

County of Wayne Travel Policy

Section 1. Policy

1. Purpose

- a. This policy is intended to provide County departments, agencies, and employees with guidelines for payment and reimbursement of travel expenses pertaining to official travel and subsistence. Individual departments are given the discretion to further define this policy.

2. Applicability

- a. All employees of Wayne County are subject to this policy.

3. Employee and Board Member Responsibility

- a. County officers and employees may have their travel expenses reimbursed by Wayne County.
- b. An officer or employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that he or she would exercise if traveling on personal business and using personal funds. Officers and employees are personally responsible for all unauthorized costs and additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.
- c. All reimbursements that will occur from out of state travel must be pre-approved by county management and proof of pre-approval must accompany reimbursement requests..

Willful violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Nothing in this policy shall preclude Wayne County from pursuing all other legally available remedies.

Section 2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- a. *Authorizing Party* – An individual authorized by this policy or by a department head to approve requests for travel advances, reimbursements, or other payments.
- b. *Common Carrier* – Commercially scheduled airplane, rail, bus, or taxi service.
- c. *County Employee* – Any employee, temporary or regular, who is paid through a county payroll.
- d. *Department Head* – Any person who oversees and is responsible for the entire operation of a department. The department head may delegate duties within this policy to other responsible persons. See the definition for Authorizing Party.
- e. *Duty Station* – The job location at which the employee spends the majority of his or her working hours or the point at which the travel begins.
- f. *Excess Expenses / Costs* – Any travel expenses/costs that exceed the limitations outlined in this policy.

- g. *Mileage Rate*—The rate at which a person is reimbursed for using a personal vehicle. Effective at the beginning of each fiscal year, the approved rate shall be the current standard IRS mileage allowance.
- h. *Officials* – People holding positions of appointment with Wayne County.
- i. *Requesting Party* – The person who will be reimbursed for travel costs incurred while conducting County business or visiting for employee interviews.
- j. *Subsistence* – Cost of lodging and meals while the officer, employee, or board member is engaged in official travel.
- k. *Transportation Expenses* – Includes personal automobile, taxi, bus, train, airplane, motor pool charges, auto rentals, tolls, and parking fees.
- l. *Travel* – All activities involving authorized business expenses for transportation, subsistence, and registration, which are to be paid from County funds or involve County vehicles for transportation.
- m. *Travel Period* – The time spent away from the duty station on County business.
- n. *Willful Violations* – Excess costs, indirect routes, luxury accommodations, and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business for which a request for reimbursement or payment is made.

Section 3. General Guidelines

1. Home-to-work Travel

As a general rule, home-to-work travel is not reimbursable. However, there may be exceptions to this rule, as noted below. An employee who has gone home after completing a day's work and is subsequently called out at night for an emergency job or meeting may be eligible for mileage reimbursement. There could also be situations where an employee is asked to conduct County business on the way to/from work. If this results in additional mileage for the employee, he or she may file for reimbursement of the additional miles only. Reimbursement may not be appropriate if the employee travels from home to an alternate workstation closer than their normal duty station on a scheduled work detail. Travel time is normally not paid unless it exceeds what is usually required for home-to-work travel. The department heads must properly authorize these exceptions for staff, and in the case of department heads, the exception must be authorized by county management.

2. Reimbursement

All reimbursement requests involving travel advances shall be submitted to the authorizing party for approval and payment within five working days of the travel period ending date. All other reimbursement requests shall be presented within thirty days of the travel period.

3. Travel

Travel authorization and reimbursement will be based on need, cost/benefit of travel, and availability of funds as determined by the authorizing party. Lodging, common carrier transportation fares, meal allowances, and registrations may be paid by the County in

advance, directly by the requesting party, or by travel advance. All other travel costs are to be paid directly by the requesting party. Car-pooling with other officers or employees of Wayne County and/or representatives of other government units is encouraged. Reimbursement for mileage for only one vehicle will be allowed unless the number traveling indicates otherwise or is approved by the authorizing party.

4. Prospective Employees

The county manager is authorized to approve reimbursement of travel expenses for individuals visiting for employment interviews. The expenses should be limited to transportation and subsistence. No travel advances will be issued to prospective employees.

5. Registration Fees

The County allows reasonable registration fees for County officials or employees. Approved fees may be paid by the unit in advance or directly by the employee and then reimbursed, or in some circumstances, through a travel advance. No authorization will be granted unless full justification and documentation are provided. Copies of brochures, fee schedules, or other material listing the costs included in the registration fees should accompany requests. The County will pay the basic registration fee and fees for associated professional activities. Any additional activities the employee cares to attend are that employee's responsibility.

6. Exceptions

Exceptions to these policies must be discussed with and approved by the Finance Director and/or the County Manager before excess expenses are incurred.

SECTION 4. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES – TRANSPORTATION

1. Common Carrier

The actual coach fare substantiated by a receipt will be reimbursed. First-class travel will only be used in extraordinary circumstances and with the approval of the department head and County Manager. Penalties and charges resulting from cancellation of airline reservations or other travel reservations shall be the County's obligation if the employee's travel has been approved in advance and the cancellation or change is made at the direction of the County. If the cancellation or change is made for the employee's personal benefit, it shall be the employee's obligation to pay the penalties and charges. However, in the event of accidents, serious illness, or death within the employee's immediate family or other critical circumstances beyond the employee's control, the County will be obligated to pay the penalties and charges.

2. Personal Vehicle

If a county vehicle is unavailable or not practical, an employee may use a personal vehicle for authorized travel and be reimbursed at the approved mileage rate. For the purposes of calculating mileage, the County will reimburse the employee based on the distance from the primary work station or the location at which travel begins, whichever results in the lesser mileage reimbursement.

3. County Vehicle

County vehicles may be used for any authorized travel. The requesting party must obey all laws of the jurisdiction where the vehicle is being operated. The vehicle will be used for conducting County business only.

4. Rental Vehicle

An itemized receipt is necessary for reimbursement of a rental vehicle. Rental vehicles are to be used as a last resort. Use must be approved in advance by the department head. Employees may be reimbursed for rental fees, or mileage, but not both.

5. Parking Fees and Tolls

Receipts are required for fees in excess of \$2.00 per day.

SECTION 5. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES – SUBSISTENCE

1. Meals and Incidental Expenses

Each requesting party is responsible for his or her reimbursement. Specific dates of meals must be listed on the reimbursement request, as well as departure and arrival times. Please refer to www.gsa.gov/perdiem for the applicable rate for your travel location. Only one method of meal expense payment may be used. For example, the traveler may request reimbursement at the per diem rate -OR- may use a county purchasing card and submit the expense for payment with the meal receipt. The traveler may not use a purchasing card and then request reimbursement of the difference between actual cost and per diem. The traveler may choose to use or allocate this amount between meals as he or she chooses.

For travel periods of less than a full day, the following “per meal” amounts shall be used:

Meal	Qualification	Amount
Breakfast	Depart duty station before 7:00 and return after 11:00 a.m.	Up to \$13.00
Lunch	Depart duty station before 11:00 a.m. and return after 3:00 p.m.	Up to \$15.00
Dinner	Depart duty station before 3:00 PM and return to duty station after 7:00 p.m.	Up to \$26.00

Receipts are not required for meal reimbursement unless a County purchasing card is used for payment. The amounts indicated above shall be treated on a per diem basis.

Employees will not be reimbursed for meals within the boundaries of Wayne County unless such expenses are incurred for attendance at formal meetings conferences, or seminars.

2. Lodging

To qualify for reimbursement, all lodging must be approved in advance by the Department Head. Lodging expenses will be reimbursed at the actual cost of the room, provided the employee seeks reasonably priced lodging. Each employee is responsible for his or her own request for reimbursement. Specific lodging dates must be listed on the reimbursement request and substantiated by an itemized receipt from a commercial lodging establishment. Only charges for room and tax will be reimbursed. Additional personal expenses are not reimbursable. Employees sharing a room with a non-county individual (including family members) are responsible for reporting and requesting reimbursement of lodging expenses at single occupancy rates.

3. Tips

Reasonable baggage handling tips may be claimed for porters at terminals and hotels as “Other Expenses”.

4. Telephone Calls

Requesting parties will not be permitted to charge long-distance phone calls to the County for calls made of a personal nature, except for one “safe arrival” call and a single call per day that does not exceed ten (10) minutes in length.

Section 6. Completion of Travel Form

1. Mileage report

Officials and employees who regularly use a personal vehicle for trips in and around the County should complete a mileage report that notes the name, department, travel dates, and total miles. The total miles for the reporting period (usually a month) are then noted on the “Claim for Expenses: Official Travel Form.” Odometer readings are not required if the department has another consistently applied, reasonable method of verifying mileage. Mileage Reports and the Claim for Expenses form will be submitted to the Finance Department every month for reimbursement.

2. Travel Expense Report for Reimbursement

If a travel advance has been issued, the Claim for Expenses form should be submitted to the Finance Department within five days of completion of the travel period. Other reimbursement requests should be presented within thirty days of the travel period. Documentation must be provided for all expenses except meals, parking fees less than \$2.00 per day, and baggage-handling tips.