reimbursement for an eligible expense, the corresponding itemized receipt must be attached. Travel and training expenses eligible for reimbursement include registration, lodging, mileage, public transportation, meal expense and incidental expenses such as tips (up to 20% gratuity), parking fees, business telephone use and business supplies. Reimbursement for meals should include a schedule of dollars spent per day on meals.

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to, the following: entertainment, alcoholic beverages, gifts, personal calls, laundry, any expense for spouse, dependents or guests, transportation costs or mileage for travel unrelated to City business and any incidental expense not pre-approved. Employees are encouraged to request a separate receipt for personal ineligible expenses when possible. Alcohol is considered a personal expense.

## **SECTION 6 – IN-STATE TRAVEL**

Unless another mode of transportation is specifically approved by the City Manager, all in-state travel will be by City vehicle. In the case that a City vehicle is unavailable for use, the employee can travel by personal car. In the case of the latter, mileage at the current allowable IRS rate will be paid to the employee. Total mileage traveled shall be determined by consulting an accepted reference such as Google Maps and documentation should be attached.

The following expense ceilings apply to in-state travel unless pre-approval for a higher amount is given by the City Manager's Office:

- A. Lodging - \$200 per day
  - B. Meals - \$50 per full day and \$30 per half day (ceiling includes tax and tip)
- Under no circumstances will any one meal over \$35 be reimbursed (including tax and tip).

Prior to expending or committing City funds for in-state lodging, the employee shall confirm that the lodging provider is eligible to accept public funds by the Iowa Office to Combat Human Trafficking (IOCHT) per Section 80.45A of the Code of Iowa. The current certification status of providers is found on the internet site <https://stophtiowa.org/certified-locations>.

## **SECTION 7 OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL**

Unless time is a critical factor, all out-of-state travel within five hours driving time will be by car. Air travel will be approved, in lieu of the car, in those instances where it is deemed absolutely necessary. For car travel, mileage at the current allowable IRS rate will be paid. Total mileage

traveled shall be determined by consulting an accepted reference such as Google Maps and document should be attached.

The following expense ceilings apply to out-state travel unless pre-approval for a higher amount is given by the City Manager's Office:

- A. Lodging - \$200 per day
  - B. Meals - \$50 per full day and \$30 per half day (ceiling includes tax and tip)
- Under no circumstances will any one meal over \$35 be reimbursed (including tax and tip).

Travel to a major metropolitan area (population of one-half million or more) unless pre-approval for a higher amount is given by the City Manager's Office:

- A. Lodging - \$225 per day
  - B. Meals - \$60 per full day and \$40 per half day (ceiling includes tax and tip)
- Under no circumstances will any one meal over \$40 be reimbursed (including tax and tip).

## **SECTION 8 - TRANSPORTATION**

Employees are expected to secure the lowest possible airfares. Travelers shall fly basic economy class on the lowest cost flight available, with reasonable consideration given to the time and distance of travel involved. Upgrades shall not be reimbursed, including early boarding, seat selection, cost for any additional luggage, after the first bag, or overweight luggage are not reimbursable unless special equipment or supplies are required to be taken as part of the conference. Travel by air, rail or bus may be arranged by the Human Resources Director, if desired. Preferably, requests for airline tickets should be made well in advance of the travel date, but under no circumstances less than three working days from that date. If air travel is more economical than driving, but the employee elects to drive their personal vehicle, the employee may only be reimbursed up to the value of what airfare would have cost or mileage (whichever is the lesser).

If at any time during an air travel trip, an itinerary is required to be changed, resulting in additional fees, full disclosure and documentation of the situation is to be reported to the Department Director as soon as possible. Circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine what, if any, portion of the cost may be the responsibility of the employee. Change fees due to personal conflicts are not reimbursable.

## **SECTION 9 – LODGING**

Employees are expected to secure reasonable lodging rates. It may be reasonable for employees to stay at the conference hotel, even if it is over the expense ceiling, when additional transportation costs would exceed the maximum. Lodging is assumed to start the night prior to the conference start date and check-out on the last day of the conference. An exception may be made based on the judgment of the Department Director and the employee. Lodging arrangements may be arranged by the Human Resources Department, if desired. The employee

must submit an itemized hotel/motel bill upon completion of the trip. A credit card receipt alone is not sufficient documentation.

## **SECTION 10 – ROUTINE TRAVEL**

Routine travel for regular in-state meetings of professional organizations, in which the employee holds membership, does not require the completion of the **Travel & Training Form**, provided lodging is not required. Eligible expenses, such as mileage, meals and parking, may be filed for reimbursement on the **Employee Reimbursement Request Form** with receipts attached. However, if the trip requires lodging, then the **Travel & Training Form** is to be completed. Routine reimbursements that only involve mileage should be made at least monthly.

## **SECTION 11 – WAGES WHILE ATTENDING LECTURES, MEETINGS, AND TRAINING**

Time spent at conferences and training is not considered to be hours worked for *non-exempt* employees if all of the following are met:

1. Attendance is outside the employee's normal work hours;
2. Attendance is voluntary;
3. The lecture or training is not directly related to the employee's job; and,
4. The employee does not perform productive work while attending the lecture or participating in the training program.

Time spent at conferences and training will be considered to be hours worked for *non-exempt* employees when any of the following are met:

1. Attendance is part of the employees normal work hours
2. Attendance is not voluntary
3. The training is directly related to the employee's job
4. The employee is performing productive work while attending the lecture or participating in the training program.

Time spent when training is provided by an independent school or college is not considered to be hours worked for *non-exempt* employees if all of the following are met:

1. Attendance is voluntary;
2. Attendance occurs outside regular work hours; and,
3. The employee does not perform productive work in connection with the course.

For *non-exempt* (hourly) employees: Continuing education courses required by the state to obtain or keep professional certifications (e.g. Paramedic, Police Officer Firearms Training, etc.) will not be considered hours worked and will only be paid if authorized by the Department Director prior to attendance of the training.

## **SECTION 12 – WAGES WHILE TRAVELING**

Employees in positions considered non-exempt may be eligible for compensation for the time they spend traveling. The compensation an employee receives depends upon the kind of travel and whether the travel time takes place within normal work hours or outside of normal work hours.

“Normal work hours”, for the purposes of this policy, are defined as 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This definition applies to normal work days (Monday through Friday) and to weekends (Saturday and Sunday). Employees not working “normal work hours” (ex: third shift) will convert to this schedule while traveling on City business to insure appropriate and consistent payment.

### **One-Day Trips**

When employees are required to travel to another city, all the travel time involved counts as time worked. The only times excluded are meal periods and the time spent traveling between the worker’s home and point of departure (such as the airport). This is to exclude the normal travel time from home to work before the regular work day begins and from work to home after the workday is over.

### **Travel Time, More than One Day, Within Normal Work Hours**

Any portion of authorized travel time that takes place within normal work hours (defined as 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) on any day of the week, including Saturday and Sunday, is treated as “work hours”.

When an employee travels between two or more time zones, the time zone associated with the point of departure should be used to determine whether the travel falls within normal work hours.

### **Travel Time, More than One Day, Outside of Normal Work Hours**

Any portion of authorized travel time (with the exception of driving time) that takes place outside of normal work hours is considered to be “outside travel hours” and are not counted as hours worked.

When a non-exempt employee is required to travel as a passenger in an automobile, plane, or any other mode of transportation outside of normal work hours, he/she will not be compensated for that portion of travel time that takes place outside of normal work hours.

When an employee travels between two or more time zones, the time zone associated with the point of departure should be used to determine whether the travel falls outside of normal work hours.

### **Travel Time as the Driver of an Automobile**

All authorized travel time spent driving an automobile (as the driver, not as a passenger) is treated as "hours worked", regardless of whether the travel takes place within normal work hours or outside of normal work hours.

Travel as a passenger in an automobile is not automatically treated as "work hours". Travel as a passenger in an automobile is treated the same as all other forms of travel and compensation depends upon whether the travel time takes place within normal work hours or outside of normal work hours.

If an employee drives a car as a matter of personal preference when an authorized flight or other travel mode is available, and the travel time by car would exceed that of the authorized mode, only the estimated travel time associated with the authorized mode will be eligible for compensation.

### **Calculating and Reporting Travel Time**

Employees are responsible for accurately tracking, calculating and reporting travel time on their time sheets in accordance with this policy.

Meal periods should be deducted from all travel time.

If an employee requests a specific travel itinerary or mode that is different than the one authorized, only the estimated travel time associated with the schedule, route and mode of transportation authorized should be reported on the time sheet.

Travel time should be calculated by rounding up to the nearest quarter hour.

Whenever possible, the employee's normal work schedule should be flexed to allow for the compensable travel and training time. For example, if a non-exempt employee who normally works 8 am. – 5 pm., M-F, is in training for 24 hours during the week and the travel time of 4 hours is deemed compensable by the policy, then the employee has worked 28 hours and their work schedule should be adjusted to allow for the extra travel time.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
Work Hours	8 (8a-5p)				4 (8a-12p)	
Training Time		8 (8a-5p)	8 (8a-5p)	8 (8a-5p)		
Travel Time *	2 (5p-7p)			2 (5p-7p)		
Total paid	10	8	8	10	4	40 hours

\*Assumes the employee is the driver.