


CITY OF CATHEDRAL CITY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY			HR-AP 16
TOPIC	Reimbursement for Travel & Training, and Vehicle Use Policy		
Approved by:  Charles McClendon, City Manager		Distributed by Human Resources	Original Date April 12, 2023
			Revised

A. PURPOSE:

- A.1. To formalize an accountable plan and uniform procedures for travel expenses & reimbursing city employees for training, travel, meetings, and out of pocket expenses incurred while on official business.

B. SCOPE

- B.1. The City hereby formalizes its policies and procedures for the reimbursement of training, general travel and other actual necessary expenses incurred by eligible individuals in the course of performing their official duties.

C. GENERAL POLICY

- C.1. This policy formalizes standards for travel and business expenses incurred while performing or conducting official City business.
- C.2. Eligible Individuals:
 - (a) All employees at the City covered by a collective bargaining agreement and all employees covered by Regulations Covering Executive, Administrative, Professional, Confidential, and Other particular Employees.
 - (b) Councilmembers and members of boards, commissions, committees.
- C.3. The City Manager and department heads are charged with the responsibility of authorizing travel and reimbursement, per this policy, and ensuring that all expenditures hereunder are within approved budget limits.
- C.4. All employees requesting reimbursement for allowed expenses, other than meals, shall provide a valid itemized receipt. Any such receipt shall include or be accompanied by documentation of the name of the vendor (e.g., hotel, airline, taxi), the date and purpose of service and actual amount charged. Employees shall file a Travel Expense Report for reimbursement through the Employee Self Service system.
- C.5. In the event a receipt is not available to substantiate an expense, the employee may submit a written explanation, with all pertinent expense and situational details, through their organizational chain of command to their respective department head. Requests approved by a department head may be sent to the City Manager, or designee, who will review such requests for reimbursement and make a final determination as to approval or denial. Reimbursement requests for

business expenses without original receipts will be processed for payment only upon approval by City Manager, or designee..

- C.6. Discretion: This policy does not claim to have addressed all contingencies and conditions. Any necessary and reasonable expense that may from time-to-time be justified due to circumstances or opportunities for the City or any necessary and reasonable expenses that may deviate from the provision of this Policy, may be presented to the City Manager, or designee for their review and approval. The City Manager, or designee shall exercise due diligence to ensure that expenses are reasonable and necessary for the conduct of City business, are within budgetary limits and ensure the City's fiscal position by minimizing costs.

(a) If an expense is not outlined in this policy, it may be subject to dismissal or rejection.

- C.7. Personal and business travel shall not be commingled in such a manner as to increase allowable expense or otherwise adversely affect the interest of the City.

D. DEPARTMENT TRAINING AND TRAVEL BUDGETS

Departments will be provided an annual budget for business travel, conferences and training based upon their unique requirements. Departments should monitor their travel and training expenditures to ensure approved allocations are not exceeded. If the overall departmental budgeted allocation has been spent, and additional travel is necessary, authorization by the City Manager, or designee's required.

E. JOB TRAINING

- E.1. The City supports job training as an ongoing process and as an important tool to help employees remain current in their job responsibilities and skills. All training is subject to available funds; however, job-required training will be given preference in the decision-making process for expending training funds. The City encourages training opportunities that can be obtained in a cost-effective manner. Such opportunities will be given priority over other similar types of training.

(a) Job Required Training: Includes mandated certifications, licenses or mandatory training required to perform the duties and responsibilities of a job. This may also include mandated safety training, technical or professional training, seminars and conferences, workshops, and similar programs. For employees required to obtain certification to perform the duties of their job, the City will pay all expenses required to obtain the certification one time. If the employee is required to retake the test, the expenses will be the employee's responsibility unless waived by the City Manager.

(b) Job Related Training: Includes general types of training related to the performance of current job duties, development of skills, or training that would assist an employee's advancement within their department and/or organization.

- (c) Covered by MOU: These sections are not meant to provide greater or different rights than those that exist in any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). To the extent that any MOU addresses this topic and/or there is a conflict, the provisions of the MOU will govern.

F. COMPENSABLE TIME

- F.1 Time attending any work-related training in which the cost is paid by the City is compensable time.
- F.2 Travel Time: The principles which apply in determining whether time spent in travel is compensable time depends upon the kind of travel involved.
 - (a) Traveling during normal work hours is considered compensable work time, except for travel to and from the normal fixed or assigned workplace.
 - (b) If travelling to a location that is one other than the normal fixed or assigned workplace, an employee's time traveling to and from the abnormal or not assigned workplace location is compensable.
- F.3 Travel Away from Home: Travel that keeps an employee away from home overnight is travel away from home. Travel away from home is work time when it cuts across the employee's workday. The time is not only hours worked on regular working days during normal working hours but also during corresponding hours on nonworking days.
- F.4 Home to Work Travel: An employee who travels from home before the regular workday and returns to their home at the end of the workday is engaged in ordinary home to work travel, which is not work time and is not compensable.
- F.5 Time spent by an employee commuting to and from work is not work-related travel and is not compensable time.
- F.6 Lunch or meal breaks are not compensable time unless the lunch includes a speaker and/or is considered a working lunch as evidenced by the agenda.

G. GENERAL TRAVEL

- G.1. Employees shall select the most economical method of transportation in terms of expense to the City and the employee's time away from the office. Employees shall receive approval, per the below, prior to making any travel arrangements.
 - (a) If travel expenses total more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), including registration, lodging, meals, and transportation (all expenses outlined in the travel approval form), travel shall be approved by the City Manager or designee.
 - (b) If travel expenses total less than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), including registration, lodging, meals, and transportation (all expenses outlined in
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the travel approval form), travel need only be approved by the employee's Department Head.

- G.2. Upon approval of travel, City credit cards may be used to make travel arrangements. Receipts, approval forms, and expense reports shall be submitted when reconciling City credit card statements.
 - (a) Employees who do not have a City credit card may have their supervisor or other department employee reserve lodging on their behalf using a City credit card.
 - (b) A travel advance may also be requested for lodging expenses. (Refer to Section J for additional information relating to travel advances.)
 - G.3. If itemized receipts are not included in the Travel Expense Report, the employee may be responsible for travel expenses.
 - G.4. An employee who extends the approved travel for their own convenience will not be entitled to any additional allowance for meals or lodging.
 - G.5. Travel on behalf of the City in case of an emergency may be exempt from provisions of this section with approval from the City Manager. Expense reports or other paperwork will be completed and submitted as soon as practical upon return from travel, but no longer than thirty (30) days after travel expenses occurred.
 - G.6. A valid California driver's license with appropriate endorsement is required if the employee is driving a City, personal, or rental vehicle while on City business. It is the employee's responsibility to maintain a valid California driver's license and report any changes to their supervisor. (Refer to Section M for additional information relating to private automobile.)
 - G.7. If more than one employee is attending the same training, employees shall attempt to arrange to carpool, either using a City pool vehicle or a designated employee's personal vehicle. Personal vehicle mileage reimbursement will not be paid to more than one employee when carpooling.
 - G.8. Airfare/Train: Allowance for air and train travel is based on actual round trip coach fare, tourist fare or by the method least costly to the City. Employees are expected to make special efforts to take advantage of discounts, special fares, and travel vouchers whenever available at reasonable and convenient times. If an employee opts to travel using a fare above the Coach rate, the employee shall provide documentation for the two fares and is personally responsible for the cost difference.
 - G.9. Travel Insurance: The purchase of travel insurance requires prior authorization by the employee's department head for airfare.
 - G.10. Car Rental: Allowance for car rental is based on actual cost to rent a mid-range size vehicle. Employees are expected to make special efforts to take advantage of discounts, special fares, and travel vouchers whenever available at reasonable and
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convenient times. Employees shall have a valid California driver's license and proof of insurance when using a rental vehicle while on City business. Employees are required to notify Risk Management and/or their department head as soon as possible (within 24 hours) of any event/incident causing property damage, or accident related to the rental car.

- G.11. Taxis, Shuttles, and/or Ride Shares (Uber/Lyft): Taxis, shuttles, and/or ride shares, such as Uber and Lyft may be reimbursed, with no more than 15% gratuity.
- G.12. Parking Expenses: The City will provide reimbursement for actual cost of parking associated with travel, including parking at the airport, hotel, and conference parking, training, or meeting site or in conjunction with any employee City business activity.
- G.13. Claims for payment or employee reimbursement shall be allowable when accompanied by a receipt for the purchase and a copy of the ticket purchased or other voucher for the common carrier expense.
- G.14. Government and group rates shall be used when available. Actual costs evidenced by an original, dated receipt and inclusive of all related taxes and other rental fees shall be submitted along with actual gas receipts (dated, vendor name printed on the receipt) obtained for the purchase of gas for the rental vehicle.

H. ADVANCE TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

- H.1. Travel expenses require prior authorization by the Department Head and the City Manager's (or designee) approval when the estimated total cost (including registration, transportation, lodging, and meals) is expected to cost five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or more per person.
- H.2. Travel expenses require prior authorization by the employee's Department Head when the estimated total cost (including registration, transportation, lodging, and meals) is less than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per person. The Department Head's approval indicates that the travel is approved and within budget.

I. USE OF TRAVEL ADVANCE AND/OR TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT

- I.1. Each employee submitting a claim for reimbursement under this policy shall file a Travel Expense Report, through the Employee Self Service portal.
 - I.2. The Travel Expense Report shall include the date(s) of travel, business destination, total amount, and business purpose. It shall include a copy of accompanied by all required supporting documents (expenditure receipts, lodging facility folio, registration forms, and meeting itineraries, conference flyer, etc.).
 - I.3. Claims shall be filed promptly, but no later than 30 days after the expense occurred. Claims filed after this time may not be considered for payment.
 - I.4. Each claim form submitted shall meet the requirements of this policy, including providing receipts and/or credit card slips, and shall be reviewed and approved by
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the submitting employee's department head and the Finance Department for compliance with this policy.

- I.5. All claim forms and associated documents related to reimbursable City expenditures are considered public records and may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act {Chapter 3.5 (Commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 Title 1}.

J. TRAVEL ADVANCES:

- J.1. Employees may request a travel advance for use in the course of necessary and allowable travel and shall be requested via the Employee Self Service (ESS) system. The employee's department head shall approve the issuance of cash advances.
- J.2. Travel advances may be requested for the following expenses:
 - (a) Meals
 - (b) Lodging
 - (c) Air fare
 - (d) Car rental

If a travel expense is not listed above, it shall be reimbursed after the fact. Typical reimbursable expenses include mileage, transportation (ride shares), and parking.

- J.3. Travel advances are to be documented and reported in the same manner as expenses incurred and submitted for reimbursements, e.g., receipts shall be saved (exceptions apply to meal expenses – Section L), a claim form may be submitted, expenses are limited, approvals of expenses shall be secured, etc. Should there be unused travel advance, the City shall be reimbursed within five (5) days if the following applies:
 - (a) Travel arrangements have been cancelled; or,
 - (b) At the conclusion of travel.

Notwithstanding, a travel advance of any denomination will not be granted whenever the requesting employee has an open travel-advance on file, wherein the employee has not submitted the necessary receipts and paperwork confirming the previous advance was used in its entirety for actual and necessary expenditures in accordance with this policy.

- J.4. Travel advances will be provided through payroll. A Claim Voucher shall be submitted to payroll through the Employee Self Service (ESS) system.
 - (a) Travel shall occur within 30 days of the advance.

K. LODGING AND RELATED EXPENSES:

- K.1. Lodging and overnight stays are not authorized for travel under 50-miles from the city limits. They may be authorized for travel more than 50 miles from City limits.
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- K.2. Employees should seek the most affordable rates available for safe, convenient, clean accommodations at 3-star quality properties, using government, group, or discounted rates when available at reasonable and convenient times. In addition to the primary travel cost, e.g., room rate, etc., an employee making lodging arrangements should also consider secondary costs, e.g., internet service fees, property use fees, etc.
- (a) Reservations for lodging should be booked as early as possible to take advantage of lower rates.
- K.3. When lodging is in connection with a conference or organized educational activity, lodging expenses shall not exceed the group rate published by the conference sponsor for the conference in question. The employee shall endeavor to stay at the conference sponsored lodging facility.
- K.4. Lodging expenses over \$250 per night shall be approved by the City Manager, or designee. If the [GSA's](#) lodging per diem rate for the destination site is greater than \$250, the corresponding GSA per diem rates shall be submitted with the travel approval form for review by all approving parties.
- (a) However, this requirement does not apply if a conference sponsor has set aside rooms for conference attendees at a lodging facility. Instead, you shall book lodging directly with the lodging facility.
- The group rate shall be clearly defined in the supporting documents provided by the conference coordinators or conference sponsor (all supporting documents shall be accompanied with the travel approval form).
- K.5. Actual and necessary cost of lodging and related expenses, including advance payments to any city employee shall be allowed, except as otherwise provided in this Section K.
- K.6. Lodging in upgraded rooms is allowable if:
- (a) the employee pays the cost difference and provides proof of the price difference for the original and upgraded rooms; or,
- (b) the employee or their department can document that no other option exists, and the selected lodging is the only option available – supporting documentation shall be attached to the travel approval form.
- K.7. Lodging and related expenditures outside the provisions of this policy may be allowed only when pre-approved by the City Manager, in accordance with Section C.6.
- K.8. An employee's reimbursement claims for lodging shall include an explanation of the business purpose of the stay and be supported by receipts, a facility folio, and shall be accompanied by all approved travel forms. When reconciling City Credit
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card travel expenses shall be included as supporting documents for invoice reconciliation.

L. MEAL EXPENSES:

L.1. Meal expenses shall be allowed at the maximum daily meal allowance rate of \$60 (\$15 for breakfast, \$20 for lunch, and \$ 25 for dinner) per employee, inclusive of taxes and reasonable tips. Per diem advances and reimbursements for meals shall be allowed when related to attendance at conventions, scheduled meetings, conferences, seminars, special training, or assignments that require an overnight stay.

(a) An employee's meal reimbursement claim shall be based on meals while enroute to the training site, at training, and enroute home, but does not include breakfast on the departure date and dinner on the return home date.

(b) Meal expenses up to the per diem rate do not require a receipt to be allowable. Meal expenses beyond the per diem reimbursement allowance are the responsibility of the employee. If an employee uses a City credit card for meals, then the employee will reimburse the City if any meal limit amounts identified above are exceeded.

(c) Meals included in a conference or meeting registration are not eligible for reimbursement. Therefore, if a meal is provided by conference or meeting registration, but the traveler chooses to eat elsewhere, the added meal expense is not reimbursable.

L.2. Meal expenses during attendance at any single day event will be allowable only when it is not reasonable for the employee to provide their own meal(s). Requests for a same-day travel meal shall only be allowed when preapproved by the employee's department head, in accordance with this policy. In evaluating any request for same-day meal reimbursements, the employee's department head shall consider special situations on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the distance traveled and the duration of the specific business activity. The maximum reimbursement for any same day event should be \$20 for lunch

M. PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE

M.1. With the exception of employees receiving an automobile stipend, the City's preference is for all employees to use City vehicles rather than personal vehicles.

M.2. The City's private-vehicle mileage reimbursement rate is the same as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) standard mileage rate (www.irs.gov) for private vehicles and will be effective concurrently with IRS periodic establishment of said rate.

M.3. Mileage shall be calculated by deducting the employee's normal commute from the total number of miles to and from the destination.

- M.4. Mileage reimbursements for use of a private vehicle shall be allowed upon authorization of the employee's department head. Reimbursement of private mileage will only be granted when a more economical means of travel is not available. However, travel/map documentation shall be provided with the travel expense form. In any case, mileage will not be reimbursed for portions of the trip made for non-business-related matters.
- M.5. Private vehicle expenses are allowable when in the course and scope of employment, including overnight travel.
 - (a) Private vehicle use shall be approved by the employee's department head.
 - (b) In the event of an incident or accident, the City does not assume responsibility for any physical damage to an employee's personal vehicle or for the payment of any kind of deductible.
 - (c) Employee shall maintain a valid driver's license, which is appropriate for the class of vehicle to be operated. If any restrictions apply, the employee shall notify their supervisor of the restrictions and/or any and all changes in the license (i.e., suspended, etc.).
- M.6. The use of motorcycles, mopeds, and similar types of vehicles for the conduct of City business is expressly prohibited, with the exception of personnel on duty in a specific assignment.
- M.7. When a department head or the City Manager authorizes use of a private vehicle for the convenience of the driver, instead of more economical travel by air, reimbursement shall not exceed the cost of usual airfare, plus ground transportation.
 - (a) The quote shall be accompanied by the Travel Expense Report.
- M.8. Employees are required to notify Risk Management and the employee's department head, as soon as possible, but in no event more than twenty-four (24) hours after any incident or accident, unless physically unable.
- M.9. Neither an employee receiving a monthly auto allowance nor an employee utilizing a city owned vehicle in their regular scope of employment is eligible to receive private-vehicle mileage reimbursement.

N. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION, TOLLS, AND PARKING

- N.1. Public transportation use is described as local transportation and can be claimed with itemized receipts.
 - N.2. Bridge and road tolls may be reimbursable with receipts.
 - N.3. Receipts are required for reimbursement of allowable parking fees.
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O. MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES:

- O.1. Miscellaneous expenses, including charges for fax service, internet, the cost of usual or necessary services and supplies, including emergency repairs, parts or towing for City vehicles, conference registration fees, vehicle parking, bridge tolls, and any other justifiable business expenses shall be allowed if the expense is necessary for the employee to conduct City related business or is otherwise a legitimate business need.
- O.2. A satisfactory explanation and documentation of the circumstances is required for these miscellaneous expenditures. An employee's reimbursement request for actual miscellaneous expenses shall be accompanied by an original receipt or other original voucher.

P. NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES:

- P.1. Expenses that the city will not reimburse include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) Purchases made for goods and/or services of a business owned (whether in whole or in part) by any current member of the City Council, or other authority for which the city is a partner agency.
 - (b) The personal portion of any trip.
 - (c) Political or charitable contributions.
 - (d) Family expenses, including spouse or partner's expenses when accompanying an employee on agency-related business, as well as children- or pet-related expenses.
 - (e) Personal guest expenses
 - (f) Entertainment expenses, including but not limited to theater, movies (either in-room or at the theater), recreational events not related to City business (including gym, massage and/or golf related expenses), and cultural events not related to City business.
 - (g) Personal automobile expenses, including repairs, traffic citations, insurance, or gasoline.
 - (h) Personal alcohol or bar expenses, even when incurred in conjunction with reimbursable meal expenses.
 - (i) Personal losses incurred while on City business.
 - (j) Expenses bearing no relation to City business, even if incurred while traveling for City business.
 - (k) If an expense is not outlined in this policy, it may be subject to dismissal or rejection.
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Q. PENALTIES:

Q.1. Penalties for the misuse of public resources, non-compliance with this policy or falsifying expense reports in violation of expense reporting policies may include, but are not be limited to, employee discipline as well as the penalties specified in state law including:

- (a) The loss of reimbursement privileges.
- (b) Restitution to the local agency.
- (c) Civil penalties for misuse of public resources pursuant to Section 8314 of the Government Code; and,
- (d) Prosecution for misappropriation of public resources, per Section 424 of the Penal Code.

EXEMPTIONS

- A. The City Manager or Designee is authorized to exempt, by ratification after the expense is incurred or prior to the expense being incurred, any City personnel from the official rules, regulations, and procedures set forth herein under extenuating circumstances.
- B. The City Manager or Designee may, at their discretion, approve or disapprove any of the types of travel and/or business expenses outlined above, or any other expense not listed, as they deem appropriate under the specific circumstances.
- C. The City Manager or Designee shall decide all questions of interpretation of the policies, rules, regulations, and procedures set forth herein.

DISPUTES

Disputed expenditures may be brought to the City Manager or Designee for resolution.
