CITY OF EUREKA		Category:	FINANCE
POLICIES & PROCEDURES		Subject:	TRAVEL POLICY
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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The City of Eureka acknowledges the value of professional seminars, conferences, training, and meetings and recognizes the need for City employees to travel outside the City to conduct City business. It is the intent of the City to provide travel and expense funds for all reasonable expenses incurred in the course of such travel.

This policy addresses the need for uniform guidelines governing travel on official business of the City of Eureka, by establishing methods of requesting, authorizing and controlling such travel and attendance by all officials and employees at approved events. Everyone who travels on City business - or supervises someone who travels - is responsible for knowing and following this policy.

OVERVIEW

These guidelines are organized into five sections:

1. General policies
2. Planning
3. Submitting travel requisitions and cash advance requests
4. Traveling
5. Accounting for expenses

The primary document in the administrative process is the Travel Requisition/Expense Report (TR). Besides ensuring that travel by City employees and officials is conducted in accordance with adopted policies, the TR summarizes the total cost of attending conferences, meetings, and seminars and provides documentation for cash advances and vendor payments. General instructions for completing and processing this form are also included in these guidelines.

Section 1 - GENERAL POLICIES

The governing factor in authorizing travel on official City business is the benefit to accrue to the City as the result of such travel. As part of the annual budget process, travel and training budget requests are submitted by department directors and recommended by the City Manager and considered by the City Council. The City Council authorizes all travel and appropriates all funds for travel in the annual budget. The City Manager administers the travel program in accordance with the authorization and appropriation made by the City Council in the adopted annual budget. This policy is not intended to address every issue, exception, or contingency that may arise in the course of City travel. Accordingly, the basic standard that should always prevail is to exercise good judgment in the use and stewardship of the City's resources. Your trip should be thoroughly planned, well in advance, keeping economy in mind. Personal business should not be mixed with official business if it will cost the City anything in dollars or lost time, or if it will harm the City's interests in any way.

Section 2 - PLANNING

General considerations

Normally, you should leave as late as possible and return as early as possible from your trip after business is completed, with the goal of minimizing the time away from work. If you take time away from official business for personal matters, or if you delay your return after completing your business, you will not be reimbursed for expenses incurred during that time. When combining business and personal travel in this manner, department director approval is required. If this extended period occurs during your regular scheduled work hours, the time will be counted as vacation, comp time (if available), or leave without pay. If you become sick, you should notify your supervisor as soon as possible. The time will be counted as sick leave if it occurs during your normally scheduled work hours, and the City's normal sick leave rules will apply.

Mode of travel

General

When planning the transportation portion of your trip, consider all aspects of cost to the City - daily expenses, overtime, lost work time - as well as actual transportation costs. For example, driving - especially if two or more employees or officials are traveling together - may be less expensive than air for travel in the northern part of the State. However, the increased time for automobile transportation - and the potential for lost work time, overtime, or increased lodging costs - should be considered in determining the best mode of transportation.

Air travel

Air travel on City business should be at the lowest possible fare class, unless approved in advance by the Department Director. You should try to book air travel as early as possible to take advantage of discounts. Privately owned and operated aircraft cannot be used for City travel.

Driving

- If you will be driving, you may use a City vehicle if one is available. To purchase fuel, you may utilize a City issued Cal-Card or request reimbursement when you return.
- If you use a rental vehicle, you should make reservations in advance. Rentals for two or fewer employees should be made at the compact car rate. When renting a car, insurance should be requested, unless the Enterprise Fleet Rental agreement is utilized. The City has a rental car discount program available for use (see the Finance Department).
- If you use your personal car, you will be reimbursed at the current IRS Standard Mileage Rate. Mileage can be calculated using programs such as "Google Maps" and entering the addresses of your point of origin and the destination hotel or

conference address. A copy of the mileage calculation must be attached to the Travel Requisition. Mileage will be reimbursed from point of origin to point of travel plus any work-related area travel provided it is documented.

To drive a privately-owned vehicle on City business you must:

- Possess a valid California driver's license.
- Certify that you carry the required liability insurance limits and that your vehicle is equipped with seat belts and adequate for the work to be performed (See Exhibit B, "Authorization to Use Privately Owned Automobiles on City of Eureka Business") When using a personal car for City business, an employee's personal car insurance carrier is the primary insurance carrier.
- Realize that fuel, any damage to the car, services, or repair occurring on the trip will be your responsibility, as these costs are included in the City's per mile cost reimbursement.
- Obtain approval from your Department Director.

Transportation at your destination

If you need local transportation at your destination, use of public transit or shuttle services is appropriate. You will be reimbursed for these expenses. You will be reimbursed for taxis or other on-line transportation options when these services are not reasonably available.

Lodging

Generally, the City will pay for a single room (including taxes and parking) for as many nights as necessary. In some cases, due to budget or other constraints, you may be asked to share a room with other City attendees. The accommodations you use should be economical but practical. For example, it is preferable to stay at the hotel where a conference is held, utilizing the Conference rate, even if that hotel may be slightly more expensive than others in the area. Location is also important: a hotel close to where you will be conducting business may be slightly more expensive than outlying hotels, but it may be easier to achieve the City's travel goals by staying at the closer location. In general, you should stay at the most reasonably priced accommodations available consistent with the purpose and goals of your travel. If you have a question about using a particular hotel, obtain concurrence or direction from your department director before making a reservation.

Reservations

Whenever possible, you should make reservations. They are often required for large conferences. Reservations can be held with the use of a Cal card. Be sure to cancel any reservations you will not use. If the City is charged for an unused reservation, you will pay that charge unless circumstances requiring cancellation were reasonably beyond your control. When making lodging reservations, be sure to ask about exemptions from the local transient occupancy tax (TOT): some cities exempt travelers on City business, others don't. If there is

an exemption, you can save up to 12% on lodging costs depending on the local TOT rate. Almost all lodging operators will require an official, written claim for exemption, and a sample for the purpose is provided in Exhibit B

Hotel Personal Expenses

Personal expenses incurred while traveling will not be reimbursed. These are included but are not limited to:

- In-room movies, video rentals
- Child care, cribs
- Alcoholic beverages
- Recreational activities, health clubs

Compensation for travel time

If you are eligible for overtime, compensation for time traveling to and from your travel destination on official City business shall be in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws and City policy.

Covered costs

The City will pay all legitimate expenses of your trip. These include transportation, lodging, registration fees, meals, and any other related expenses if they are for official business and follow this policy.

Alcoholic beverages

City funds shall not be used to purchase alcohol or reimburse employees for alcohol related costs during travel.

Spouses and guests

While spouses and guests may accompany you on City travel, any additional costs associated with the participation of your spouse or other guests are your responsibility. You will pay directly for all travel costs associated with your spouse or guests. If a City vehicle is used for travel, any guest accompanying the employee must have the approval of the Department Director and a signed waiver on file.

Non-Reimbursable Expenses

Travelers will not be reimbursed for the following miscellaneous expenses:

- Airline club membership dues
- Alcohol
- Auto repairs
- Barbers and hairdressers
- Child care services
- Clothing or toiletry items
- Hotel safety deposit box (safe)
- Loss or theft of cash advance money or airline tickets
- Loss or theft of personal funds or property

- Lost baggage
- Luggage or briefcases
- Movies and video games
- "No-show" charges for airfare, hotel or car service (due to traveler negligence)
- Over-the-counter medication/prescription
- Parking ticket or traffic violations
- Personal automobile routine maintenance/tune-ups
- Personal entertainment, including sporting events
- Pet care
- Reading materials including magazines, newspapers and books
- Souvenirs or personal gifts
- Spouse/dependent travel
- Vacation - expenses related to personal days before, during or after a business trip

Other issues

Travel less than one day
When your official travel does not require you to be absent overnight from the City of Eureka, you will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred.

Bonus or mileage points
Frequent flyer miles earned by any traveler during City business travel may be retained by the traveler business or personal use. Accumulating frequent flyer miles shall not influence traveler to select a flight that is not the lowest priced flight available.

Reimbursement by other organizations or agencies
When traveling on City business to attend meetings or trainings that are reimbursed by another organization, the employee will submit the Travel Requisition to the City per this policy. Reimbursement from the other organization is then to be issued to the City of Eureka.

Section 3 - SUBMITTING TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS AND CASH ADVANCE REQUESTS

Travel Request forms (TR's) are required for all overnight travel. For travel that does not require an overnight stay, the normal check request, Cal card, or purchase order procedures may be used to request vendor payments or employee expense reimbursements. Department Director approval of Travel Requisitions is required. City Manager approval is required on Travel Requisitions over $2,500, travel outside of California, and all Director travel. The first page of the completed TR and accompanying check requests should be submitted to your department director as far in advance as possible. The reverse side of the TR (Reconciliation) will be used when you return to account for your expenses (See Exhibits C and D).
Department Directors approving TR's are responsible for determining that the cost is reasonable and justified by the trip's purpose. They should be certain that:

- The purpose cannot be accomplished via mail, telephone, teleconference or the Internet.
- The seminar, meeting, or conference is mandatory, reimbursable, or otherwise necessary

to accomplish key City goals and objectives and is unavailable locally if overnight accommodations are required.
- The appropriate number of City staff members is going.
- The itinerary ensures accomplishment of the purpose at the lowest reasonable cost.
- The traveler understands and follows these guidelines.
- There is enough money in the appropriate travel budget to cover the costs.

Requests for cash in advance and payments to vendors

Direct vendor payments are made by the City to an organization to pay for specific costs related to a trip - usually registration fees, lodging and airfare. These payments can be initiated by purchase order, check request, or Cal card. Cash advances are lump sum payments made to you before you leave to cover expenses as they arise on the trip.
To obtain either direct vendor payments or a cash advance, you must complete the appropriate sections of the TR and attach check requests for all payments (including cash advances). If you are using a Cal card, you must keep all documentation for reconciliation. When you travel, you will be provided with a copy of the TR to be used for expense reconciliation upon your return.

Section 4 - TRAVELING

Meals and Gratuities - The Per Diem Method

Daily Per Diem rates are determined by GSA Travel Rates and are calculated using their website: https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates. Travelers should enter the destination's zip code to obtain an accurate Meals & Incidentals (M&IE) Breakdown. The appropriate per diem rate will need to be calculated using this method. The GSA full per-diem rate with individual meal allowances and incidentals should be used for all days of travel. The GSA estimate of per-diem amount must be printed and included with Travel Requisition.. When per diem up to the maximum amount is claimed, receipts or proof of payment for the expenses covered are not required.
The term "incidental allowance" includes, but is not limited to, expenses for laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothes, and fees and tips for services such as for waiters and baggage handlers. It does not include costs like cab fares, bridge tolls or telephone calls.

Meals reimbursed using the per diem allowance method already include the tip amount. All other tips should be reported as "Miscellaneous" on the Travel Expense Report and should be accompanied by a brief description, i.e., porter, bellhop, etc.

Other expenses

You must maintain a detailed record of all other expenses incurred during your travel: transportation, lodging, parking fees, registration fees, bridge tolls, and any other reasonable and necessary expenses.

Section 5 - ACCOUNTING FOR EXPENSES (Reconciliation)

When you return from your trip or official function, a final accounting of all expenses must be approved by your department director and submitted to Finance within ten working days. An expense report is required in all cases - whether your advance and actual expenses are equal, you are eligible for additional reimbursement, or you owe money to the City.
The final accounting is made by completing the “Expense Report” section on the reverse side of the TR. The “Expense Report” must include all final receipts paid for with City funds.

After completing the expense report, you should attach required receipts, sign the report attesting to its accuracy, and submit it to your department director for review and approval. If you owe the City for the unused balance of a cash advance, you should attach payment in the form of a check to your expense report, or get a receipt from the cashier and attach that to the expense report.
Department Directors approving expense reports are responsible for ensuring that:

- All expenses are reasonable, necessary, and consistent with these guidelines.
- Any required receipts are attached.
- The final disposition is correct (e.g., balance due employee; balance due City).
- Any amounts due to the City are reimbursed.
- Final accounting of all expenses is submitted to Finance.

Upon approval by your department director for expenses under $2,500 and the City Manager for total expenses over $2,500, the reconciliation should be processed as follows depending upon the circumstances:

If the City owes you

The expense report is forwarded to Finance and the reimbursement will be processed on the next check run.

If you owe the City

The expense report is forwarded to Finance. You will be contacted with the final amount due to the City and provide with payment options.

If you have not substantiated your travel expenses and returned unused cash advance amounts within 20 working days after the completion of your trip, the City will invoice you for the amount due.

No new travel funds will be authorized until prior travel advances have been reconciled.

VIOLATIONS OF TRAVEL POLICY

Violations of the travel policy can be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.