Administrative Procedure
Alachua County, Florida

Procedure No.: AP-53
Revision No.: 3

Effective: 2/13/2018
Review Date: 2/19/2021, 11/1/2022

Travel Procedures

Scope: This procedure applies to all persons traveling on behalf of the County.

Provisions:
It is the intent of this procedure to provide guidance for obtaining authorization to travel, for preparing to travel, for travel itself, and for reimbursement of travel expenses. In the event of a conflict between the terms of this document and the terms of §112.061, Florida Statute, the latter shall prevail except for mileage rate, per diem and meal allowance.

Procedures:

1. Definitions
    a. *Administrating Official* means the County Manager or County Attorney.

    b. *Assigned headquarters* means the employee's permanent job location, or as determined by the Department Director.

    c. *Class A travel* means continuous travel of 24 hours or more away from official headquarters.

    d. *Class B travel* means continuous travel of less than 24 hours which involves overnight absence from official headquarters.

    e. *Class C travel* means travel for short or day trips where the traveler is not away from their assigned headquarters overnight, which includes commuting to an alternate work site.

    f. *Commuter miles* are round trip miles between the traveler's residence and assigned headquarters.

g. *Official headquarters* means the geographical location specified by §112.061 (4), F.S. Generally, the official headquarters is the city or town of the office to which the employee is assigned. If the employee is located in the field, the official headquarters is the city or town nearest to the area of the majority of the employee's work or the city or town as designated by the Administrating Official in the best interest of the County and not for convenience of the employee. If an employee is stationed in a location for more than 30 continuous days, the city or town where the employee is stationed will be the official headquarters.

h. *Travel Reimbursement Form* means the form submitted by the traveler for reimbursement of eligible expenses.

i. *Traveler* means any employee, board member, appointed official, elected official, volunteer, job candidate or other individual authorized to receive travel reimbursement, including outside consultants and vendors hired by contract where applicable.

2. Authorization for International Travel

Any international travel will require prior approval from the Administrating Official and will be submitted as an agenda item for approval by a majority vote of the Board of County Commissioners at a Regular meeting.

3. Employee Responsibilities

Prior to booking any travel, employees shall consult with their supervisor.

4. Supervisor's Responsibilities

a. Supervisors or their designees are responsible for determining that the cost of travel outside of Alachua County is reasonable and justified by the purpose of that travel. Prior to approving travel, the supervisor should conclude that:

i. The purpose of the trip is to conduct County business;

ii. A comparable seminar, meeting or conference is unavailable locally;

iii. The traveler understands the County's travel policies and procedures;

iv. The itinerary ensures accomplishment of the purpose at the lowest reasonable cost;

v. There is enough money in the appropriate travel budget to cover all expected costs; and

vi. All expenses are reasonable and necessary.

b. Supervisors shall not require travelers to share accommodations.

5. Reimbursement for Eligible Expenses

a. Travel Reimbursement Form
Travelers should submit a Travel Reimbursement Form to their supervisors within seven (7) calendar days of travel outside of Alachua County. The Travel Reimbursement Form should contain:

i. A clear reconciliation of the estimated cost of travel with the actual cost of travel or reimbursement sought;

ii. A statement of the final settlement due to or due from the traveler (if any); and

iii. All required receipts and documentation.

b. Registration and Tuition Fees
Registration or tuition fees (fees for a seminar or conference, tuition for a class, and other fees that relate to attending an event) are eligible expenses and will be reimbursed with proper documentation. Proper documentation may include a brochure or agenda for the conference, seminar, class or convention or other proof of attendance. Departments should charge "registration fees" to the applicable object code in the respective department's budget.

c. Transportation
i. Transportation expenses are eligible expenses. They must also comply with the Rental Car Procedures. Travelers shall choose the most practical mode of transportation for travel on County business. Travelers shall consider the cost, size of load, distance, and time expended in obtaining and returning a rental vehicle

When practical, the County encourages joint utilization of transportation. No traveler shall be allowed either mileage or transportation expense when gratuitously transported by another person or when transported by another traveler who is entitled to mileage or transportation expense.

i. County-Owned Vehicles

Fuel and vehicle repair expenses, incurred while traveling in a County-owned vehicle, are eligible expenses for reimbursement. Travelers should report any problems with County-owned vehicles to Fleet Management as soon as reasonably possible to avoid incurring more costly repairs. Travelers must use County-owned vehicles in compliance with the Motor Vehicle Operation Procedure.

ii. Privately-Owned Vehicles

Per mile expenses, for miles incurred while traveling in a privately-owned vehicle while on County business, are eligible expenses for reimbursement provided that actual mileage traveled is greater than the travelers standard daily commute. The County will reimburse a traveler mileage in accordance with the standard mileage rate published by the U. S. Internal Revenue Service per actual mile, or per mile as based on the State of Florida Highway Mileage Chart (Mileage Chart), if the actual mileage is not available.

If the traveler leaves from and/or returns to their assigned headquarters, the reimbursable mileage is actual miles traveled. If the traveler leaves from and/or returns to locations other than their assigned headquarters, the reimbursable mileage shall be computed on a daily basis by summing all miles driven and subtracting commuting miles, which are not reimbursable. If the actual mileage reported exceed the mileage based on the Mileages Chart by more than 20 percent, the traveler should attach a written explanation to explain how the miles were incurred.

Use of a privately owned vehicle on County business is also governed by the Motor Vehicle Operation Procedure.

iii. Rental Cars

Expenses associated with rental cars are eligible expenses for reimbursement with proper documentation. Travelers must use rental cars in compliance with the County Rental Car Procedures.

iv. Vehicles for Hire (Taxi Cab, Uber, Lyft)
Vehicles for Hire (Taxi Cab, Uber, Lyft) fares, incurred for necessary trips, are eligible expenses for reimbursement with proper documentation. Tips, exceeding 15% are not eligible expenses for reimbursement.

v. Airplane
Airplane ticket costs are eligible expenses for reimbursement with proper documentation. Travelers are encouraged to buy tickets at least 21 calendar days before the date of the flight in order to get the lowest possible fare. The traveler should purchase airplane tickets at the lowest fare considering such factors as per diem, subsistence, productivity and amount of time required for travel. If the traveler chooses to fly in a higher class, the traveler will not be reimbursed for the difference between the lowest fare and the higher class, except in extraordinary circumstances and when approved by the Administrating Official.

Refundable vs. Nonrefundable Tickets

Refundable airline tickets are typically more expensive than nonrefundable tickets. Travelers should make decisions to purchase refundable or nonrefundable tickets on a case-by-case basis with the input of their supervisors.

Unused Tickets
If a purchased ticket will not be used, in whole or part, the traveler should cancel the ticket to the airline as soon a practically possible to obtain a refund. Penalties incurred from cancellation of airline fees may be paid or reimbursed by the County with approval of the traveler's Administrating Official.

Chartered Planes
Travelers may travel on chartered planes only upon approval of the Board of County Commissioners. Under no circumstances may a County traveler pilot any type of aircraft when traveling on official County business.

Travelers Insurance
The traveler will not be reimbursed for airline travel insurance.

Airport Parking
Airport parking is an eligible expense for reimbursement. When it is necessary for a traveler to park a vehicle at an airport, the traveler should

choose the most economical parking either the long term (pay-by-the-day) or the short-term (pay-by-the-hour) parking lots.

vi. Other Methods of Transportation

Expenses incurred from other methods of transportation are eligible expenses for reimbursement provided that the travel is safe and practical.

d. Lodging, Meals and Tips

i. Lodging

With proper documentation, lodging, required for Class A and B Travel, is an eligible expense for reimbursement. Travelers may stay in hotels recommended by the conference, seminar or convention they are attending. If no hotel is recommended or the traveler is not attending a conference, seminar or convention, the traveler may stay in competitively priced lodging for a particular geographic location. The County will reimburse the traveler for lodging but will not reimburse expenses associated with family members or guests accompanying a traveler implies will reimburse if not occupying some room.

Travelers are encouraged to reserve rooms early in order to obtain the lowest prices. Travelers should request government rates. Reservations may be held by either:

- County purchasing card, or
- Personal credit card

Lodging may be paid by any of the following means:

- County purchasing card,
- Personal credit card,
- County check, issued by Finance and Accounting, or
- Personal funds

Finance and Accounting will issue County checks for lodging to the traveler no earlier than one week prior to the start of travel unless special circumstances exist, such as personal vacation precedes travel.

ii. Meals

Meal expenses are paid as meal subsistence without receipts. Traveler must not claim meals that are provided free-of-charge or as a part of registration. For the purposes of this procedure, snacks, continental breakfasts and hors d'oeuvres served at receptions are not considered meals.

No receipts are required for meals.

iii. Meal Tips
Meal tips are included in, per diem or subsistence and will not be separately reimbursed.

iv. Meal Subsistence
Meal subsistence is calculated in accordance with current per diem rates as established via Resolution by the BoCC, as authorized in Florida Statute Section 112.061(14), and will be taxed per applicable tax rules and regulations for the following times:

- Breakfast – if travel begins before 6:00 a.m. and extends after 8:00 a.m. - $13
- Lunch – if travel begins before noon and extends after 2:00 p.m. - $15
- Dinner – if travel begins before 6:00 p.m. and extends after 8:00 p.m. - $26

v. Reimbursement Class A and B – per diem
In most circumstances, Class A and B travelers may choose either actual expenses or per diem for reimbursement.

Per diem reimburses the traveler for necessary expenses except for meals and lodging. This method is typically used when the traveler stays with family or friends while on County business. Since the County does not incur hotel costs, the traveler is awarded a per diem for the day. With this method, a $80.00 per day allowance is given to the employee.

Per diem allowance should be calculated as follows:

- For Class A travel, the day is broken up into four 6-hour cycles. Travelers will be reimbursed $20.00 for each cycle during which they have traveled.
- For Class B travel, the 6-hour cycles begins at the hour of departure.
- Class C travelers cannot be reimbursed by per diem.

vi. Telephone Calls/Communications Expenses
Telephone, facsimile and other communications expenses, incurred while traveling on County business, are eligible expenses for reimbursement provided that each telephone call, facsimile or other communication is properly identified on the Travel Reimbursement Form. Personal calls will not be reimbursed.

For the purposes of reimbursement, the traveler must document business-related telephone calls or other communication expenses with a telephone bill or other official business document.

vii. Optional Tours, Banquets, or Other Activities
Expenses associated with optional tours, optional banquets and other optional activities, incurred during travel, are eligible expenses for reimbursement provided that they are job-related. Travelers should seek the advice of their supervisor.

viii. Other Eligible Expenses
Other expenses, incurred during travel and that are of direct benefit to the County, are eligible expenses for reimbursement. Such expenses included, but are not limited to, expenses incurred from parking (including self-parking, mandatory valet services, or reimbursement at the self-parking rate if the employee chooses valet parking) and tolls.

ix. Tax
In-state vendors may waive sales and other taxes on lodging and other purchases if the traveler pays by County check or purchasing card. Therefore, travelers are encouraged to pay for their purchases using County check or purchasing card.

x. Ineligible Expenses Incurred During Travel – No Reimbursement
Any expense that is not properly substantiated by receipts or other documentation (when required) and any expenses incurred but not approved by supervision (prior to or after travel) are not eligible expenses for reimbursement.

xi. Personal Expenses
Personal expenses incurred during travel are not eligible expenses for reimbursement. Such expenses include, but are not limited to, any moneys spent on movies, entertainment, premium television services, alcoholic beverages, dry-cleaning, spas, gyms, travel insurance, purchase of clothing, toiletries, newspapers, magazines, loss of tickets, fines or traffic violations, additional baggage beyond first checked bag that does not fulfill a business purpose, elective flight seat selection or upgrade, spouse or guest accommodations, meals, beverages or other forms of entertainment paid for by other persons.

xii. Tips
Tips are reimbursed under the following criteria:

- Actual tips paid to vehicles for hire which shall not exceed 15% of the fare.
- Actual amount paid for mandatory valet parking and which was incurred in the performance of public business.

- Actual portage charges paid which shall not exceed $1 per bag not to exceed total of $5 per incident.
- Daily subsistence tips are reimbursed at 10% for meals, with receipt.

xiii. Travel Paid by Other Entity

Travel expenses, incurred while the traveler is traveling on behalf of another entity, are not eligible expenses for reimbursement. Other entities include, but are not limited to, business entities, agencies and professional associations.

When any eligible County travel expenses are paid for or reimbursed directly to the traveler by another entity or agency, the traveler may not seek reimbursement for those same expenses from the County.

xiv. Vacation Combined with County Travel

When a traveler combines County travel with a personal vacation, the traveler should clearly segregate expenses and time associated with vacation from expenses and time associated with County business. Travelers will only receive reimbursement for those expenses while on County business.

6. Methods of Payment

a. County Purchasing Cards

Use of County Purchasing cards shall be in compliance with the County Purchasing Card Program Policies and Procedures

b. County Checks

County checks may be obtained in advance for prepayment of registration, airline and lodging expenses in accordance with this Procedure

c. Personal Credit Card or Other Personal Funds

Travelers may choose to use personal funds to pay all travel costs during the trip and to seek reimbursement upon return.

d. Cancellations

If a traveler cannot attend a conference or course, the traveler should cancel all registrations and reservations, and seek refunds of any amounts paid. If amounts are non-refundable, then the supervisor should attempt to send a substitute traveler. Uncashed County checks should be returned to Finance and Accounting.

e. Use of Good Judgement

These travel procedures are not expected to address every issue or contingency that may arise in the course of County travel. Travelers and their supervisors are expected to exercise good judgment in the use and stewardship of the County's resources.