

**CITY OF VACAVILLE**  
**TRAVEL EXPENSE POLICY**



CITY OF VACAVILLE  
CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT  
650 MERCHANT STREET  
VACAVILLE, CA 95688

*Adopted: October 2001*  
*Amendment: June 25, 2019*

## **Travel Expense Policy**

### **Adopted:**

October 23, 2001

Approved by Minute Action; Travel Expense Policy

### **Amendments:**

June 25, 2019

Resolution No. 2019-056; Resolution of the City Council of the City of Vacaville Updating the Travel Expense Policy

**RESOLUTION NO. 2019-056**

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VACAVILLE UPDATING THE TRAVEL EXPENSE POLICY**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Vacaville takes seriously its stewardship over the use of its limited public resources by its officials and employees; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council acknowledges that City officials and employees are required to travel for City-related purposes, that the City benefits from such travel, and that public resources should be used for such travel when there is a benefit to the City; and

**WHEREAS**, in December 2005 the City adopted a Travel Expense Policy to establish appropriate policies and procedures for using public resources for City-related travel; and

**WHEREAS**, the existing Travel Expense Policy is out of date; and

**WHEREAS**, the updated Travel Expense Policy is designed to set forth current guidelines and establish uniform practices and policies regarding expenditures associated with City business-related travel; and

**WHEREAS**, this policy intends to assure the City Council that any City funds for conferences, training sessions, and other City related travel, is appropriately used by City officials and employees for the benefit of the City and are properly accounted for by the City; and

**WHEREAS**, a draft Travel Expense Policy was presented to the City Council on June 25, 2019; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Vacaville hereby adopts the Travel Expense Policy (included herein as Attachment A), which supersedes the Travel Expense Policy adopted on December 13, 2005.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the following types of occurrences qualify a City official to receive reimbursement under the Travel Expense Policy:

1. Communicating with representatives of regional, state and national government on City-adopted policy positions and/or other matters of community concern;
2. Attending educational seminars designed to improve officials' skill and information levels;
3. Participating in regional, state and national organizations whose activities affect the City's interests;
4. Promoting public service and morale by recognizing and honoring such service on the part of City employees, members of the community, and/or other individuals;
5. Attending events and meetings that affect the City's interests;
6. Promoting or implementing a strategy for attracting or retaining businesses and other development to the City; and
7. The performance of such other official duties that affect the City's interests.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that nothing in this resolution or the Travel Expense Policy affects or supersedes any previously authorized vehicle allowances for the Mayor or City Councilmembers.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that the foregoing resolution was introduced and passed at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Vacaville, held on the 25th day of June, 2019, by the following vote:

AYES: Council members Beaty, Mashburn, Sullivan, Vice Mayor Harris and Mayor Rowlett

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ATTEST:

  
Michelle A. Thornbrugh, City Clerk

## **TRAVEL EXPENSE POLICY**

### **PURPOSE:**

The City Council recognizes the benefit of training sessions, conferences, seminars, and meetings to gain knowledge and techniques beneficial to the efficient management and operation of the City. This policy sets forth guidelines and establishes uniform practices and policies regarding expenditures associated with City business-related travel. This policy intends to assure the City Council that any and all City funds for conferences, training sessions, and other City related travel is properly used by the employee for the benefit of the City and are properly accounted for by the City.

### **APPLICATION:**

This policy applies to all City employees, including part-time, temporary (seasonal) employees, City Council Members, and City Commissioners.

### **AUTHORITY AND LIMITATIONS:**

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.

Travel and meeting expenditures shall not exceed approved budget appropriations and associated fiscal policies.

The City shall not be responsible for any travel associated with personal business. If an employee attends a conference/meeting for which reimbursement is claimed that also includes personal business, the employee shall only seek reimbursement for expenses associated with the conduct of the City's business.

Regardless of employee's attendance at a conference or meeting, expenses for family or personal guests shall not be reimbursed by the City.

### **POLICY AND PROCEDURE:**

Department Heads or their designee may authorize attendance, travel, and reimbursement of all normal and necessary expenses incurred by employees representing the City on official business or at an approved function. The City Manager authorizes the travel of City Council, Commissioners, and Department Heads. The City Attorney shall authorize the travel of the City Manager.

A Travel Authorization Form must be completed and approved prior to travel and spending of City funds. The following guidelines shall govern the approval of such travel and in those

areas not specifically covered, the City Manager's decision shall govern.

Options For Paying For Travel Related Expenses:

Option 1: Allowed expenses incurred will be paid using a City-issued purchasing card. Expenses shall include registration and materials for the classes or conference, transportation, lodging, meals, parking, taxi, etc. The conference itinerary must be submitted with the Travel Authorization Form to determine which meals are included in the conference fees. *Using this option requires itemized receipts for all expenses* incurred to be submitted with the Travel Expense Statement for reconciliation. Receipts should detail expenses being reconciled and, where applicable, those in attendance. If a receipt is lost or unavailable, a signed affidavit will be required for missing documentation.

Option 2: Registration, class materials, transportation, and lodging may be paid with either a City purchasing card or may be paid directly by the employee, Mayor, City Council Member or City Commissioner with their own funds (“out of pocket expenses”). For employees only, a Per Diem reimbursement or cash advance may be obtained for meals and incidentals. The conference itinerary must be submitted with the Travel Authorization Form to determine which meals are included in the conference fees. Per Diem shall be determined by the U.S. Government General Services Administration (GSA) and be equal to the standard Continental United States (CONUS) per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses with 20% allowed for breakfast, 30% allowed for lunch and 50% allowed for dinner when calculating meals that are not included in registration. Per Diem rates can be found on GSA’s website: <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>.

Under this option, except as otherwise set forth herein, receipts will be required for the items charged on the City purchasing card or paid for directly by the employee, Mayor, City Council Member or City Commissioner, and for which reimbursement is requested. *Receipts are not required for Per Diem* reimbursed or advanced meals. Any meal or incidental expense over the Per Diem allowance *will not* be reimbursed. The Mayor, City Council and City Commissioners are required to submit itemized receipts for meals. Out of pocket expenses shall be reimbursed following submittal of the required Travel Expense Statement and associated documentation and receipts.

Travel Advance Procedure: Per Diem advances may be requested for conferences and meetings over one day on the Travel Authorization Form. Authorized requests must be submitted to Accounts Payable by the regular check run schedule (generally ten business days before needed) to avoid the expense of processing a special check and must be supported by necessary conference registration materials or other travel justification.

Travel Authorization Forms shall be submitted no more than six weeks before travel.

Advanced Per Diem for travel that is canceled or not completed must be returned with the Travel Expense Statement during the reconciliation process.

Special training where the City is reimbursed, such as P.O.S.T. may be advanced at a higher rate, but not to exceed the amount the City can recover.

Expenditures Qualifying for Reimbursement: It shall be the duty of each employee who travels at City expense to do so in a practical and economical manner.

The following shall be considered qualified expenditures:

Registration	Parking Fees
Lodging	Toll Bridges
Meals	Transportation or mileage where appropriate
Tips (not to exceed 15%)	Business related phone calls
Bus/Taxi/Rapid Transit & other fares	

Transportation: Travel shall be by the means most economical to the City. If air travel is indicated, coach or economy fare will be used. The City will pay for one piece of checked luggage. Travel by automobile will be authorized when it does not necessitate more time away from the job than air travel. The total travel cost for automobile usage shall not exceed the round trip cost of air travel, travel to and from the airport, and parking.

Employees are encouraged to use City vehicles whenever available and suitable for use. The use of City vehicles shall be limited to official business and travel reasonably related thereto. Transportation of persons other than employees, Commissioners, or personnel designated by the City Council shall be authorized only in situations where it relates to City business.

When vehicles, either private or City-owned, are provided, employees shall pool rides whenever possible. Employees using personal vehicles to attend City related conferences or meetings shall receive mileage reimbursement at the prevailing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) approved rate in effect at the time of travel. The distance shall be calculated based on the shortest distance from the employee's workplace, or employee's primary residence, to the point of destination, whichever is less. Employees who receive an automobile allowance are not eligible for mileage reimbursement.

Should a rental car be needed, every effort should be made to rent the most economical car available and to pool rides if more than one City representative is attending the same function. Employees shall not purchase additional liability insurance through the rental agency as they are covered under the City's self-insurance program. Employees should use a City Purchasing Card for rental vehicles whenever possible as this can provide coverage related to vehicle damage. While operating a rental vehicle, employees shall follow the guidelines outlined in the Driving Policy.

Out-of-State Travel: All out-of-state travel must be preapproved by the City Manager or their designee.

Airport Parking: Long-term parking must be used for travel exceeding 24 hours.

Lodging: Lodging refers to commercial hotel/motel rooms and will be allowed for travel beyond a 75-mile radius of employee's workplace or the employee's primary residence (whichever is less), or if authorized in advance by the Department Head or their designee for

functions that span multiple days. Lodging arrangements should be practical, economical, and within a reasonable radius of the conference or meeting. Employees staying at “Conference” hotels 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. Whenever possible, lodging will be paid directly to the hotel by the City, either by City purchasing card or by City check.

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.

The City does not reimburse for lodging if the employee wishes to extend their stay after the conference has been completed.

Meals: Reimbursement for meals shall be made only when training is for a minimum of six (6) hours, except when specifically approved otherwise by the Department Head. The City’s maximum full day meal and incidental expenses rate shall be equal to the standard CONUS per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses as established by the GSA and can be found at GSA’s website: <http://www.gsa.gov/perDiem>.

Alcoholic beverages are NOT to be claimed, nor will they be reimbursed by the City.

Meals provided by common carriers (e.g., airline or train) or included in registration fees or hotel rates are not eligible for Per Diem reimbursement.

Travel meals are reimbursable/paid by the City for travel, as shown below:

Departure Time on First Day of Travel	Meals Allowed
Before 7 am	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Before 11 am	Lunch, Dinner
Before 6 pm	Dinner
After 6 pm	No Meals for First Day

Departure Time on Last Day of Travel	Meals Allowed
After 10 am	Breakfast
After 1 pm	Breakfast, Lunch
After 7 pm	Breakfast, Lunch Dinner

A continental breakfast does not constitute a meal.

Gratuities for meals are included in the Per Diem rates and are not reimbursed separately.

Travel Expense Reconciliation: After returning from an authorized conference, meeting, or seminar, the attending employee shall complete a Travel Expense Statement. The completed



form is to be submitted to the Department Head or their designee for approval (or to the City Manager in the event of Department Head travel), then to Accounts Payable for processing within ten business days of completion of travel. Itemized receipts must be submitted with the Travel Expense Statement for all non-Per Diem expenses. This form is mandatory for all overnight stay costs, even if the balance due is zero.

Public Reporting: The Mayor, City Council Members and City Commissioners shall provide a brief written or oral report on the conference, meeting, or seminar attended and paid for in whole or in part by the City, at the next regular meeting of the City Council or Commission (as applicable) following return from the conference, meeting or seminar. If multiple officials attended, a single or joint report may be made.

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

Non-Allowable Costs: The following items do not qualify for advance or reimbursement payment under this policy:

- Unjustified car rental and upgrade from the standard compact size vehicle
- Flight/travel insurance
- Air travel ticket higher than coach/economy class
- Parking/moving violations, tickets, or other penalties for infractions of any law
- Unjustified canceled travel tickets and change/cancellation costs
- Lodging other than “standard” room rate. Upgrades are not reimbursable.
- Payment for accommodation with friends/relatives
- Hotel entertainment (movies, unjustified internet access, etc.)
- Meal expenses in lieu of the conference provided meals
- Alcoholic beverages
- Costs for child care or pet boarding during business travel
- Personal laundry/dry cleaning expenses
- Baggage handling fees and gratuities exceeding 15% of the total bill
- Loss/damage/theft of personal property