

Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy

I. Purpose

To establish a consistent manner to reimburse employees and city officials for travel and business expenses that is compliant with all city, state, and federal laws and ensures the responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

II. Definitions

- A. **Per-Diem:** a daily allowance provided for meal and incidental expenses while traveling on City business; includes cost of meal (breakfast, lunch or dinner) plus allowable tip for waitstaff.
- B. **Mileage Reimbursement:** reimbursement provided for the use of an employee's personal vehicle during City business.
- C. **Commuting Miles:** those miles traveled from the employee's place of residence to their normal daily work station.
- D. **Advanced Travel Allowance:** funds provided prior to travel to cover reimbursable costs such as lodging, mileage, per-diem, and registration as applicable.

III. Policy

- A. **Policy Scope:** This policy applies to elected officials, management, directors, supervisors and other city employees.
- B. **Prudent Judgment:** Officials and employees are expected to exercise prudent judgment in incurring travel expenses on authorized and budgeted official City business. The failure of employees to follow this policy or to incur excessive expenses may be cause for disciplinary action. Non-business related expenses will not be approved or reimbursed.

Employees are expected to utilize training opportunities where travel expenses are eliminated or reduced as much as possible. The use of local training and other alternatives to travel such as teleconferencing, on-line training, satellite training, and/or "train the trainer" models is encouraged. Officials and/or Department Heads shall determine the number of employees attending a particular meeting.

- C. **Alternative Travel must be approved in advance:** Employees should consider methods of travel and times of travel which minimize costs to the City. Employees who extend travel or travel to alternate destinations which

results in increased expenses shall be required to pay for any such difference in costs. Employees should consider not only costs to the taxpayers but the appearance of misuse of public funds.

- D. **Travel Authorization:** Travel and travel related forms must be approved by the City Manager, the City Manager's designee, Department Heads, or the employee's immediate supervisor. The City Manager or designee is authorized to administer the procedures for reimbursement of travel expenses to allow for full flexibility when necessary, provided that reasons for deviations from the policy shall be fully documented.

IV. Procedures

- A. **Administrative Changes to Procedures:** The City Manager may make administrative adjustments in procedures to best accomplish the intent of the policy.
- B. **Registration:** Registration fees required in connection with attendance at conventions, conferences, and official meetings are reimbursable. Reimbursable registration fees may include meals, special dinners, and banquets but may not include recreational activities or personal items such as golf tournaments, souvenirs, etc. When possible, registration should be done prior to travel through the normal check request procedures or by use of the employees' procurement card.
- C. **Amenities and Meals:**
1. **Rates:** The City will pay per diem rates consistent with the current Federal per Diem Rates listed on www.gsa.gov. The allowed per-diem will be divided at a set rate for breakfast, lunch, dinner and incidentals.
 2. **Conference Amenities:** Meals, lodging, or other expenses provided during a conference or seminar will not be additionally reimbursed through per-diem request. In addition, if the employee chooses to purchase a meal other than the one provided at the conference/seminar, reimbursement will not be allowed.
 3. **Set Meal Costs at Business Functions:** Individual meals may exceed the maximum per diem amount with the prior approval of the

City Manager when an employee is required to attend a business related function where the meal cost is set at a rate higher than the maximum. Reimbursement for such meals shall be by receipt plus allowable tip not to exceed 20% of allowable expenses.

4. **Meals for Travel Outside the City:**

a. **Travel for One (1) Day or Less:** Reimbursement for meals when an employee is traveling more than 30 miles from the City for more than five (5) hours shall be restricted to actual expenses (detailed receipts required) not to exceed the allowed per meal rate.

b. **Travel for More Than One (1) Day:** Reimbursement for meals when an employee is out of town for more than one day shall be paid at a rate consistent with the federal GSA guidelines per full day of travel. **If a meal is provided during the conference/seminar, no per diem will be allowed for that meal.** Partial per-diem will be allowed for the first and last day of travel according to the partial per-diem rates in Section C.4.

5. **Meals within City Limits:** Meals and refreshments for City employees while within the City limits shall be reimbursed for actual costs (receipts required in the following cases only). All other conditions and rates will apply.

a. Required training at a conference or seminar

b. Business related meetings where meals are an integral part of the meeting

c. During emergency situations when employees are working extended hours and stopping for a meal period could worsen the emergency or increase the cost to the City

d. Other circumstances within the scope of this policy as approved by the City Manager.

6. **Non-Reimbursable Items:** Tobacco and alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable. **Any purchase other than a meal for breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner will not be reimbursed. This includes extra snacks, drinks, etc.**

7. **Meals, Refreshments and Incidentals for Non-employees:**

- a. **Meals and Refreshments for Volunteers:** City offices and departments may provide meals and refreshments of nominal value to recognize volunteers.
- b. **Meals and Refreshments for General Public:** City offices and departments may provide meals and refreshments of nominal value for the general public for official City proceedings.
- c. **Meals and Refreshments for Trainers, Consultants, and other persons providing services to the City:** City offices and departments may provide meals and refreshments except when contractual per diem is paid by the City to the person providing the service.

D. **Lodging:** Reimbursement for lodging expenses shall be on the basis of actual expenses incurred and deemed reasonable for the locality in which the lodging facility is located. City representatives must stay at hotel/motel recommended by Conference/Convention sponsor. If representative chooses to stay elsewhere, the City will only pay comparable rates. Receipts are required.

E. **Transportation**

1. **Mileage**

- a. **Mileage Reimbursement:** The mileage reimbursement shall be consistent with the current federal GSA Travel guidelines for employees using their personal vehicles on City business. If multiple City representatives travel together, only one can claim the mileage reimbursement. **Allowable mileage will be the lesser of the actual miles driven or the mileage from the employees usual work station and the destination.** For those employees receiving a Car Allowance, mileage will only be reimbursed for those miles in excess of a 50 mile radius from the City.
- b. **Driving versus Airfare:** Reimbursement for mileage and per diem for travel shall not exceed the sum of the round trip coach airfare of a common carrier, local mileage/ground transportation,

parking, other related costs for the destination, and per diem had airfare been chosen.

- c. **Commuting Miles:** Employees traveling subject to this policy will be reimbursed for only those miles additional to their normal commuting mileage. **The City will not reimburse mileage that is or, under usual circumstances, would be incurred during the employee's normal workday.**

2. **City Vehicle:** Employees should use a City owned vehicle when one is assigned and available instead of their personal vehicle to travel. City vehicles shall be used in accordance with City Policy.
3. **Airfare, Trains, etc:** Air or other transportation shall be at the most economical class.
4. **Car Rental:** Car rental is reimbursable. Officials and employees should consider alternative transportation, its availability, and cost prior to vehicle rental. The purchase of supplemental insurance for a rental vehicle is not necessary.
5. **Other Travel Expenses:** Taxicab fares, parking fees and tolls are reimbursable. Traffic citations, parking tickets, or other fines are not reimbursable.

F. **Tips:** The City allows reimbursement for the tipping of certain service providers under the following conditions:

- a. **Waitstaff:** The maximum reimbursable tip amount is 20% of the allowable meal expenses. This tip amount is included in the per-diem rate.
- b. **Bellhop/Hotel Staff/Valet:** A maximum of \$10 per day is allowed for the tipping of a hotel staff. This amount is only allowed for the day of arrival and the day of departure. This tip is in addition to the per-diem rate.
- c. **Taxi/Shuttle:** A tip amount not to exceed 20% of the travel cost is reimbursable for taxi or shuttle service.

G. **Spouse/Guest:** The City will not pay any expenses relative to the spouse/guest accompanying the City representative. All expenses incurred

on behalf of the spouse/guest will be the responsibility of the City representative.

H. **Miscellaneous/Incidentals**

1. Other miscellaneous expenses will be reimbursed only by approval of the applicable Department Head or the City Manager.

V. **Documentation of Expenses**

A. **Receipts**: Detailed receipts are required to be submitted when requesting Travel Reimbursement, for P-card purchases, and when a Travel Expense Report is not submitted.

1. **Credit Card Receipts**: When paying by credit card, merchants generally provide a detailed receipt in addition to the credit card slip. Detailed receipts are required to be submitted in all cases where they are provided by the vendor.
2. **Missing Receipts**: Officials and employees who misplace or cannot obtain receipts shall be required to submit an affidavit on a form prescribed by the Finance Director. Such affidavit shall provide a detailed explanation of the expenditure, the amount, and the signature of the employee certifying that the expenditure was for City business purposes. Chronic failure to provide receipts will be considered failure to follow the intent of this policy and can be grounds for denial of future travel privileges.

B. **Claims for Reimbursement**: A *Travel Reimbursement Request Form* must be submitted no later than 30 days of incurring the expense. Detailed expense receipts must be attached along with proof of travel (i.e. lodging receipt).

1. **Meals**: All claims for reimbursement for meals must include the following information:
 - Name and location of restaurant
 - Date and time of expense

- Names of people served
- Itemized to show food and drinks purchased
- Tip, if applicable
- Business purpose of meeting

2. **Lodging:** Lodging receipts must clearly identify the following:

- Name and location of the hotel
- Date(s) the employee stayed
- Number of occupants
- Separate amounts for charges such as room rate, meals, entertainment and parking.

C. **Specific Requirements when Combining Expenses**

1. **Travel with Another Employee:** Employees traveling together and who may share lodging or eat together may combine expenses of a meal or lodging on a single receipt, however, the receipt of claim must clearly indicate who incurred the expenses. Each employee must claim per diem individually. One employee cannot claim per diem for other employees.

2. **Expenses Incurred on Behalf of Another:** When an employee claims reimbursement for travel or other expenses incurred on behalf of another, in addition to other requirements, a detailed accounting must be attached to the reimbursement claim, which includes at least the following:

- Name of the person on whose behalf the expenses were incurred.
- Whether the person is a City employee and, if not, the nature of his or her connection with City business.
- A breakdown of each type of expense for each person, including the employee, for whom reimbursement is claimed.

D. **Cash Advance for Travel Expenses: A *Per Diem Allowance***

Form must be submitted no later than 14 days prior to expected travel.

1. **Before Travel:** The advance shall be issued not more than 14 days prior to commencement of the authorized travel period and must include the following:

- Date(s) of travel including estimated date/time of departure, number of days spent on business, and estimated date/time of return
- Destination
- Purpose: Business purpose for the expense or the business benefit gained or expected to be gained. Conference/seminar agenda must be attached.
- Signature of employee and supervisor

2. **After Travel:** Within 10 days following the completion of travel, employee must submit proof of travel (for overnight travel only) by providing a lodging receipt and any excess travel advance funds must be returned to the Finance Department. Failure to return excess funds may result in loss of travel privileges and/or disciplinary action. Examples of excess funds include change in travel days (depart later or return early), meals provided at conference/training, etc.

3. **Restricted Use of Funds:** Under no circumstances shall any travel advance be considered as a personal loan to any individual. Any unauthorized use of any advance shall be deemed a misappropriation of public funds.

E. **Use of Purchasing Card:** For those employees who have been issued a Purchasing Card, this is the preferred method of payment for travel related expenses. Most associated costs such as registrations, lodging, transportation and meals can be purchased using the P-card. All per diem limits and restrictions apply to p-card purchases.

1. A Per Diem Allowance Form with proof of travel must be submitted to Finance to later than 10 days from return. Any expense above the allowable per diem rate must be reimbursed to the City by the employee within 10 days of return.
2. **Credit Card Receipts:** Detailed receipts are required to be uploaded to each transaction in all cases where they are provided by the vendor.

City of Seguin
Per-Diem Allowance



It's real.

Employee: _____ Dept. _____
 Address: _____

Business Purpose of Travel:		FINANCE DEPT USE ONLY				
		Partial M&IE	Full M&IE	M&IE Rate	Less Provided Meals	Total
Destination	Departure	Return		M&IE	Less Provided Meals	Total
	Date	Time	Date			
Totals						

Please attach documentation to support the travel. This must include the dates & times of the seminar/conference/training, the location, and if any meals are included in the registration fees (if applicable).

Within 10 business days of return, please provide proof of travel for the dates in which an allowance was provided. This can be in the form of a lodging receipt showing the check-in and check-out dates, or other travel related receipts from the destination. If departure was later than expected or return was sooner than expected, you must return any excess allowance provided for those days.

Employee _____ Supervisor _____ Date _____

FINANCE DEPT USE ONLY			
Yes	No	N/A	Amt.
Comments:			
Finance Approval _____			Date _____

