

## **TRAVEL POLICY**

### **AUTHORITY**

This policy is in keeping with City Charter, Section 3.01(12) and provisions of Florida Statutes Section 112.061, as modified by City ordinance.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Travel must be for a public purpose and authorized in advance.

### **PURPOSE**

This policy provides a method for authorizing travel and sets forth criteria and guidelines for travel and related expense reimbursement.

### **SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all travelers including elected officials, employees, or others approved by the Mayor. Where provisions of this policy conflict with a collective bargaining agreement, the collective bargaining agreement will prevail.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Common Carrier** - Train, bus, commercial airline operating scheduled flights, or rental vehicles.

**Official Headquarters** - City Hall or another City location where the employee reports to work on a normal workday.

**Travel** - Authorized official business away from the employee's official headquarters.

**Travel Expense** - Lodging, meals, transportation, gas purchased when using City vehicle, mileage when using a personal vehicle, tolls, parking fees and other incidental expenses incurred when traveling.

### **STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

#### **A. AUTHORITY TO INCUR TRAVEL EXPENSES**

All travel, except travel by the Mayor, City Commissioners, or the City Administrator must be authorized in advance by the appropriate supervisor.

Travelers shall timely register for conferences and lodging to avoid late, undiscounted travel and/or registration fees. Travel that is booked when discounted conference registration and lodging fees are unavailable, making higher conference and lodging fees applicable, may result in the travel not being approved.

## MEAL ALLOWANCE

1. Allowances for meals will be based on the following schedule:

**Breakfast-** When travel begins before 6 a.m. and extends beyond 8 a.m.

**Lunch** -When travel begins before 12 noon and extends beyond 2 p.m.

**Dinner-** When travel begins before 6 p.m. and extends beyond 8 p.m. or when travel occurs during nighttime hours due to special assignments.

2. No allowance will be made for meals when travel is confined within 40 miles of the employee's official headquarters. No one will be reimbursed for any meals or lodging if the reimbursable registration fee for the event includes meals and lodging. Continental breakfasts, receptions, and airline food are not considered meals for reimbursement purposes.

## B. TRANSPORTATION

- a. Transportation must be the most direct and economical route. If a person travels by an indirect route or more expensive class for their own comfort or convenience, the traveler will pay the extra costs. This includes purchasing travel insurance, refundable tickets, seat selection fees and extra baggage fees.

2. Considerations for approved travel:

- a. The nature of the business;
- b. The time of travel, impact on the productivity of the traveler, cost of transportation, and other allowable expenses; and
- c. The number of persons making the trip and the amount of equipment or materials to be transported.

3. Mode of Transportation:

Mode of Transportation must be justified on the "Travel Authorization" form.

- a. **City Vehicles** - will be used by a traveler on official business when one is available and using the City vehicle is feasible.
- b. **Planes, Trains, Buses, etc.** - will be used by a traveler when most economical and feasible. Only "coach class" fare will be paid by the City. Add on fees such as fees noted in this section above the base fare for seats with extra space or close to the exits will not be paid by the City.
- c. **Rental Vehicles** - may be used by a traveler only when most economical and absolutely necessary. Justification must be pre- approved on the "Travel Authorization" form.

- d. **Privately Owned Vehicles** - may be used by a traveler on official business, in lieu of City owned vehicles or common carrier. When authorized, the driver will be compensated for mileage at a fixed rate per mile as set by the Internal Revenue Service, not to exceed the cost of travel by common carrier.
- 4. If a traveler uses a common carrier and personally pays for the transportation, proof of payment must be provided for reimbursement.
- 5. Individuals receiving a monthly car allowance will not be compensated for mileage within 100 miles of their official headquarters. Reimbursement for miles in excess of 100 will be provided, presuming the excess miles are business related.

For Example: An individual who travels to a location that is 125 miles from their official headquarters will be eligible for reimbursement of 25 miles - the amount of miles over the 100 range. In case of a round trip then 50 miles will be reimbursable (125 miles traveling to the location and 125 returning from the location, minus the 100 miles each way that excluded from reimbursement).

## C. LODGING

- 1. Overnight accommodations may be allowed when a traveler attends an event, such as a conference or training beyond 40 miles from their point of origin and the traveler is expected to return home after 10:00 p.m. Accommodations may be approved for the night before an event if the traveler needs to begin travel before 6:00 a.m. in order to reach the destination at the required time.
- 2. The point of origin is as follows:
  - a. On a workday, reimbursable travel begins at the traveler's official headquarters, unless the destination is closer to the traveler's residence.
  - b. On a non-workday, reimbursable travel begins at the traveler's residence.
- 3. The maximum rate allowable for a traveler is single occupancy unless additional people who stay in the room are also authorized City travelers.

## D. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS AND REGULATIONS

The City allows reimbursement for some miscellaneous expenses. Reimbursable expenses must be authorized, have been actually paid for by the traveler, and must be supported by receipts.

### **1. Reimbursable Expenses**

- a. Taxi or shuttle fare (including rideshares such as, Uber and Lyft).
- b. Ferry fares; and bridge, road, and tunnel tolls.
- c. Parking fees or emergency vehicle storage. City will not reimburse valet or premium parking fees when lower cost or self-parking options are available.
- d. Communication expenses.
- e. Gasoline and oil while driving City owned vehicles or rental vehicles.
- f. Convention, conference or training course registration fees.
- g. Room taxes when documented on a hotel bill. All travelers should use the Tax-Exempt Certificate for hotel accommodations when payment is in the form of a City check or procurement card.

### **2. Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

In addition to the items listed in this policy as non-reimbursable, the following items are non-reimbursable:

- Tips and gratuities.
- Laundry and dry cleaning.
- Personal and local telephone calls.
- Limousine or chauffeur services (approval from City Administration is needed for group transportation options).

### **3. Incidental Expenses**

For overnight travel, an allowance of \$5.00 per day may be claimed without, actual receipts, for incidental expenses that are not otherwise reimbursable.

## **E. TRAVEL FORMS**

### **1. Travel Authorization**

- a. The Travel Authorization form must be used for all travel and must be authorized in advance by a Department Director or designee. Any special circumstances must be justified on the Travel Authorization form.

Documentation supporting the need for the travel authorization must be attached to the Travel Authorization form. This includes agendas, conference information, and/or registration and projected hotel rates. If the traveler will be seeking meal reimbursements, the traveler must submit information detailing which meals will be covered by the conference/organizer and which will require reimbursement.

- b. The originally approved travel authorization must be submitted with the Travel Expense Report (Form 118) after the travel has been completed.

- c. A copy of the Travel Authorization form and appropriate supporting documentation must be attached with every Direct Payment Request (Form 121) that is submitted to the Finance Department.

## **2. Form 118 - Travel Expense Report**

Travel Expense Report (Form 118) must be used to provide a mandatory detailed record of all expenses for travel that is paid by City funds. All travelers must submit a Form 118 to the Finance department within **fifteen business days** after the date of return travel. No reimbursements shall be paid until Form 118 is submitted with proper approvals, supporting documentation and receipts to the Finance Department.

- a. If required and a traveler does not submit a Form 118 or if the Finance Department does not approve it, the entire amount paid by the City will be reported to the IRS as personal and taxable income. Employees who have not submitted their Travel Expense Report will be notified via email, with a copy to their respective Department Director that the amount on their travel authorization form will be submitted to the IRS and reported as personal and taxable income.
- b. All information about the travel and all allowable expenses must be provided in the appropriate sections of the form.
- c. If reimbursement is requested for personally paid expenses; either a receipt, bank statement or card statement must accompany the expense report, Traveler is required to remove any personal information other than the name, date, and purchases for which they are seeking reimbursement from the submitted receipt.

## **3. Form 121 - Direct Payment Request**

- a. Form 121 is used to request advance payment of registration fees, hotel room, and plane fare. An invoice or written cost estimate must be included and presented to accounts payable.
- b. Form 121 may also be used for pre-travel reimbursement of personally paid expenses; written proof of payment must be included.

## **4. Local Mileage Reimbursement Report**

- a. The "Local Mileage Reimbursement Report" is used to request payment when the only travel expense is mileage.
- b. The driver must use a personal vehicle.
- c. The distance in miles must be in excess of the normal commute between the employee's home and their official headquarters.

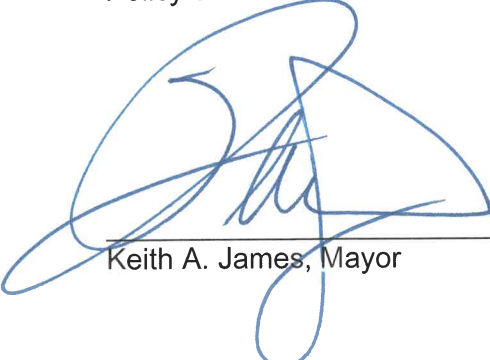
- d. MapQuest, Google Maps (or other map/navigation system) report and travel justification must be provided.
- e. As noted under Section C. above, individuals who receive a car allowance shall not be entitled to receive mileage reimbursements for any travel conducted within 100 miles of their official headquarters except as provided under Section C.

**F. DEPARTMENT AND EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. Responsibility for oversight, administration and periodic review of this policy for any needed revisions shall be the responsibility of the Finance Department.
- b. The Finance Department shall be responsible for reviewing the travel reimbursement information submitted in support of any travel reimbursement to ensure all necessary supporting documentation justifying the reimbursement has been submitted.
- c. The Finance Department shall be responsible for ensuring only items allowed to be reimbursed under this policy are reimbursed.
- d. Department Directors or their designee are responsible for supervising their respective employees to ensure compliance with this policy.
- e. All employees and elected officials shall read and familiarize themselves with this policy and their attendant responsibilities via the City's learning management system ("CityEDGE"), and electronically acknowledge their receipt and review of this policy in CityEDGE.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Policy 5-1 is effective December 30, 2022



Keith A. James, Mayor

**APPENDIX 1**  
**RATES FOR MEALS AND MILEAGE**

The Travel Policy of the City of West Palm Beach, Florida is set forth by City Ordinance.

1.) The current reimbursement amounts for meals are:

Breakfast	\$16.00
Lunch	\$17.00
Dinner	\$31.00
Incidental Expenses	\$5.00

2.) The mileage reimbursement rate is based on the mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service on a calendar year basis. As mileage reimbursement rates are revised by the Internal Revenue Service, employees will be reimbursed at the most recent mileage reimbursement rate set by the Internal Revenue Service.