

# Travel & Training Expense Reimbursement Policy

## Purpose

It is recognized that Commission members and employees may, from time to time, be required to travel as a city representative or attend educational and training opportunities. It is further recognized that certain reimbursable expenses may be incurred in order to conduct business or improve skills and capabilities. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure: (a) adequate cost controls are in place, (b) travel and other expenditures are appropriate and (c) uniform and consistent reimbursements methods of authorized expenses are practiced. It is the policy of the City of Ottawa to reimburse only reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred.

When incurring business expenses the City expects representatives to:

- Exercise discretion and good business judgment with respect to those expenses.
- Be cost conscious and spend as judiciously as the individual would spend one's own funds.
- Report expenses, supported by required documentation, as they were actually spent.

## Expense Report

Expenses will not be reimbursed unless the individual requesting reimbursement submits a written Expense Report. The Expense Report, which shall be submitted within two weeks of the completion of travel if travel expense reimbursement is requested must include:

- The individual's name.
- The date, origin, destination and purpose of the trip, including a description of each organization-related activity during the trip.
- The name and affiliation of all people for whom expenses are claimed.
- An itemized list of all expenses for which reimbursement is requested.

## Receipts

Receipts are required for all expenditures whether billed directly to the City or out of pocket. No expense will be reimbursed unless the individual requesting reimbursement submits with the Expense Report, written receipts from each vendor (not a credit card statement) showing the vendor's name, a description of services provided (if not otherwise obvious), date, and the total expenses, including tips (if applicable).

## Meals

Meals are reimbursed in accordance with the 24-hour rule. That is to say, an employee must be away from home for such time as to require substantial rest, i.e., at least 24 hours, to qualify for meal reimbursement. If an employee is away from home less than 24 hours and seeks reimbursement, such reimbursement is considered compensation and must be processed through payroll to be taxed.

## General Travel Requirements

In determining the reasonableness and necessity of travel, City representatives and the person authorizing such expenditures shall consider ways in which the City will benefit from such travel and weigh those benefits against the anticipated costs. The existence of less expensive alternatives shall be considered. For example, is participation by telephone, video conferencing, or other local training opportunities a possibility?

*Personal and Spousal Travel Expenses.* Individuals traveling on behalf of the City may incorporate personal travel or business with their City-related trips; however, City representatives shall not arrange Company travel at a time that is less advantageous to the City or involving greater expenses to the City in order to accommodate personal travel plans. Any additional expenses incurred as a result of personal travel, including but not limited to extra hotel nights, additional stopovers, meals or transportation, are the sole responsibility of the individual and will not be reimbursed. Expenses associated with travel, lodging or registration fees for an individual's spouse, family or friends will not be reimbursed by the City.

## **Air Travel**

Reservations should be made as far in advance as possible in order to take advantage of reduced fares.

*Frequent Flyer Miles and Compensation for Denied Boarding.* City representatives traveling on behalf of the City may accept and retain frequent flyer miles and compensation for denied boarding for their personal use. Individuals may not deliberately patronize a single airline to accumulate frequent flyer miles if less expensive comparable tickets are available on another airline.

## **Lodging**

City representatives traveling on behalf of the City may be reimbursed at the single room rate for the reasonable cost of hotel accommodations. Convenience, the cost of staying in the city in which the hotel is located, and proximity to other venues on the individual's itinerary shall be considered in determining reasonableness.

## **Ground Transportation**

Employees are expected to use the most economical ground transportation appropriate under the circumstances and should generally use the following, in this order of desirability:

*Courtesy Cars.* Many hotels have courtesy cars, which will take you to and from the airport at no charge. Free service should be used whenever possible. Another alternative may be a shuttle or bus.

*Taxis.* When courtesy cars and airport shuttles are not available, a taxi is often the next most economical and convenient form of transportation when the trip is for a limited time and minimal mileage is involved.

*Rental Cars.* Car rentals are expensive. Other forms of transportation should be considered whenever practical.

## **Personal Cars**

City representatives are compensated for use of their personal cars when used for City business. When individuals use their personal car for such travel, including travel to and from the airport, mileage will be allowed at the currently approved City rate per mile.

In the case of individuals using their personal cars to take a trip that would normally be made by air, mileage will be allowed at the currently approved rate; however, the total mileage reimbursement will not exceed the sum of the lowest available round trip coach airfare.

## **Parking/Tolls**

Parking and toll expenses, including charges for hotel parking, incurred by City representatives traveling on organization business will be reimbursed. The costs of parking tickets, fines, car washes, valet service, etc., are the responsibility of the owner of the vehicle and will not be reimbursed.

Off-airport parking facilities should be used.

## **Entertainment and Business Meetings**

Reasonable expenses incurred for business meetings or other types of business-related entertainment will be reimbursed only if the expenditures are approved in advance by the City Manager or Director of Finance. Detailed documentation for any such expense must be provided, including:

- Date and place of entertainment
- Nature of expense
- Name, titles, and corporate affiliation of those entertained
- A complete description of the business purpose for the activity including the specific business matter discussed
- Vendor receipts (not credit card receipts or statements) showing the vendor's name, a description of the services provided, the date, and the total expenses, including tips (if applicable).

### **Other Expenses**

Reasonable City-related telephone and fax charges due to absence of City representatives from the individual's place of business are reimbursable. In addition, reasonable and necessary gratuities that are not covered under meals may be reimbursed.

### **Non-reimbursable Expenditures**

The City maintains a strict policy that expenses in any category that could be perceived as lavish or excessive will not be reimbursed, as such expenses are inappropriate for reimbursement by a City. Expenses that are not reimbursable include, but are not limited to:

- Travel insurance
- First class tickets or upgrades
- When lodging accommodations have been arranged by the City and the individual elects to stay elsewhere, reimbursement is made at the amount no higher than the rate negotiated by the City. Reimbursement shall not be made for transportation between the alternate lodging and the meeting site.
- Limousine travel
- Movies, liquor, or bar costs
- Participation in or attendance at golf, tennis, or sporting events, without the advance approval of the City Manager or his designee
- Purchase of sporting equipment
- Spa or exercise charges
- Clothing purchases
- Business conferences and entertainment which are not approved
- Valet service
- Car washes
- Toiletry articles
- Expenses for spouses, friends, or relatives. If a spouse, friend or relative accompanies City representatives on a trip, it is the responsibility of the City representatives to determine any added cost for double occupancy and related expenses and to make the appropriate adjustment in the reimbursement request.