



## LARAMIE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

<b>TITLE</b> Travel Policy	<b>APPROVAL DATE</b> 07/17/1990
<b>SECTION</b> Compensation	<b>REVISION DATE</b> 8/6/2019

The County recognizes that expenditure of public funds for travel is necessary to conduct county business. The following policies are set forth to improve control and minimize costs by providing guidance to all employees and Elected Officials concerning authorization for expenses incurred while conducting official County business while traveling.

### **Eligibility & Authorization**

1. Elected Officials/Department Heads or their designees shall authorize all travel, subject to the limitations of this policy and the annual departmental budget. The Elected Official/Department Head or designee shall be held responsible for certifying that travel is related to County business.
2. Travel is authorized for the minimum number of persons necessary to carry out the business purpose of the travel, and only for those whose job tasks are directly related to the purpose of the travel. Only individuals who are employees or who are elected officials of Laramie County may receive payment of authorized travel-related expenses.
3. This policy applies to all County business meeting meals, refreshments/light snacks for which County funds are expended regardless of the manner of payment; it includes but is not limited to, purchasing card or credit card purchases, purchase orders, and direct payment by both Elected Officials and Non-Elected Employees for subsequent reimbursement from the County.
4. This policy applies to all Elected Officials and Non-Elected Employees, unless a provision is in conflict with specific provisions of state or federal law. In such cases, the provisions of those agreements or laws shall prevail for those covered under such agreements or laws.
5. The County Clerk's office shall audit and pay travel claims in accordance with this policy and shall create, distribute and require the use of any form and procedure necessary for the execution and enforcement of the travel and per diem policies and procedures, consistent with the requirements and intent of these policies and procedures.
6. Reimbursements to Elected Officials for County business travel are made in accordance with IRS requirements for an "Accountable Plan." An Accountable Plan requires expenses have a business connection, expenses must be adequately accounted for within a reasonable period of time, and any excess reimbursement or allowance is returned within a reasonable period of time.
7. Non-elected employees will receive a per diem allowance for ordinary and necessary expenses for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) based on federal GSA rates.

### **DEFINITIONS**

1. "County Business" shall mean activities directly related to or in support of the governmental functions of Laramie County as certified by an Elected Official, Department Head or their designees.
2. "Department Head or designee" shall mean the officially designated individual who directs the daily operation of any department under the Laramie County Board of Commissioners.



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3. "Elected Officials" shall mean members of the Laramie County Board of Commissioners and all Laramie County elected officials.
4. "Extended Lodging and/or Meal Expenses" refers to expenses incurred for lodging and meals that extend one or more days prior to or after the actual dates of a conference, seminar, meeting, training, or other County business travel event.
5. "General Area" refers to an area from Cheyenne that will affect a Traveler's taxable income in the event or reimbursement of per diem meals and incidental expenses when no overnight stay is required.
6. "Incidental Expense" includes but is not limited to fees and tips for porters, baggage handlers, bell staff, housecleaning staff or other personal service employees.
7. "Lodging" shall mean expenses for overnight sleeping facilities, including any mandatory fees (taxes, telephone etc.).
8. "Meals" shall mean expenses for breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, refreshments, and related tips and taxes (specifically excluded are alcoholic beverage and entertainment expenses).
9. "Transportation Expense" must be reasonable and include airfare, rental cars, taxi, trains, local buses, shuttle, baggage fees, parking fees.
10. "Miscellaneous Expense" must be reasonable and include customary transportation tips/gratuities, fax, telephone, copy charges, laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothes, registration fees, County business expenses (e.g. internet access, purchase of necessary materials and supplies, etc.) and other business related expenses.
11. "Non-Elected Employees" shall mean non-elected employees and non-elected Department Heads of the County.
12. "Non-reimbursable Expenses" include expenses that are not a necessary part of the required travel, including: parking and traffic violations, mileage for County vehicle, mileage to commute to/from work, Emergency repairs for non-County vehicle, car rental insurance, alcoholic beverages, medicinal remedies (or health supplies, cosmetics), personal entertainment, childcare fees, kennel/boarding fees, TSA-Preselect and discretionary early check-in fees, costs for extra person in the room, in room pay per view movie rentals, non-County business-related phone calls, expenses paid for or reimbursed by a non-county entity.
13. "Per Diem" is the daily allowance for meals and incidental expenses for travel expenses in connection with work done away from home per established rates by the U.S. General Services Administration Agency (GSA) by locale.
14. "Traveler" shall mean an individual who is eligible to receive either
  - a. per diem (for non-elected) or reimbursement (for electeds) not to exceed the GSA Per Diem for meals and incidentals, and



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- b. reimbursement of lodging and Miscellaneous Expenses related to travel for County business purposes outside the General Area.

### **TRAVEL POLICY**

It is the County's policy to reimburse a Traveler for actual expenses for lodging and reasonable Miscellaneous Expenses. Non-elected employees will receive payment for meals and incidental expenses while traveling on County business, based on the GSA per diem allowance for the locale. Elected officials will be reimbursed for the cost of their meals and incidental expenses based on detailed, itemized receipts, the total of which cannot exceed the daily M&IE per diem. County credit/purchasing card procedures can be found in the ".....*Card Policies and Procedures.*"

### **ELECTED OFFICIAL, DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR, COUNTY CLERK RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. Elected Officials/Department Heads or their designees will authorize activities for Non-Electeds Employees related to County business, including travel for County business purposes and reimbursement/allowance of related expenses within the guidelines identified in this policy.
- b. Department procedures for obtaining approval of travel and reimbursement of related expenses for Non-Elected Employees may be established in accordance with the policy set forth herein. Department Heads or their designees will be responsible for ensuring compliance with County policy within their respective departments.
- c. Departments will maintain internal records documenting County business travel and related expenses, including pertinent conference brochures, agendas, schedules of meetings, or a concise statement of the purpose, destination, and travel dates and times of each trip for Non-Elected Employees.
- d. With the exception of the Department Heads, all travel and anticipated payment of related expenses must be approved in advance by the Department Head or designee.
- e. Travel by Department Heads must be approved in advance by the Board of County Commissioners.
- f. Non-Elected Employee travel is authorized for the minimum number of persons necessary to carry out the business purpose of the travel, and for only those whose job tasks are directly related to the purpose of the travel. Additionally, when attendance at conferences, seminars or training events is beneficial, first preference must be given to those offered locally.
- g. When a Non-Elected Employee, at the request of an organization outside of Laramie County, is acting as an instructor or panel member or participating in similar activity at an intrastate meeting or professional conference, Department Heads or their designees should ordinarily authorize absence with salary paid only, in the expectation that the sponsoring organization will pay for the associated travel and related expenses. However, when this arrangement is not feasible, and a Department Head or designee determines that the



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participation of the employee is beneficial to the County, he/she may also authorize payment for the associated travel and related expenses.

### ELECTED OFFICIAL AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL

The following expenses require board approval:

- 1) International travel directly related to duties/responsibilities.
- 2) Expenses which exceed annual or per trip limits, if any, established by the Board under this Policy.

Requests for exception to the Travel Policy (e.g., for expenses that do not fall within the types of occurrences set forth in this policy). Examples of personal expenses that the County will not reimburse include, but are not limited to:

- 1) The personal portion of any trip;
- 2) Political contributions or events;
- 3) Family expenses, including partner's expenses when accompanying an official on County-related business, as well as children or pet-related expenses;
- 4) Charitable contributions or events, unless the event has a direct relationship to County business, (for example, acknowledging extraordinary deeds by County personnel) and is pre-approved by the Board;
- 5) Entertainment expenses, including theater, movies (either in-room or at the theater), sporting events (including gym, massage and/or golf related expenses), or other cultural events; and
- 6) Non-mileage personal automobile expenses, including repairs, traffic citations, insurance or gasoline.
- 7) Any questions regarding the propriety of a particular type of expense should be resolved before the expense is incurred.
- 8) Expenses for which Elected Officials receive reimbursement from another agency are not reimbursable.

### TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES: REIMBURSEMENT

- a. Actual reasonable and necessary cost of local transportation, including taxi, local buses, shuttle and limousine service, transportation network companies, and customary tips/gratuities to and from the point of departure (e.g., Denver Airport) is eligible for reimbursement with receipt. When reasonable and practical the traveler should fly out of the Cheyenne Airport. Otherwise, the most economical mode (e.g., trains or personal vehicle vs. taxi) should be used whenever practicable; however, use of a transportation provider with multiple stops (e.g., shuttle), is not mandated.
- b. A Traveler should utilize the most economical and reasonable mode of transportation consistent with the requirements of the department using the most direct and efficient route. Government and group rates offered by a provider of transportation services should be used when available. The use of discount airfares is encouraged in the interest of economy. However, in determining the most economical and reasonable fare, a Traveler should not be required to use a fare that falls into any of the following categories:



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- 1) Circuitous routing – an itinerary that requires more than one stop between origination and destination points.
  - 2) Excessively prolonged travel – connections or stopovers of more than two hours on domestic trips or six hours on international trips.
  - 3) Travel during unreasonable hours – boarding or deplaning before 6:00 a.m. or after 10:00 or overnight travel without an opportunity for rest before beginning work.
  - 4) Travel which results in additional costs – travel which would require other types of costs that would offset the initial savings in transportation.
  - 5) Travel which is not reasonably adequate for the physical or medical needs of the Traveler.
- c. Airline ticketing, lodging and car rental quotes and reservations may be accomplished through a travel agency or directly with an airline. Whenever possible, such arrangements should be made as soon as possible prior to expected departure date in order to obtain the most economical fare. (Advance airline booking is usually necessary in order to take advantage of discounted rates.)
- d. Elected Officials and Non-Elected Employees shall use reasonable judgment in booking commercial airline reservations. For flights over four hours (excluding connection time), premium economy class may be acceptable. Business class and first class accommodations are not reimbursable unless necessary to respond to an emergency or to accommodate a medical disability or other special need. Anyone may, at their own expense, pay to upgrade their airline reservations from premium economy to business or first class.
- e. In the event a more expensive transportation form or route is used, the cost borne by the County will be limited to the cost of the most economical, direct, efficient and reasonable transportation form.

### RENTAL, CHARTERED OR CONTRACTED VEHICLE TRANSPORTATION:

Reimbursement is limited to reasonable rates for necessary use with official receipts submitted for audit and payment. Shuttle service or public transportation is to be used when available and practical.

- 1) Car rental must be authorized by Elected Official/Department Head or designee in advance as indicated on the Pre-Approval Form. Car rental may be authorized for County business travel if there is a valid need and cost savings over other modes of available transportation. Car rental arrangements may be made directly with a commercial car rental company or through a travel agent. In either case, the following guidelines will apply:
  - a. Government rates should always be requested;
  - b. The most reasonably priced rental car that meets the official requirements of the trip should be used;
  - c. Claims for reimbursement of other than a standard vehicle will require justification;
  - d. Original paid rental agreement/receipt for all car rentals are required for reimbursement purposes; and



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- 2) When renting a vehicle, the fuel tank must be filled when the vehicle is returned whenever practicable in order to avoid any additional refueling charges from the car rental agency.
  - 3) Expense Incurred Due to Damaged Rental Car - Costs associated with damage to an automobile rented while on County business may be reimbursable as a claim. Travelers should contact the Office of Risk Management for more information in the event of a loss to determine what documentation is needed to evaluate the claim for possible payment.
- f. **PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES AND MILEAGE:** Mileage is reimbursable at the Internal Revenue Service current rate (<http://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/Standard-Mileage-Rates>). Parking, bridge and road tolls are also reimbursable upon submission of detailed receipts. Total mileage reimbursement shall not exceed commercial economy airfare. The beginning and ending odometer readings are required with a voucher and other documentation for reimbursement. All mileage is based on the nearest practical highway route as indicated on the official state maps, plus a reasonable amount of travel within the destination vicinity. Any fines or penalties arising from the operation of a motor vehicle in an unlawful manner shall be the personal responsibility of the driver of the vehicle.
- g. **COUNTY VEHICLE:** If a county-owned vehicle is used, the driver must hold a valid driver's license and be authorized to use County vehicles for official County business. Reimbursement is limited to actual expense of fuel purchased and parking costs, if any. Fines for traffic or parking violations against a County vehicle are the responsibilities of the employee to whom the vehicle is assigned and all violations must be reported to the Elected Official/Department Head or designee, and to the County Risk Manager.

### LODGING: REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVELLER'S LODGING

- a. The most economical and practical accommodations available considering the purpose of the meeting, and other relevant factors will be reimbursed. Conference discount rates and "government rates" should be used whenever possible.
- b. Lodging quotes or reservations may be accomplished through a travel agency or directly with a lodging establishment. Reimbursement of lodging expenses is based upon actual reasonable and necessary expenses incurred for the business purpose of the trip.
  - 1) Lodging for Non-Elected Employees may only be utilized for meetings in excess of one day outside the County unless otherwise pre-approved by the Elected Official/Department Head or designee.
  - 2) Lodging at sites other than hotels or motels (e.g., apartments, cabins, etc.) are reimbursable when they result in a lower cost to the County. However, payment to another individual to stay in their home is not allowed and will not be reimbursed.
  - 3) A Traveler, if accompanied by someone who is not a traveler authorized for County business (e.g., spouse, children, friend, etc.) is entitled to lodging reimbursement at the standard room rate.
  - 4) Lodging Arrangements – When attending a prearranged seminar/meeting requiring a particular accommodation or unforeseen circumstances arise during the course of a trip,



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the traveler may make lodging arrangements for reasonably priced accommodations directly with a lodging establishment.

### MEALS AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSES (Including snacks, tips and taxes)

- a. For non-elected Travelers, payment of per diem for meals and incidental expenses will be the federal Per Diem rates established by the GSA. For Elected Officials, meals and incidental expenses will be reimbursed for actual meal and incidental expenses not to exceed the federal Per Diem rates established by the GSA. Non-elected Travelers who are paid per diem are not required to produce receipts for meals and incidental expenses, but are required to detail their destinations, dates and times of travel. Elected officials are required to produce detailed, itemized receipts of their expenses, including name of facility, cost of items, tax and tip.
  - i. Meal expenses, either directly billed to the County, or included in registration, seminar and conference fees paid by the County on behalf of the County official or employee are considered part of the meal and incidental expenses allowance and shall be deducted from the allowance claim of the employee.
- b. For the first and last travel days, the meals and incidental expenses per diem reimbursement limit for Travelers shall be prorated to 75%, in accordance with GSA policy.
- c. Elected Official/Department Head or designee pre-approval is required for meal expenses in the General Area when an overnight stay is not required. In accordance with IRS regulations, meals paid while away from home but not overnight shall be taxable income.
- d. Third party meal and incidental expenses are not eligible for reimbursement.

### EXTENDED LODGING AND MEAL EXPENSES

- a. Extended Lodging and Meal Expenses – Such actual necessary and reasonable expenses for lodging and meals will be eligible for reimbursement when it is demonstrated to be less than the transportation savings when the traveler travels in advance (e.g., on a weekend before or after a travel event). However, nothing in this or the following paragraph should be interpreted as a requirement to extend County travel beyond that required to conduct business.
  - i. For example, if a traveler departs on Saturday for a Monday event, Saturday night lodging and meal expense will be eligible for reimbursement if the allowable expense is less than the savings due to traveling on Sunday rather than Saturday. Documentation must accompany the *Mileage and Other Expenses Claim Form* to justify these “extended” expenses.

### MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES – REIMBURSEMENT – RECEIPT REQUIRED

- a. County business expenses such as copying, facsimile transmittals, internet access or rental of office machines in connection with preparation of official reports or correspondence;



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purchase of necessary materials and supplies, when normal purchasing procedures cannot be followed; and rental of a room or other facility for the transaction of County business are eligible for reimbursement. These expenses will require actual receipts or written certification for reimbursement purposes.

- b. Parking – Necessary reasonable expenses for self-parking in pay-to-park lots when attending meetings or other County business events are eligible for reimbursement. These expenses will require actual receipts or written certification for reimbursement purposes. Actual expenses for valet parking are eligible for reimbursement when no other reasonable parking option is available. Long-term parking should be used for travel exceeding 24-hours.
- c. Telephone or Wi-Fi charges are allowable if they are necessarily incurred for the conduct of County business.
- d. Registration Fees – Actual fees paid for registration to attend an authorized event is an allowable expense. Registration fees should be paid in advance by the department whenever practicable. Original, itemized receipts will be required for reimbursement to an individual. Reimbursable registration fees do not include participation in non-profit activities (e.g., United Way).
- e. Laundry charges are reimbursable with an original receipt for County travel lasting more than three days.

### COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

- a. All documents related to travel and reimburseable expenses are public records subject to disclosure under the Wyoming Public Records Act.
- b. 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 County,
  - 3) the County's reporting the expenses as income to the employee and to federal tax authorities and
  - 4) prosecution for misuse of public resources.

### **COUNTY BUSINESS MEETING POLICY**

This policy establishes rules and procedures for the County regarding the purchase of refreshments/light snacks and nominal meals to be used for official County Business Meetings. Departments will budget annually for costs associated with this policy. All purchased items referenced in this policy must serve a public purpose of the County and be related to official County business and follow the form/format approved by the County Clerk. Expenses for County Business Meetings shall be reasonable and moderate in nature, taking into account community standards and the prevailing vendor pricing within the County.





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- a. The reasonable expenses for nominal meals, refreshments/light snacks provided at County Business Meetings that extend over the normal break or meal periods are eligible for reimbursement when:
  - 1) Elected Officials, Department Head or designee determines that it is for the benefit and advantage of the County to keep all participants together and not have them disperse for breaks (County employees who are not attending the County Business Meeting are not included).
  - 2) Elected Officials, Department Head or designee directs the attendance of Non-Elected Employees and
    - a) Special facts require that the event be held and conduct its business over a normal meal period; and
    - b) Business is actually conducted over a meal period.
- b. County funds may not be expended to reimburse Elected Officials or Non-Elected Employees for their expenses in purchasing meals for third parties, such as constituents, legislators and private business owners, at meetings held to discuss legislation or other matters of benefit to the County.
- c. Elected Officials, Department Directors or their designees are accountable for determining:
  - 1) The necessity for expending public funds for meals, refreshments/light snacks.
  - 2) The appropriateness and accuracy of the claim.
  - 3) The availability of funds.
  - 4) Conformity with County Policy.

### **COUNTY BUSINESS MEETING PAYMENT AND REIMBURSEMENT**

- a. County business meeting meals, refreshments/light snacks may be purchased through the use of the authorized County credit/purchasing card, purchase order or direct payment by an Elected Official or Non-Elected Employee. Itemized receipts are required regardless of the amount spent. In addition, all business meal expenses must be supported with itemized listing of food and beverage purchases. The cost of alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.

### **EXPENSE CLAIMS**

#### **1. APPROVALS, FORM, AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

- a. Approvals: Non-Elected Employee claims for reimbursement will require Department Head or designee review, verification and approval before submitting to the County Clerk's office for review and payment. This approval certifies that the claimed amount is correct and the expense is reasonable, necessary and incurred for the benefit of the County. Staff of Elected Officials shall obtain approvals from the Elected Official or designee.
  - 1) While signature authority for claims can be delegated, the Department Head or designee is responsible to ensure that all claims for Non-Elected Employees are reviewed and verified to be necessary and reasonable expenses incurred for the benefit of the County.



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- b. Elected Official Requirements: Elected Official expense reports must document that the expense in question met the requirements of this Policy.
- c. Mileage and Other Expenses Claim Form: Requests for reimbursement to individuals for expenses related to County business travel shall be submitted to the County Clerk's office on a signed original Mileage and Other Expense Claim form. Justification for reimbursement for travel-related expenses must include adequate information to justify payment, including the time, place, identification and cost of the various items (e.g., meals, parking, lodging, etc.), and the County business purpose.
- d. Supporting Documentation: Supporting documents and receipts, when required, should be the actual original invoices, receipts, sales slips, passenger coupons, hotel bills, etc. and must be submitted along with forms created, distributed and required by the County Clerk's office.
  - 1) Transportation, lodging, and miscellaneous expenses require supporting documentation to be submitted.
  - 2) Non-elected Traveler meal and incidental expenses do not require receipts.
  - 3) Elected Officials are required to submit detailed, itemized receipts.
  - 4) County business meetings meals require supporting documentation to be submitted including description of purpose of the meeting (e.g., agenda).

### TIMING REQUIREMENTS

- a. In accordance with IRS regulations, travelers must adequately account to the County for all expenses incurred within a reasonable period of time as follows:
  - 1) Expense claims for travel must be properly approved and submitted to the County Clerk's office in a timely manner.
    - ii. Any travel costs that are unsubstantiated shall be treated as taxable compensation to the traveler and reported on IRS Form W-2

RECEIVED AND APPROVED AS  
TO FORM ONLY BY THE  
LARAMIE COUNTY ATTORNEY