

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Policy Title:	Travel Policy	Effective Date: 01/23/17
Policy No.:	17-02 CM-16	Revision Date: 8/16/11 No. 92-03
Sections:	1 - 5	Revision Date: n/a
Reviewed by:	TST	Revision Date: n/a

1. PURPOSE.

From time to time, city employees are required to attend conferences, meetings, training seminars, certification institutes, etc., which apply directly to the management and operation of Tulare city government. The city recognizes the value and importance of such meetings that relate either to representing city interests before other agencies or the business sector, and provide the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and training as it relates to the performance of city duties. This policy sets forth guidelines and establishes uniform practices and policies regarding expenditures associated with these cities business activities.

2. AUTHORITY.

The City Manager may exempt any city employee from the provisions of this policy should it be determined that an exemption is warranted by extraordinary circumstances or operating requirements.

3. APPLICATION.

This policy is applicable to all city employees and legislative members. The expenses incurred by spouses or guests who choose to attend a conference shall be paid by the employee. There are, from time to time, meetings or social events where an employee's spouse/guest is invited and expected to attend and participate. In those cases, costs associated with the spouse/guest attendance shall be paid for by the City of Tulare. Written authorization from the Department Head shall be secured in advance when spouse/guest expenses will be incurred.

4. TRAVEL TYPES.

Examples of types of travel that are covered by this policy are as follows:

- Attendance at Department approved events, conferences, conventions, hearings, trainings, educational or work related seminars, or other meeting.
- Participation in regional, state or national organizations whose activities affect the City's interests.
- Other such Department approved activities requiring travel, which is clearly necessary, and in the best interest of the City.

5. POLICY.

Budget appropriations constitute approval of travel where travel advance or reimbursement will be required. Unanticipated, but necessary, travel and related expenditures shall be approved by the City Manager in advance. Out of state travel by city employees may be permitted; however, authorization will be granted on a “case-by-case” basis by the City Manager. Requests for attendance at out of state conferences, which are not approved in the annual budget, must be submitted to the City Manager, in writing, through the department head, with appropriate information regarding why attendance is required, mode of transportation, and anticipated total cost.

Overnight travel requiring city paid expenditures *under option 1, 2 or 3* is to be approved in advance by the Department Head or their designee and routed to the City Manager’s Office via email for final approval and processing to Finance.

The submitting Department is responsible for making all related travel arrangements once approval has been given.

Transportation: Employees attending city business related meetings by automobile are encouraged to use a city vehicle, if available.

Employees wishing to use their personal vehicle must comply with City Administrative Policy 87-01 in regard to proof of insurance.

Employees using personal vehicles to attend city related conferences and meetings shall receive mileage reimbursement at the prevailing Internal Revenue Service approved rate in effect at the time.

Department Head Car Allowance/Mileage: Department Heads or any other employee who receive a monthly vehicle allowance in lieu of a staff vehicle shall use their personal vehicle for all travel, which is 25 miles one way from City Hall. When traveling one way further than 25 miles, the Department Head may use a City vehicle or request mileage reimbursement at the prevailing Internal Revenue Service approved rate in effect at the time, with no adjustment made to the actual business miles traveled. Claims for eligible mileage shall be submitted to the City Manager for Approval, and then forwarded to the Finance Department for processing.

Requests for Cash Advance: Requests for cash advance for conference related expenses are to be submitted to the Finance Department in accordance with the regular accounts payable schedule (i.e. no later than 5 p.m., Friday, for checks to be distributed every other Friday).

Options for Paying for Conference Expenses

Option 1: All allowed expenses incurred will be paid using a city-issued credit card. Expenses shall include: registration and materials for the classes or conference attended, lodging, meals, incidentals including parking, baggage handling, taxi, etc. Using this option requires itemized receipts for all expenses incurred to be submitted upon return from the trip. If a receipt is lost or unavailable, a signed affidavit will be required for missing documentation. Petty cash reimbursement may be made in circumstances where a credit card may not be accepted (i.e. parking meters, etc.).

Option 2: Registration, class materials, and lodging can be placed on a city credit card. A Per Diem cash advance may be obtained for meals for travel beginning/ending as shown on the below schedule. Conference registration must be submitted to determine which meals are included in the conference. Per Diem shall be determined by the allowed Federal Government (IRS) rate with 20% allowed for breakfast, 30% allowed for lunch and 50% allowed for dinner when calculating meals that are not included in registration. In this option, receipts will be required for the items charged on the city credit card. Receipts are not required for meals included in the Per Diem. Any meal or incidental expense in excess of the Per Diem allowance will not be reimbursed.

Meals	Departure on Initial Day of Travel	Return on Final Day of Travel
Breakfast	Before 7:00 a.m.	After 10:00 a.m.
Lunch	Before 11:00 a.m.	After 2:00 p.m.
Dinner	Before 4:00 p.m.	After 7:00 p.m.

Meals included in registration fees or hotel rates are not eligible for per diem (a continental breakfast does not constitute a meal).

Gratuities for meals are included in the per diem rates and are not reimbursed separately.

Option 3: Using this option, the employee may elect a Per Diem cash allowance to cover the cost of lodging, meals, and all incidentals. Meal Per Diem shall be handled the same as in option 2. No receipts are required under this option. Class or conference registration and materials will be paid using a city credit card. Lodging, meals, and incidental expenses in excess of the Per Diem amount will not be reimbursed.

Qualified Expenditures: It shall be the duty of each staff member who travels at city expense to do so in a practical and economical manner. NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE TO BE CLAIMED OR WILL BE REIMBURSED BY THE CITY.

Qualified Expenditures shall be considered for the following:

Registration	Parking Fees
Lodging*	Toll Bridges
Meals	Mileage where appropriate
Tips (not to exceed 20%)	Business related hotel phone calls
Bus/Taxi/Rapid Transit & other fares related to conference/meeting activity	Baggage handling

**Lodging arrangements should be practical and economical. As a guide, lodging, as much as possible, should be similar to the current Federal Government (IRS) guidelines: Employees staying at “Conference” hotel and receiving the discounted conference rate shall be allowed to exceed these guidelines, but are not exempt from any other items in the travel policy.*

A Transient Occupancy Tax waiver (California travel only) should always be requested at the hotel. If it is denied, a notation should be made on the waiver form, which then should be attached to the expense form.

Meals: Reimbursement for meals shall be made only when travel extends for a minimum of six (6) hours except when specifically approved otherwise by the Department Director. Reimbursement shall be at the current per diem rate established by the U.S. Government General Services Administration (GSA).

Meals provided by common carriers (e.g. airline, train, bus) or included in registration fees or hotel rates (i.e., if a Traveler attends a conference where lunch is provided, no reimbursement will be provided for the lunch meal) are not eligible for per diem reimbursements. A continental breakfast does not constitute a meal. Gratuities for meals are included in the per diem rates and are not reimbursed separately.

Lodging: Reimbursement of lodging is limited to the actual cost of a single room. When making arrangements for lodging, the government, group, conference or promotional rates shall be requested. The City will not reimburse the traveler for luxury upgrades (e.g. ocean views, suites, etc.) When lodging at a conference facility is full, lodging at a comparable hotel shall be acceptable.

Expense Form: After returning from an authorized conference, meeting, or seminar, the attending employee(s) *utilizing option 1 or 2* above shall complete, with twenty (20) working days a “travel expense form” provided by the City of Tulare. The completed form is to be submitted to the department head, then to the *Finance Director* for processing.

Both the itemized and total paid receipts must be submitted for all meals.

Extended Personal Travel: Travelers who combine personal travel with business travel must identify and pay for the personal segment of the trip. Reimbursement for car rental and airport parking must be prorated to allow reimbursement for only those costs associated with City business.

Public Records Requirement: All documents related to reimbursable City travel expenditures are public records and may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act (Government Code §6250-6270).

The City's Records Retention Schedule requires that travel reports and supporting documents be retained for two (2) years.

Paul Melikian, Interim City Manager

Date