City Personnel Policy

PAYMENT OF TRAVEL AND BUSINESS EXPENSES

POLICY: 401

Council approval: 07/22/2024 # Pages: 3

POLICY:

The City of Council Bluffs will pay reasonable expenses which are incurred in the course of authorized City travel for the purpose of conducting City business, representing the City at meetings and professional associations, as well as for training to enhance performance.

APPLICABILITY:

All employees, including both elected and appointed City officials.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to inform employees, supervisors, Department Heads, and other City officials of their respective roles and responsibilities relative to submitting and approving travel and business-related expenses. It is the expressed purpose of this policy to provide employees with reasonable travel accommodations and related expenses, while maintaining a prudent spending policy. This policy will enforce audit guidelines, federal per diem meal allotments, and allow City staff to follow industry best practice and processes, while continuing to follow the City's mission, vision, and values.

ADMINISTRATION:

The Director of Finance is primarily responsible for the contents and administration of this policy. All other Department Heads have collateral responsibility for administration of this policy.

PROCEDURE:

1. Authorization to Travel**.** Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that travel is appropriate, reasonable, and necessary to the mission and responsibilities of the department and/or City government, and that funds are available within the current fiscal year (FY) budget for related expenses. Supervisors must approve travel requests prior to the travel occurring.

2. Expenses Eligible for Payment or Reimbursement. Travel expenses that may be paid by the City include conference or training fees, meals, lodging, and transportation costs. Excess costs, indirect routes, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary, unjustified, or solely for the convenience or personal preference of the employee are not eligible for reimbursement.

A. Lodging Expense: Reasonable lodging expense will be paid either directly by the City or will be reimbursed to the employee for an approved function. Additional hotel/motel services and tips paid for such service will not be reimbursed.

- Personal travel miles and/or reward points shall not be used or reimbursed for City-related travel.

- Employees and supervisors should refer to the Department of Administrative Services website as the first place to check for reasonable lodging. An exception would be if a conference has special rates at hotels near conference site or if prior arrangements have been made out of the City's control (i.e. conference or entity provides hotel accommodations)

(https://das.iowa.gov/procurement/agencies/hotel-motel-and-bb-listing)

B. Conference, Seminar or Training Expense: Approved conference, seminar, or training registration expenses will be paid by the City.

C. Transportation: Reimbursement or payment of transportation expenses shall be in the best interest of the City. In no case shall the total travel reimbursement exceed the tourist class air rate or the actual mileage rate incurred, whichever is less. Tips for transportation services will be reimbursed, up to 20%. Tip amounts that exceed 20% will only be reimbursed to the 20% threshold.

(1) Air Travel Procedure: Each Department is responsible for making air travel arrangements in a prudent manner. Luxury accommodations will not be reimbursed.

- Personal travel miles and/or reward points shall not be used or reimbursed for City-related travel.

(2) For City policy on transportation via vehicle, refer to policy 400 – Vehicle Usage.

D. Meal Reimbursement/Allotment: The City will reimburse employees for actual meal costs while travelling for business purposes, not to exceed the determined amount by the federal per diem meal allotment. Employees must check these rates prior to travel. Meals that are included with registration of a conference, seminar, or training are already paid for by the City. Therefore, there will be no meal allotment allowed for the covered meals.

(1) The Finance Department will refer to GSA.gov (https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates?topnav=travel) to reimburse for meals.

(2) All meal receipts must be submitted in order to receive reimbursement. Meal reimbursement in excess of these amounts may be made only upon a showing of extraordinary* circumstances, and there should be written pre-approval by the employee's supervisor when possible. The City will not reimburse any purchases of alcohol.
*Extraordinary within this policy is defined as:

- Lack of meal options in the area/surrounding area
- Time constraints out of anyone's control
- Any other reasonable accommodation that aligns with the City's mission and values.

E. Miscellaneous Expenses: Employees will also be reimbursed for any other necessary charges such as taxi, bus, parking, etc. Receipts are required for any miscellaneous expenses for which the employee is requesting reimbursement. Tips for such miscellaneous expenses will be reimbursed, up to 20%. Tip amounts that exceed 20% will only be reimbursed to the 20% threshold.

3. Forms of Payment for Travel and Business Expenses. Travel and business expenses can be paid for or reimbursed in the following manner:

A. Use of a City of Council Bluffs Purchasing Card is the preferred payment method for travel, lodging and business expenses, to include meals.

B. For extenuating circumstances which require an employee to purchase travel, lodging and other business expenses, reimbursement must be submitted within 10 business days from the return of the travel by completing the Travel & Business Expense Reimbursement Request form (see Appendix "A" – F401-1) and attaching receipts showing payment of applicable expenses. Employees will be reimbursed via direct deposit. Reimbursement before travel occurs will not be allowed.

C. For expenses that can be directly billed to the City, the employee can process payment through the normal accounts payable system. This method can be used to have a City check prepared for the employee to deliver at the time of the event.