

 Lake County Policy	10.9 Travel and Business Expense Reimbursement Policy
	Approved by the County Board on: Month DD, YYYY

1. Purpose and Intent

1.1 The purpose and the intent of the Travel and Business Expense Reimbursement Policy is:

- To ensure that business expenses are reimbursed to County employees and officials in a consistent, fair, and equitable manner throughout the County and to ensure that the County complies with applicable federal and state rules and regulations.
- To regulate the types of official business for which travel, meal, and lodging expenses are allowed.
- To establish the maximum allowable reimbursement for travel, meal, and lodging expenses.
- To establish standardized forms and procedures for submission of travel, meal, and lodging and provide guidance on the documentation required.

2. Background

- 2.1 In accordance with the Local Government Travel Expense Control Act, 50 ILCS 150, all local public agencies are required to regulate the reimbursement of all travel, meal, and lodging expenses of officers and employees.
- 2.2 Travel and business expense records are subject to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) laws and regulations.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all departments, Lake County Board, agencies/commissions, and elected offices whose funding is approved by the Lake County Board, unless meeting criteria that waves this requirement as defined in policy 3.1 *Finance Policy*.
- 3.2 Collective bargaining agreements prevail, if any policies conflict.
- 3.3 Department policies or grant requirements that are more stringent supersede this policy.
- 3.4 This policy covers expenses for business purposes such as meals (see 5.5).

4. Authority

- 4.1 The Authority as stated in 3.1 Finance Policy, Section 4. Authority applies.

5. Policy

5.1 General Principles

- 5.1.1 Lake County encourages employees to participate in job related training, seminars, conferences, professional affiliations, and business-related functions which serve in the best interest of the County.
- 5.1.2 Travel, meal, and lodging expenses are allowed while an employee or official is on official business. Official business is defined as performing the authorized duties, responsibilities, and educational training required by the employee or official's position.
- 5.1.3 Expenses incurred during business travel will be paid by the County, based upon documented, reasonable, and necessary expenses.
- 5.1.4 Lake County employees are expected to exercise good judgment and proper regard for public funds while incurring travel and business expenses. Personal and non-business expenses will not be reimbursed.
- 5.1.5 It is the responsibility of the Department Head or authorized designee to ensure reimbursable expenses incurred in the performance of County duties are within budgetary constraints established by the County Board.
- 5.1.6 Policy review and update: The County Administrator through the Chief Financial Officer shall review the Travel and Business Expense Reimbursement Policy annually to ensure the policy remains consistent with all county, state, and federal rules and regulations; and to ensure that the maximum reimbursable amounts established by this policy are reasonable for current economic conditions. All policy updates shall be in accordance with *3.1 Finance Policy*.

5.2 Methods of Reimbursement

- 5.2.1 Payroll Reimbursement: Upon completion of travel, a request for reimbursement using a standardized form, receipts and/or supporting documentation are submitted to the Lake County Finance Department Accounts Payable for validation and reimbursement. The reimbursement will be included in the employee's payroll check as non-taxed dollars.
- 5.2.2 Procurement Card: The Purchasing Card (P-Card) Program is designed to make County purchases easy and flexible. This includes paying for travel expenses without relying on personal credit cards or travel advances. P-Cardholders should use the P-Card to cover travel and business expenses for themselves and other department employees. Itemized receipts are required for all expenses except for per diem allowances for meals. Itemized receipt is defined in section 5.9.1. Travel receipts, training, or conference registration documentation should be attached to the transaction in the P-Card online portal. The Lake County P-Card Policy may contain more stringent requirements which will supersede this policy.

5.3 Travel Expenses

- 5.3.1 Day Travel: Travel for business purposes within 75 miles from the employee's work location. Eligible reimbursements for local travel include registration/conference

fees, meals, parking/tolls and/or mileage. A conference agenda or event registration must be included in the P-Card supporting documentation or attached to the standardized expense reimbursement form submitted to Accounts Payable.

- 5.3.2 Overnight Travel: Travel for business purposes over 75 miles from the employee's work location, which necessitates an overnight stay. Departments are encouraged to secure their travel and training arrangements at least 30 days in advance. Eligible reimbursements for overnight travel include lodging, registration/conference fees, meals, parking/tolls and/or transportation. When traveling overnight for a conference, a conference agenda must be included with the P-Card supporting documentation or attached to the standardized expense reimbursement form submitted to Accounts Payable.

If the location of the meeting is within 75 miles of the employee's work location, written permission by the Department Head or their designee justifying the overnight stay(s) must be secured in advance and submitted with the travel reimbursement request upon completion of the business travel.

- 5.3.3 Lake County highly encourages employees to register for conferences/training and make travel arrangements as far in advance as possible. Travel and training arrangements are typically made at a minimum of 30 days in advance.

5.4 Eligible Reimbursable Expenses:

- 5.4.1 Registration/Conference Fees: Registration fees shall be for attendance of professional and educational activities related to County business.
- 5.4.2 Lodging: Lodging shall be reimbursed at actual cost for a standard single room (or equivalent) consistent with facilities available within reasonable proximity to the location of the business purpose. When attending a conference, the employee is responsible for ensuring that lodging may not exceed the negotiated conference hotel rate, if rooms are available. For travel without negotiated rates, lodging may not exceed \$400 per night including taxes and fees. Employees are encouraged to make their best effort in finding an economical lodging rate by taking advantage of special rates including seminar/conference block rates or government rates. If attending a conference, the conference agenda must be included for the lodging fees pursuant to section 5.3.2.

The number of nights for which an employee may obtain reimbursement will be limited to the number necessary to conduct County business. If the location of the meeting is within 75 miles of the employee's work location, written permission by the Department Head or their designee justifying the overnight stay(s) must be secured in advance.

- 5.4.3 Meal Expense Reimbursement: Meal expenses will be reimbursed on a per diem basis (allowance) or will be reimbursed to the extent of the actual cost of the meal up to the maximum limits established in this section. Itemized receipts are only required for the actual cost of meals, not for per diem meals. Taxes and tips are included in the limits. Employees will not be reimbursed for meals paid for or provided by others.

Employees will not be reimbursed for meals paid for by others or provided as part of a hotel or conference fee. A copy of the conference agenda or event registration must be attached to the reimbursement request to verify whether meals were provided as part of the conference or event. If a conference or event registration includes meals, the per diem will be reduced accordingly and no P-Card expenses will be reimbursed for those meals.

Breakfast:	\$ 15.00
Lunch:	\$ 25.00
Dinner:	\$ 35.00

All meals for a day: \$ 75.00 (including taxes, tips and fees)

Per diem means that there is a dollar amount provided to the traveler and no receipts or individual meal limitations apply.

Travelers are not allowed to combine per diem and actual receipt requests.

If the cardholder is paying for meals for additional employees, their full names must also be included on the receipt, supporting documentation or in the P-Card transaction notes.

Travelers may request an exception for reimbursement of meals provided by a conference or hotel to be approved by their Department Head or authorized designee.

Travel commencing before 6 am will authorize breakfast and travel concluding after 7 pm will authorize dinner. Meals will only be reimbursed when travel extends four consecutive hours or more.

Maximum meal amounts will be evaluated annually and may change based on consumer price index, inflation, and/or general economic condition of the County, at the discretion of the Chief Financial Officer, without Board approval up to 5% per annum.

- 5.4.4 Transportation: Transportation costs incurred for travel must be ordinary, necessary and the most economical option available.

Rental cars: Employees may be allowed to rent a car for non-local travel, limited to:

The cost of renting a car is less than alternative methods such as transportation by other commercial common carriers and other transportation options such as car service, taxi, and ride sharing.

Car rental will be reimbursed at the compact car rate unless the need for a larger car can be justified to the Department Head or authorized designee. Daily rental rates, taxes, surcharges, gas, and car rental insurance are all reimbursable items.

Commercial Common Carriers: Commercial common carriers include airline (refundable), train (coach) and bus tickets (coach). Airfare will be reimbursed at the actual cost of least expensive, refundable ticket up to a maximum of \$1,000 per

roundtrip fare inclusive of taxes, additional airline fees, seat selection and one carry on or checked bag.

Per Scope 3.3 - Department policies or grant requirements that are more stringent supersede this Policy. For example, a department may disallow certain transportation expenses due to grant requirements.

County vehicle use: Departments may allow the use of County vehicles, when traveling on County business. Fuel for County vehicles is available at the Division of Transportation and should be used for local trips. Additional fuel and parking charges paid by the employee will be reimbursed with itemized receipts. Receipts for fuel should include vehicle number of County vehicle used.

Personal vehicle use: Personal vehicle use for travel will be reimbursed using the currently approved Internal Revenue Service mileage rate which may be located at www.irs.gov. Fuel, towing and repairs for personal vehicles are not allowable expenses.

Local travel: local mileage is limited to the mileage in excess of normal commuting mileage (from the employee's or official's residence to their primary County work location).

Non-Local travel: long distance mileage is limited to the lower of (a) the most economical transportation available or (b) the miles driven multiplied by the current Internal Revenue Service mileage rate.

Other Transportation Costs: Car service, taxicab, and ride sharing are all reimbursable at actual cost with a valid receipt, up to \$100 per ride, including tip. These services are only reimbursable when it is directly related to the business purpose and is approved by the Department Head or authorized designee.

5.4.5 Parking/Tolls: Parking incurred by employees traveling on official County business is reimbursable. On-airport parking is permitted for short business trips, defined as less than two nights. For extended trips, of more than two nights, employees are encouraged to use economy facilities or other cost-effective modes of transportation. A receipt is required to be reimbursed for parking. No receipt is required for tolls.

5.4.6 Non-Reimbursable Expenses

The following are examples of non-reimbursable expenses. This list is not intended to be all inclusive.

- Alcoholic Beverages
- Personal items
- Personal use of laundry and dry-cleaning services
- Personal use of Wi-Fi
- Personal phone calls
- Personal portions of a trip combined with business travel
- Early check-in or late check-out fees
- TSA Precheck

- Travel protection
- Travel agent fees
- Transportation for personal purposes
- Change of flight fees (if not required for business purpose)
- Parking fines or traffic fines
- Repairs, towing, and car wash expenses for personal vehicles
- Valet service or valet parking
- Non-meal related tips
- Any additional costs due to extending travel for personal reasons
- Movies or other entertainment

5.5 Expenses for Business Purposes: Meals provided to employees or business associates which are held for the convenience of the Department Head or authorized designee are allowable when related to official County business. Meals may be reimbursed up to the Meal Expense allowable amounts listed in 5.4.3 Meal Expense.

5.6 Sales Tax: Purchases made by Lake County are generally exempt from the payment of state, county and local tax. Sales tax exceptions are restaurant food, airline flights and hotel rooms.

5.7 Tips: Tips for meals, taxicabs and ride share services are authorized up to a maximum of 20%. However, any tips shall be included in the total cost and subject to the relevant maximum limit.

5.8 Reimbursement and Forms

5.8.1 Standardized Forms: In accordance with Public Act 99-604, Lake County uses a standardized form for submission of travel, meal and lodging expenses. Approval of reimbursement may only occur after receipts and documentation have been submitted to the Finance Department in compliance with this Policy and accounts payable procedures.

5.8.2 After completing travel, an employee or official will request reimbursement on a standardized expense reimbursement form. Required documentation includes receipts for the cost of travel, meals or lodging for expenses incurred; name, job title, and department for the individual requesting reimbursement; date(s) of travel; travel purpose; conference agenda/itinerary/brochure (if, applicable); and any other necessary support to validate travel. The form and receipts must be submitted to the Finance Department no later than 30 days after the last day of travel. Employees may accumulate non-grant related small dollar amounts and submit on a monthly or quarterly basis.

5.8.3 Missing Receipt: If a receipt or invoice is not available, a Travel and Business Expense Policy Exception Form must be submitted as the supporting documentation for the transaction. One form must be completed for each missing receipt. This form must be signed by the employee and the Department Head or authorized designee. **Repeated submission of Exception Forms or more than five exceptions in one fiscal year is considered non-compliant with this Policy.**

5.9 Documentation

- 5.9.1 Receipts: Detailed/itemized receipts are required, except for per diem meals. Receipts must have the vendor’s name, a description of the goods/services received, the date, line-item cost and the total expenses, including tips (if applicable). A credit card receipt only showing the total cost is not an itemized receipt and will not be accepted. An electronic copy or a photograph of a receipt is acceptable, provided it is clear and readable.
- 5.9.2 It is the responsibility of the person seeking reimbursement to provide all the required documentation and as requested by the Finance Department.

6. Approval of expenses per the Local Government Travel Expense Control Act.

- 6.1 Expenses for travel, meals and lodging of: (1) any officer or employee that exceeds the maximum allowed per this policy; or (2) any member of the Lake County Board, may only be approved by a roll call vote at an open meeting of the Lake County Board

7. Severability

- 7.1 If any section or provision of this policy should be held invalid by operation of law, none of the remainder shall be affected.

8. Non-Discrimination

- 8.1 Lake County prohibits the discriminatory application, implementation, or enforcement of any provision of this policy on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, source of income, gender identity housing status, or any other protected category established by law, statute, or ordinance.

Policy History			
Version	Date Adopted	Legistar Item #	Notes
	February 14, 2017	17-0160	Previous Name: “Employee Reimbursement Policy”
Revised	January 17, 2023	23-0102	Renamed and updated to incorporate operational and administrative improvements
Revised		TBD	Annual review with updates to include both per diem and actual cost meal reimbursements as well as refundable airfare for efficient business travel.