

**CITY OF SAN PABLO
TRAVEL AND TRAINING EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

PURPOSE

To establish a policy for travel expense reimbursement for department-approved attendance at conferences, conventions, hearings, seminars, or other meetings, and procedures for the reimbursement of training and travel expenses in accordance with state and federal law.

DEFINITIONS

- Council: Members of the City of San Pablo City Council.
- Elected Officials: Members of the City of San Pablo City Council, and the City Clerk and City Treasurer.
- Officials: Any individual formally appointed to conduct official City business or represent the City in an official capacity at a particular event or function, including Members of Boards and Commissions but not Staff.
- Staff: Full- or part-time appointed employees of the City of San Pablo.
- Travelers: Any Elected Official, Official, Staff or volunteer officially traveling on City business.

POLICY

The City of San Pablo recognizes the constructive value of professional conferences, seminars, meetings and training, and provides or reimburses funds for City elected and appointed officials who attend such official events or incur such official expenses on the City's behalf.

All Elected Officials, Officials, Staff and volunteers ("Travelers") shall be entitled to reimbursement for their reasonable expenses associated with travel, meals, lodging and other actual and necessary expenses associated with attending such events while on authorized travel within the forty-eight (48) contiguous States and in a manner and in the amounts as set forth in this policy. Such Elected Officials, Officials and Staff designated in the City's Conflict of Interest Code; however, are required to receive ethics training as required under Government Code § 53235 (AB 1234). This policy shall also apply where City officials act as members of the Local Successor Agency (LSA), Joint Powers Financing Authority (JPFA) or other similar entities. Further limitations apply to reimbursement for City Councilmembers described below.

This policy shall be formally adopted by the City Council and any changes thereto shall also be adopted by City Council.

REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

Expenses incurred by Travelers while engaging and/or participating in the following activities and/or events constitute authorized and reimbursable expenses (as long as other requirements of this policy are also met). Only expenses incurred while on authorized travel within the forty-eight (48) contiguous States are eligible for reimbursement unless prior written approval is received from the City Manager or Assistant City Manager; travel outside the 48-contiguous states requires City Manager/Assistant City Manager written approval prior to the travel.

- A. Communicating with or presenting information or testimony to representatives of regional, state and national government and their various agencies and entities on City, JPFA or Local Successor Agency adopted or authorized policy positions, proposed or pending legislation, or administrative actions that may impact the City;
- B. Attending educational seminars designed to improve Traveler's knowledge, skills and abilities in serving the City;
- C. Participating in regional, state and national organizations whose activities affect the City's interests (e.g., League of California Cities, National League of Cities, International City/County Management Association, etc.);
- D. Attending City-sponsored events;
- E. Implementing City-approved strategy for attracting or retaining businesses to the City, which will typically involve at least one staff member;
- F. Attending functions of local civic or community organizations where there is a clear nexus between the event and the official's function or job (i.e.: not purely social events);
- G. Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) and other mandated training courses as required.

NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

The following personal expenditures incurred by Travelers shall not be reimbursed:

- A. The personal portion of any trip;
- B. Political activities or charitable contributions or events;
- C. Family expenses, including those of a partner when accompanying the Traveler on City business; or child or pet care expenses;
- D. Entertainment expenses, including theatre, shows, movies (either in-room or in theaters); sporting events; personal fitness or relaxation including use of gyms, swimming

pools, golf fees, spa treatments, etc., except as included in the cost of hotel room reservation or conference registration;

E. Non-mileage personal automobile expenses including repairs, insurance, gasoline, traffic citations; etc.;

F. Personal losses incurred while on City business;

G. Alcohol and alcohol-related or personal bar expenses, including tax and gratuities;

H. Items for personal use or consumption, including medications, lotions, hair brushes, razors, candy, gum, energy drinks, snacks and beverages, etc.

I. Gratuities in excess of maximum allowable amounts: \$2 per bag for baggage handling fees; 15% gratuity for taxi or shuttle service; and 20% gratuity for meal service.

J. Expenses for which City officials receive reimbursement from another agency.

The allowances and amounts advanced to persons traveling on official City business shall be established on the basis of specific guidelines set forth herein.

PROCEDURE

A. Cost Control

To conserve City resources and keep expenses within community standards for Travelers, expenditures should adhere to the following guidelines. In the event that expenses are incurred which exceed these guidelines, the cost borne or reimbursed by the City will be limited to the costs that fall within the guidelines.

Payment for seminar registration, transportation and lodging expenses should be through the City warrant (check) request process or by City credit card. Arrangements should be made well in advance to obtain lowest rates available.

B. Authorization

Travel on City business, which exceeds \$2,000, requires submission of the City's Travel Authorization form and approval by the City Manager/Assistant City Manager. The \$2,000 requirement is applicable to all costs associated with the travel, including transportation, registration, lodging, meals and incidental expenses.

C. Types of Authorized Travel Expenses Defined

1) Event Registration

Registration fee charged for any authorized convention, conference, seminar or meeting is reimbursable (if over \$2,000 see A above). Travelers should request direct registration

payment by the City prior to attendance, since registration fees are usually due in advance.

2) Transportation

The method of travel (air, train, automobile, etc.) should be selected on the basis of best value for the City, taking into consideration travel time, fare and traveler work time. If available, Travelers should use City vehicles when practicable. Losses or damage to personal vehicles while on City business are not covered under City insurance policies. All transportation-related expenses are reimbursable, but must be supported by original transportation receipts.

a. Air Travel

The lowest fare available a minimum of 30 days before the event should be utilized, unless a shorter time frame is required by extenuating circumstances. However, lack of advance planning causing higher travel costs may result in denial of the travel or denial of full reimbursement. Only lowest cost tickets will be reimbursed; upgrades in class will be at the employee's expense. Any deviation shall require City Manager/Assistant City Manager approval.

Transportation costs for commercial air travel are best managed by City payment directly to the carrier whenever practical. The traveler, however, may make his/her own reservations and be reimbursed for the ticket expense.

Round trip tickets shall normally be purchased whenever commercial carriers are used. Travel expenses of a family member of a Traveler are not eligible for reimbursement by the City and should be made and paid for by the family member.

b. Taxi, Car Rental and Shuttle Service

Normally, shuttle, bus, BART, or other public transportation should first be considered for travel between home, airport, hotel and conference site. Taxi, Uber, Lyft or similar services may also be considered when such arrangements can be made cost effectively (e.g. sharing the cost with other passengers). Expenses incurred for car rental and shuttle services other than airport shuttle services shall not be reimbursed unless authorization is received from the City Manager, Assistant City Manager or department head prior to the travel. Expenses incurred for any personal travel or entertainment shall not be reimbursed. Reimbursement may include a 15 percent gratuity.

c. Personal Vehicles

Personal automobiles, when approved, as a mode of travel to and from destinations, will be reimbursed at the IRS established standard mileage rate (see www.irs.gov). Reimbursement for private car mileage shall not exceed, unless authorized, the cost of the most economical roundtrip airfare rate for that destination booked 30 days in advance, plus savings in transportation costs to and from the airport, airport parking, and transportation costs at the destination. Exception to the maximum reimbursement, as stated above, may be authorized when air service is not available or reasonably

convenient to the point of destination. Losses or damage to personal vehicles while on City business is not covered under City insurance policies and will not be reimbursed.

When a commercial air carrier is used, a Traveler will be reimbursed for mileage to and from the airport and the actual cost of airport parking. Long-term parking must be used for travel exceeding 24 hours. If two or more travelers share transportation to and from the airport, reimbursement shall be made to the person driving his/her vehicle. If a van/shuttle is used to and from the airport, the Traveler shall be reimbursed for the actual cost.

Payment of mileage shall be based upon the most direct route from point of departure to point of destination. A Traveler may leave from his/her home for a meeting, conference, seminar or training session. However, the mileage from home to the destination will not exceed the mileage from City Hall to the destination. Attach a "Google Maps" or similar record as documentation to verify the mileage reimbursement requested.

d. City Vehicles

Travel in City vehicles is preferred when available and when circumstances allow, especially one-day travel. When traveling in a City vehicle, receipts should be secured for the purpose of gas, oil, emergency repairs and other supplies necessary en route. All receipts for such payments must be furnished in order to obtain reimbursement. All individuals using or driving City vehicles shall abide by the "Vehicle Use Policy" located on the "N" drive (N:\RESOURCES\POLICIES\Old Policies).

e. Parking, Tolls and Public Transportation

Parking and public transportation expenses and bridge and road tolls shall be reimbursed based on actual expenses incurred. Receipts for such expenses should be retained and submitted for reimbursement.

f. Discounts or Passes on Commercial Carriers

Elected Officials and Officials (but not Staff) are prohibited by California Constitution article XII, section 7 from accepting any free pass or discount from a transportation company whether the pass or discount is provided in connection with personal or public business. The Attorney General has approved frequent flyer discounts and upgrades. Please see the City Attorney with any questions.

3) Lodging

Hotel accommodations will be reimbursed or paid for when travel on official City business reasonably requires an overnight stay, and travel to the destination is generally greater than 50 miles travel from City Hall or 50 miles from home if the Traveler is traveling directly from home. Other circumstances in which hotel accommodations may be necessary despite being less than 50 miles away include such things as making an early presentation or attending a late-night session or meeting. Staff must obtain department

head approval for lodging under such circumstances prior to the event. Elected Officials, Officials and volunteers need to seek approval from the City Manager.

If necessary lodging is in connection with a conference, lodging is generally approved at the conference hotel. If the conference hotel is booked up or for whatever reason the traveler needs to stay in another hotel, lodging expenses must not exceed the conference rate if such rates are available at the time of booking. If at the time of booking such room rates cannot be found convenient to the conference site, room rates are presumed reasonable and reimbursable if within 25% of the conference rate. Rates above this amount require approval by the department head prior to the event.

For travel not associated with a conference hotel (e.g. POST training), lodging expense shall be limited to the approved rate as published by the United States General Services Administration (GSA). These rates are published annually, effective October 1 of each year (see www.gsa.gov/perdiem) and are available on the City's "N" drive under the Resources/City Forms/Finance folder. The rate varies depending on the location of the event, so be sure to confirm the correct amount prior to travel. If at the time of booking such room rates cannot be found convenient to the conference site, room rates within 35% of the posted GSA rates are presumed reasonable and reimbursable. Rates above this amount require approval by the department head prior to the event. Lodging taxes are not included in the published per diem rates and are calculated separately.

Accommodations may be arranged directly by the Traveler or by the City. If reservation deposits are required, they should be requested well in advance of the travel in order to utilize City credit cards or payment by City check. The hotel expense shall be reimbursed at the single occupancy rate. The City shall not reimburse hotel expenses for family members in accompaniment, although the City's advance credit card guarantee may include that rate. When feasible, hotel accommodations should be within easy walking access to the functions for which the travel was authorized.

4) Meals and Incidentals

City Council Members on Overnight Travel

Meals necessary for overnight travel are eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursement shall be at the actual cost. Reimbursement, however, shall be limited to the federal per diem rates, including tax and gratuity, for "Meals and Incidental Expenses" (M&IE) as published by the United States General Services Administration (GSA). These rates are published annually, effective October 1 of each year (see www.gsa.gov/perdiem). The rate varies depending on the location of the event, so the Council Member must be sure to confirm the correct amount prior to travel as reimbursement is only available up to the published rate. Receipts or other back-up documentation must be provided for reimbursement to occur, including submission of a conference agenda in order to substantiate meals provided or not provided with the conference or hotel. Every attempt should be made to take advantage of meals that are included as part of the conference. Council Members choosing to eat meals on their own when such meals were provided

with conference or hotel registration are not eligible for reimbursement. Light or insubstantial continental breakfasts are not considered a meal.

Snack foods, drinks, candy, etc. and other non-business related expenses are not reimbursable. Gratuities are limited to 20% of the total meal expense.

All Other Travelers on Overnight Travel (Non-City Council Members)

Meals, including tax and gratuity, will be reimbursed on a “per diem” basis after overnight travel occurs at a rate equal to the federal per diem rates for “Meals and Incidental Expenses” (M&IE) as published by the United States General Services Administration (GSA). Allowable meal reimbursements for the first and last days of travel shall be further limited to the GSA published rate for each meal consumed during the travel days, but shall not exceed 75% of the full GSA per diem rate.

The GSA rates are published annually, effective October 1 of each year (see www.gsa.gov/perdiem) and are available on the City’s “N” drive under the Resources/City Forms/Finance folder. The rate varies depending on the location of the event, so the official must confirm the correct amount prior to travel as reimbursement is only available up to the published rate.

Submission of meal receipts is not required, but submission of a conference agenda is required in order to substantiate meals provided or not provided with the conference or hotel. The value of meals as determined by the GSA and provided with the conference or hotel registration—whether consumed or not—will be deducted from the full per diem requested. Every attempt should be made to take advantage of meals that are included as part of the conference. Travelers choosing to eat meals on their own when such meals were provided with conference or hotel registration are not eligible for reimbursement. Light or insubstantial continental breakfasts are not considered a meal.

One-day Conferences or Meetings Not Requiring an Overnight Stay (All Travelers)

Meals necessary for an approved one-day or half-day conference, workshop or professional association meeting are eligible for reimbursement when the conference hours fall within standard meal times. Reimbursement shall be at the actual cost; therefore, receipts or other back-up documentation must be provided for reimbursement to occur. Gratuities are limited to 20% of the total meal expense. Snack foods, drinks, candy, etc. and other non-business related expenses are not reimbursable.

5) Other Approved Expenses

Telephone/Fax/Cellular

City officials will be reimbursed for actual telephone and fax expenses incurred on City business. Telephone bills should identify which calls were made on City business.

Internet

City officials will be reimbursed for Internet access connection and/or usage fees away from home, not to exceed \$15.00 per day, if Internet access is necessary for City-related business.

Baggage Handling Fees

Baggage handling fees of up to \$2 per bag and gratuities of up to 15 percent will be reimbursed.

D. Miscellaneous Instructions

1) Advances

Because conference registration, hotel and travel expenses may be paid in advance using City resources, advance payments to individual Travelers are generally not available and will only be made in extenuating circumstances.

2) Credit Cards

City credit cards are available for hotel charges to City Council Members and Staff only if specifically requested at time of travel request. Receipts for all charges on the credit cards must be submitted to the Finance Department with the Travel Expense Reconciliation. Under no circumstances is a City credit card to be used to purchase items unrelated to the travel, or for the personal use of the Traveler. Misuse of a City credit card may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination and full civil and criminal prosecution under the law.

The City Manager is authorized possession and use of a City credit card for official expenses consistent with this policy at any time.

3) Reconciliation

All receipts and other backup documentation must be submitted to the Finance Department within thirty (30) working days of the last day of official travel. Inability to provide such documentation within this time frame may result in the expense being borne by the Traveler. Expense reimbursement for travel shall not be authorized after 60 days.

All reported expenses must comply with City policies relating to expenses and use of public resources. The information submitted on this form is a public record. While the expense report form may be modified from time to time, it shall include the requirement that the official identify the activity or event attended, and the nature of the expenses. Actual receipts documenting each expense shall be attached to the form, except in the case of per diem meal allowances for non-City Council Members. In situations where no receipt can be obtained, an explanation of the charges and the reason for the lack of receipt must be included.

4) Cancellation of Travel

Should a Traveler find that he/she cannot attend an event for which an event registration or travel reservations have been made, it is the Traveler's responsibility to cancel the

registration and reservations and obtain refunds. Failure to give such notification early enough to obtain a refund may result in the attendee assuming financial responsibility for the expenditures related to the event. Failure to adhere to the above procedure may result in denial of advance payments, use of City credit card, and/or prepayment of all travel/meeting deposits and expenses.

5) Additional Travel Days

When traveling before or after an event or when staying over a Saturday or Sunday results in cost savings or no additional cost to the City, the City Manager/Assistant City Manager may authorize additional travel days. However, if the Traveler elects to travel in advance of an approved training event or stay longer than the published days of the event for personal reasons, the City shall be obligated only for the round trip travel costs of the event and the other associated eligible costs during the event (e.g. conference lodging, meals, etc.). The City shall not be obligated for additional expenses on the additional personal travel days. Moreover, Staff requesting such leave time for personal travel shall be required to use personal leave balances for missed work time per City Personnel Rules and applicable MOU's.

6) Audits of Expense Reports

All expenses are subject to verification before reimbursement to ensure that they comply with this policy.

E. Reports to the Legislative Body

As required by Government Code section 53232.3(d), each City Council member or Official who attends a meeting or activity at City expense shall briefly report on all such meetings at the next regular meeting of the Council or Commission or Board. If multiple officials attended, a joint report may be made.

F. Compliance with Laws

City officials should keep in mind that some expenditures may be subject to reporting under the Political Reform Act and other laws. All agency expenditures are public records subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act.

G. Violation of This Policy

Pursuant to Government Code section 53232.4, use of public resources or falsifying expense reports in violation of this policy may result in any or all of the following: (1) loss of reimbursement privileges; (2) a demand for restitution to the City; (3) reporting the expenses as income to state and federal tax authorities; (4) civil penalties of up to \$1,000 per day and three times the value of the resources used; and (5) civil or criminal prosecution for misuse of public resources.