

City of Douglasville, Georgia
Travel Policy for Employees

Purpose

To provide guidelines for authorization and administration of travel expense reported by the City of Douglasville employees. The City of Douglasville has a responsibility to carefully account for public funds, to manage municipal finances wisely, and to plan for the provision of public services.

Objective

- I. Uniformity and fairness to all travelers
- II. Conservation of public funds
- III. Providing a level of comfort while traveling that allows business to be conducted in a dignified manner.

Scope

These policies and procedures apply to all City of Douglasville employees and all others who are authorized to travel on City business and seek reimbursement from the funds of City of Douglasville, Georgia.

Definitions

- I. **City business** – shall pertain to either of the following:
 - a. Business travel for the purpose of conducting official, authorized City business
 - b. Professional/Education-authorized travel to attend meetings, conferences, and training/certification programs for professional growth and development as well as the mutual benefit of the City.
- II. **Authorizing party** – individual authorized to approve or disapprove all travel-related requests. The individual shall be in a level of authority such that they can accurately evaluate the need for and the cost and benefit of such travel.
- III. **Requesting party** – individual who will be reimbursed for travel costs incurred out of the funds of the City of Douglasville, Georgia
- IV. **Metro Atlanta Area** – area including the counties of Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale.
- V. **Meals** – shall pertain to either of the following:
 - a. Breakfast: first meal of the day or meal falling between 5:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
 - b. Lunch: second meal of the day or meal falling between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
 - c. Dinner: last meal of the day or meal falling between 5:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.
- VI. **Continental Breakfast** – a light breakfast, typically consisting of coffee and rolls with butter and jam. Continental breakfast is not considered a full meal.

Administration

- I. Employees are expected to search out the most reasonably priced arrangements for their travel event, taking into consideration their personal safety and a reasonable level of comfort and dignity.
- II. The City does not contract with a specific travel agent. Employees may book travel arrangements through an agent of their choosing or by utilizing one of the many websites available for such purposes.
- III. Travel arrangements that include air, lodging and/or car rental should be made as far in advance as possible, preferably at least thirty (30) days prior to the travel event, to ensure the most economical and desirable arrangements.

Guidelines for Authorization of Travel

- I. Decisions as to which travel is authorized begin with the budgetary process. Travel needs must be anticipated and submitted in the annually adopted budget for approval by the Mayor and Council. All anticipated travel must be submitted in itemized form for approval. If needed, the budget can be amended at a designated period to gain compliance.
- II. Department Directors shall act as the authorizing party for travel authorizations submitted by their respective department staff; the City Manager shall act as the authorizing party for travel authorizations submitted by any Department Director.
- III. The authorizing party's responsibility is to stay within his/her departmental budget's travel allocation to complete all travel forms with all necessary funding information specific to their department and acknowledgment of budget verification is checked. A copy of the departmental budget must be submitted with the requesting party's travel request documents in order to prove the department has sufficient funds left for travel. If the department does not have sufficient funding left for travel, the City Manager can approve an intradepartmental transfer at his/her discretion, based on other available funds within the departmental budget.
- IV. Prior to approving a travel request, the authorizing party is responsible for determining that a sufficient unexpended appropriation remains in the travel budget to reimburse all expected costs of the travel.
- V. An expense report must be prepared to reflect only expenses essential to the conduct of City business by the employee.
- VI. Personal items, alcoholic beverages, and expenses of family members are not authorized.

Travel

The City shall reimburse or pay expenses incurred by employees for travel relating to official business of the City. The Travel Request Form is required for an advance of travel expenditures and/or exceptions to this policy.

I. Lodging:

Hotel charges shall qualify for reimbursement when they fall outside of the Metro-Atlanta Area and exceed a fifty (50) mile radius of the employee's place of work or residence (closer of the two). Hotel accommodations for travel less than a fifty (50) mile radius requires pre-authorization approved by the City Manager. All traveling personnel shall minimize the expense associated with hotel costs by contacting the hotel directly to make reservations, possibly retrieving a lower rate for qualified stays. To ensure the most economical and desirable lodging arrangements are made, employees shall acquire three (3) quotes from hotels located nearby the event host location, unless a block rate has been secured for lodging by the host organization of the event. Lodging taxes are not included in the per diem rate. Per diem rates can be found on the GSA website (www.gsa.gov).

If an employee is attending a conference in which the site is located at a hotel, it may be economically feasible for an employee to accommodate lodging at the host hotel for the conference, to relieve cost in other areas (i.e. travel costs to and from conference site, parking fees, etc.).

Lodging accommodations should be held using their department's Purchasing Card or using a check request. If the Purchasing Card is not accepted, a check will need to be mailed to the hotel. If cancellation is needed, an employee must do so in enough time, allowing funds to be reimbursed to the City. If an employee has used City funds for lodging and the funds cannot be reimbursed, the employee is responsible for reimbursing the City all fees. Only during extreme circumstances shall the employee not be responsible for reimbursing the City. An explanation shall be provided by the employee and approved by the employee's Department Director. The City Manager is subject to review the circumstance and provide the final decision.

As additional lodging expense where the event site is located more than ninety (90) to two hundred (200) miles from the employee's place of work and attends at least one day of the event, the employee shall be entitled to one (1) additional day of actual lodging expenses to be paid by the City. Furthermore, as additional lodging expense where the event site is located more than two hundred (200) miles from the employee's place of work and the employee attends at least one day of the event, the employee shall be entitled to two (2) additional day of actual lodging expenses to be paid by the City.

II. **Transportation:**

Authorization of the mode of travel shall be by the most economical means. Modes of transportation include vehicle, air, rail, taxi and any form of public transportation. The method selected by the traveler shall be the most economically feasible, taking into consideration the value of time. Use of a personal vehicle within ten (10) miles of the employee's place of work will not be reimbursed, however, each employee is encouraged to make use of City vehicles when traveling on official City business located less than ten (10) miles from the employee's place of work.

- a. **Mileage** – miles traveled in privately owned vehicles shall be reimbursed at the rate designated by the IRS (<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/2017-standard-mileage-rates-for-business-and-medical-and-moving-announced>). The Mayor/City Council may establish a rate lower than the IRS rate as a result of limited budget availability for travel. Mileage shall be calculated using the employee's place of work or employee's residence (lesser of the two) as the origination point and destination point on the traveler's itinerary. Excess mileage will not be reimbursed, only reasonable local travel within the origination and destination point may be reimbursed upon proper explanation. Normal wear and tear expenses associated with an employee's personal vehicle such as fuel, oil, tires, etc. shall not be subject to reimbursement by the City, as they are already included in the IRS rate.
- b. **Rental Cars** – expenses associated with rental cars, i.e. rental expense and fuel, will be paid at cost based on valid receipts. Employees shall rent full size or smaller vehicles based upon the number of employees needing transportation. Expenses associated with exceeding this car class will be the responsibility of the traveler, unless reasonable explanation is provided. Renting a car is only necessary when a proper City vehicle is not available for use.
- c. **Air/Rail** – transportation provided by major airlines or railroads shall be paid at cost to the traveler. To ensure the most economical and desirable arrangements are made, employees shall acquire three (3) quotes from preferred airlines or railroads (Delta, Southwest, American Airlines, Amtrak, etc.). These quotes must be attached to the travel authorization and submitted to the appropriate authorizing party. Employees are required to consider any baggage fees associated with air travel. Costs, or lack thereof, associated with baggage may determine which airline is the most economical. Travel will be limited to coach/economy classes of service. A change to a higher class (business or first class) or extension of the trip and change in departure or

arrival dates resulting in an added cost will be the responsibility of the traveler. Any reduction of expense associated with transportation costs as a result of extended or modified travel dates for personal benefit shall not be provided back to the traveler. The traveler will be responsible to pay the difference of the original amount, with proper showing of documentation. To avoid premium pricing, air/rail travel accommodations must be made at a minimum of thirty (30) days in advance of the day of travel.

If cancellation is needed an employee must do so in enough time, allowing funds to be reimbursed to the City. If an employee has used City funds for air/rail travel and the funds cannot be reimbursed the employee is responsible for reimbursing the City all funds. Only during extreme circumstances shall the employee not be responsible for reimbursing the City. An explanation shall be provided by the employee and approved by the employee's supervisor. The City Manager is subject to review the circumstance and provide the final decision.

- d. **Taxi/Shuttle/Public Transportation** – expenses associated with local transportation will be deemed eligible for reimbursements as long as receipts are provided with point-to-point explanation for this mode of transportation. Such documentation should accompany receipts. Employees should choose the most economical mode of local transportation possible. If lodging accommodations provide a shuttle service free of charge, the employee is required to utilize that service. If a free shuttle service is not provided, the employee is required to get quotes from three (3) preferred operations (i.e. Uber, Lyft, taxi service, town car, etc.) If three (3) quotes cannot be obtained, any transportation method can be reimbursed with appropriate receipt(s).
- e. **Tolls/Parking** – traveler shall be reimbursed for toll and parking charges. Receipts or any form of explanation are required for reimbursement.

III. **Meals/Incidentals:**

Expense associated with meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and incidentals (snacks, tips) shall be administered on a per diem basis by the City. Per diem amounts for cities across the United States will be derived from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) which updates per diem rates annually. This fiscal year's meal allowance rates can be found on the GSA website: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. Per diem advances to the employee prior to travel, if needed, shall be provided. The per diem is set as a maximum amount for travels. Occasionally, due to the location of the travel, the per diem may be insufficient.

When scheduled official conference or convention meals are not included as part of the registration fees, and where it can be clearly shown that the cost of such meal(s) exceeds

the per diem meal limit, the applicable amount shall be increased to the required amount but only if supported by receipts and approved by the employee's supervisor. If meals are provided by the training or conference, employees should not expense additional meals. If lodging accommodations or the conference provide full breakfast, employees are not eligible for breakfast per diem or reimbursement. However, if continental breakfast is provided, employees are eligible for breakfast per diem or reimbursement.

Room service is permissible as part of the per diem rate as set by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). Travelers should remain within the allocated funds for meals when using room service. Room service should not be charged using the City's Purchasing Card for reimbursement.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) meals and incidental expense (M&IE) rate does include taxes and tips. Incidental expenses include fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, and hotel staff.

IV. Credit Cards/Submission of Expenses:

Each traveler shall pay for expenses associated with lodging on a City Purchasing Card or a check request, if available. Any travel requests in which a City Purchasing Card is used must be submitted to Finance no less than two (2) weeks before travel begins.

V. Miscellaneous Expense:

Expenses such as printing, copying, and Wi-Fi usage is for business use only and should be coded as "miscellaneous expenses" on the expense report. These expenses shall be obtained at the most economical rate.

VI. Non-reimbursable items:

The following are non-reimbursable expenses:

1. Personal entertainment
2. Personal phone calls
3. Traffic and parking tickets
4. Theft, loss, or damage of personal goods
5. Personal care items
6. Expenses of family members
7. Anything that is not associated with City business

The above items are not eligible for reimbursement, under any circumstance. Please refer to the City's Purchasing Card Policy for proper usage.

Receipts are required for:

1. Lodging
2. Meals that are outside of per diem (example: state-funded dinners at conferences)
3. Air/rail fare
4. Baggage fees
5. Car rental
6. Taxi/shuttle/public transportation
7. Tolls/parking
8. Additional fuel costs for City-owned vehicles

Receipts must be submitted with the employee's Final Expense Report upon his/her return. Acceptable receipts must be itemized; containing transaction date, name of merchant, item purchased, and indication that the amount was paid by the person requesting reimbursement. Pictures of receipts are acceptable, however, will only be accepted from the employee's City-issued cellular device. If the traveling employee does not have a City-issued cellular device, actual receipts must be submitted.

Exceptions for any travel accommodations due to medical conditions, food allergies, handicaps of any kind, disabilities, religious or moral beliefs, or any other circumstance can be made for any employee traveling on City business and will be made at the discretion of the City Manager. Food allergies, prior medical conditions, etc. need to be officially documented by a licensed healthcare professional. Should any employee need to request any exception for travel, he/she are required to verify, no less than thirty (30) days in advance of the event, to ensure their special needs can be met. If it is determined that their needs cannot be met, the employee should make individual preparations and take precautions to satisfy their safety and physical well-being.

Upon an employee's return from travel, he/she must submit a Final Expense Report (Appendix A) within fifteen (15) days along with any receipts to prove purchase(s). If no additional purchases were made, employees are still required to submit this form.

Use of good judgement, common sense and economic responsibility shall be exhibited by every City employee when traveling on official City business and/or representing the City at any conference or training.

Exhibit A Advance Travel Request Form & Expense Report Form

ADVANCE TRAVEL REQUEST FORM

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|--|--|--|
| NAME OF TRAVELER | DEPT | DEPARTURE DATE | RETURN DATE | | | | |
| <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: 8px;">LAST</td> <td style="font-size: 8px;">FIRST</td> </tr> </table> | | | LAST | FIRST | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| LAST | FIRST | | | | | | |

PURPOSE OF TRAVEL

Notes:
 - All Travel Must Be Approved By City Manager Marcia Hampton and Submitted No More Than Two Weeks Prior to Departure Date
 - If Paid with PCard; The Request Packet Must Also Be Attached to the PCard Statement
 - All Requests Must Have Backup (Registrations, Receipts, Reservations, Etc)

ACCOMODATION INFORMATION

| | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| VENDOR | TOTAL ACCOMODATIONS | PAYMENT METHOD |
| | | PCARD <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | CHECK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| RATE 1 | DAYS | RATE 2 |
| \$ - | | \$ - |
| | | 0.00 |

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| VENDOR | TOTAL REGISTRATION | PAYMENT METHOD |
| | | PCARD <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | CHECK <input type="checkbox"/> |

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| EMPLOYEE VEHICLE | MILEAGE .535¢ | TOTAL TRANS | PAYMENT METHOD |
| | 0.00 | \$ - | PCARD <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | CHECK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| VENDOR | TOTAL | If Not Driving Personal Vehicle | |
| | \$ - | | |

PER DIEM & MISC INFORMATION

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| MEAL | SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | PAYMENT METHOD |
| BREAKFAST | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | PCARD <input type="checkbox"/> |
| LUNCH | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | CHECK <input type="checkbox"/> |
| DINNER | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| INCIDENTALS | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| TOTALS | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | TOTAL PER-DIEM \$ - |

MISC EXPENSES TOTALS

RECEIPTS MUST BE ATTACHED WITH AN EXPLANATION OF EXPENSE

APPROVALS

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| BUDGETED TRAVEL | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO | ADVANCE REQUEST | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | AMOUNT DUE FROM CITY | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">\$0.00</div> | | | | |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div> <p>APPROVAL BY CITY MANAGER</p> | | | <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid red; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid red; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid red; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid red; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table> | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

EXPENSE REPORT FORM

NAME OF TRAVELER

DEPT

DEPARTURE DATE

RETURN DATE

LAST

FIRST

PURPOSE OF TRAVEL

Notes:

- Expense Reports Must Be Turned In To Finance
Within 15 Calendar Days of The Return Date

ACCOMODATION INFORMATION

ACTUAL EXPENSE FOR ACCOMODATIONS

\$ -

RECEIPTS ATTACHED

YES

PREPAYMENT FOR ACCOMODATIONS

\$ -

NO

DUE TO/FROM CITY \$ -

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

ACTUAL EXPENSE FOR REGISTRATION

\$ -

RECEIPTS ATTACHED

YES

PREPAYMENT FOR REGISTRATION

\$ -

NO

DUE TO/FROM CITY \$ -

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

ACTUAL EXPENSE FOR TRANSPORTAION

\$ -

RECEIPTS ATTACHED

YES

PREPAYMENT FOR TRANSPORTATION

\$ -

NO

DUE TO/FROM CITY \$ -

PER DIEM & MISC INFORMATION

ACTUAL EXPENSE FOR PER DIEM

\$ -

RECEIPTS ATTACHED FOR MISC EXPENSES

YES

PREPAYMENT FOR PER DIEM

\$ -

NO

DUE TO/FROM CITY \$ -

COMMENTS AND ADDITIONAL EXPENSE APPROVALS

TOTAL DUE TO / FROM CITY \$ -

COMMENTS / EXPLANATIONS:

ACCOUNT NUMBER

SIGNATURE

PRINTED NAME

SUBMITTED BY: _____