



LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY POLICY

Subject: Travel Policy	Policy No: 1.1.2
Approved:	Effective Date: July 1, 2019 Revised Date

I. Policy Statement

This policy establishes guidelines and procedures for the amount and type of travel expenses eligible for reimbursement. Travel expenses must have a public purpose and serve the public interest. All travel expenditures must be reasonable and necessary.

II. Applicability

Scope:

This policy is applicable to all county employees. For purposes of this policy, “employee” includes all Lewis and Clark County employees and elected officials.

Administration:

- A. Employees are responsible for following the policy, and accurately tracking and reporting all travel related expenditures.
- B. Department Heads are responsible for the implementation of the policy within their departments; employee compliance with the travel policy; prior authorization of travel; approval of travel advances; settlements, and reimbursement requests.
- C. County Finance is responsible for administering, interpreting, and applying the terms of this policy.
- D. Chief Administrative Officer has final authority

III. Definitions

Board or BoCC. The Board of County Commissioners of Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The Chief Administrative Officer of Lewis and Clark County, Montana, or such person’s designee

County. Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

Department Director. The duly appointed Director of any department of the County.

IV. Directives

A. Travel and Training Reimbursement Guidelines

1. Employees will be reimbursed for transportation, lodging, meals, and certain incidental expenses while traveling on approved business for the County.
2. General Reimbursement Guidelines
 - a. Employees must obtain prior approval for travel from the department director (or their designee).
 - b. Claims for reimbursement will be submitted on travel voucher forms approved by the Chief Financial Officer or designee and must include receipts when required.
 - c. All reimbursements will be subject to applicable IRS regulations.
3. Travel Time – Employees will be compensated for travel time when traveling on approved County-related business or to attend required training.
4. Transportation Costs
 - a. All commercial air travel should be by the least expensive service available and will be reimbursed with appropriate receipts. The cost of one checked bag is an allowable expense, but the traveler is responsible for class upgrades and itinerary or booking changes which are not the result of an emergency or required to satisfy the business needs of the County.
 - b. Whenever it is cost effective to use an automobile for travel, employees will travel by car. Use of a County vehicle is preferred whenever car travel is necessary. If personal funds are used to purchase gas for a County vehicle, a receipt must be submitted to obtain a reimbursement. In the event that a private automobile is used for approved County-related business or to attend required training, the employee will be reimbursed according to the IRS established mileage allowance. Departments will be notified of the current rate at the beginning of a calendar year.
 - c. Employees who drive County vehicles must possess a valid driver's license. Employees who use a private vehicle for approved or required County business must also carry liability insurance which meets or exceeds the requirements cited in MCA 61-6-103. The County reserves the right to require proof of insurance for any personal vehicle used for County business.
 - d. Taxis, Airport Limousines, Shuttle Buses, Shared Rides, and Parking expenses are reimbursable, and receipts are required if more than \$10. Valet parking, unless the only parking option available, and parking tickets are not eligible for reimbursement.
 - e. Public Transit fares are reimbursable without receipts if the total for such expenses is less than \$10 for the entire trip.
 - f. If an employee is traveling for an agency other than the County, i.e. the federal government, the employee will follow that agency's expense policies.
5. Meal Costs
 - a. **Overnight Travel** – Employees are reimbursed for meals in accordance with allowances established by IRS regulations. The amount of per diem paid varies depending on the location. Per Diem amounts are available on the web at

www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates or through the County Finance Office. This site provides per diem rates for travel anywhere within the continental United States. If travel is not for a full day, the per diem breakdown is as follows:

- i. Breakfast allowance – 20% of the total per diem rate. (Travel more than three hours between 12:01 a.m. and 10:00a.m.)
 - ii. Lunch allowance – 30% of the total per diem rate. (Travel more than three hours between 10:01 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.)
 - iii. Dinner allowance – 50% of the total per diem rate. (Travel more than three hours between 3:01 p.m. and 12:01 a.m.)
 - iv. Any combination of above not to exceed the appropriate per diem amount.
- b. On the first and last day of travel, employees are only eligible for 75 percent of the total M&IE rate for their destination location.
 - c. Per Diem reimbursements provided for above are representative of the maximum allowable for any meal, or series of meals. It is the employee's responsibility to determine per diem rate before traveling. Employees will not be reimbursed for meal expenses above stated maximum amount.
 - d. Meal receipts are not required as long as lodging receipt is attached indicating the date, location and purpose of the travel.
 - e. **Same Day Travel** – Same day meals are considered taxable income by the IRS. A properly approved reimbursement claim must be submitted to payroll with an employee's timesheet. Reimbursement for same day travel expenses do not require meal receipts provided expenses are adequately accounted for. Employees must be at least 20 miles from headquarters and must be away from headquarters for more than three continuous hours. Expenses will be considered adequately accounted for if the *date, place and the business purpose relating to the expense* is provided. Reimbursement rates will be calculated using the per diem rate and the percent allowed for each meal as outlined in "Overnight Travel" above.
 - f. **Other Eligible Meal Expense** – Meals are also reimbursed at the per diem rate in the following situations and subject to CAO approval:
 - i. when employees are required to eat at the employer's premises for the employer's convenience or in emergency situations;
 - ii. when employees are required to attend a business luncheon or dinner; or
 - iii. when meals are provided for a County board while conducting business.
 - g. Any amount an employee claims for meal reimbursement that is below the actual per diem amount will be paid without receipts. Adequate accounting, as defined above, must be provided to be eligible for this reimbursement. Per Diem expenses are paid through the normal claim process.
 - h. Per Lewis and Clark County Credit Card Policy (**reference**) meals cannot be paid with a county issued credit card.

6. Lodging Costs

All county employees are authorized the actual cost of lodging at a conference site. If no rooms are available at the conference site, an employee will be reimbursed for the cost of lodging at an alternative location as long as its room rate does not exceed the conference room rate. In any event, employees are encouraged to seek less expensive

room options if available nearby. Documentation which shows the conference room rate must be provided with a travel advance or a reimbursement request.

If a conference is held at a site which provides no lodging, or if lodging is unrelated to the attendance at a conference, reimbursement will not exceed the maximum rate quote for the city on the US General Services Administration (GSA) website. If the city is not listed on the rate schedule for the destination, the standard rate for lodging in the continental United States will apply. Employees are reminded to inquire if a government rate is available.

Lodging, per the State of Montana Department of Administration, in Big Sky, Colstrip, Bozeman and Cooke City will be reimbursed at actual costs all year. Lodging in Gardiner, Kalispell, Polson, West Glacier, West Yellowstone, Whitefish and Red Lodge will be paid at actual costs from May 1 through September 30 of each year. Receipts are required.

7. Incidental Expenses

The County will reimburse the employee for incidental costs. Incidental costs may not exceed the daily limit as outlined by the GSA www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates. GSA regulations describe incidentals as: fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, and hotel staff.

8. Unallowable Expenses

Travel and/or flight insurance is not allowable. Alcoholic beverages and expenditures of a personal nature are not allowable. Examples include: hotel/motel room service charges in excess of applicable per diem rates, mini-bar and amenity charges; porter service for personal luggage; laundry service; in room movies; transportation expense for dining out; optional valet parking; parking tickets, and fees at a conference or meeting for social events such as golf, sightseeing, or the entertainment of a spouse or guest. Wifi and internet charges are not allowable. Other expenditures, unless allowable, may be rejected without proper travel authorization or expenditure documentation.

9. Reimbursement Procedures

Travel vouchers must be submitted for all requests for reimbursement, provide conference material or other supporting documentation for overnight trips; must be signed by the employee and approved by the appropriate supervisor or department head. No one may authorize his or her own claim for reimbursement. Amounts spent in excess of maximum per diem allowances will not be reimbursed.

10. Travel Advances

Upon approval by the employee's supervisor, advances for amounts greater than \$100 may be granted for travel expenses up to 100% of the per diem costs, including hotel costs. Employees must submit a Travel Expense Voucher, available from your supervisor or County Finance and include conference related material to justify expenses requested. Whenever possible, county issued credit cards should be used for lodging. Mileage costs will not be issued on a travel advance; mileage is a reimbursable expense. Requests should be made at least two, but no more than 3 weeks prior to departure.

A travel advance must be settled within fifteen (15) days of returning to work. The employee must complete the Travel Expense Voucher and provide original receipts or other supporting documentation. If the claim is less than the advance, the employee must reimburse the County within thirty (30) days for the difference using either a personal check or cash.

11. Elected Officials

As allowed by state law, County Commissioners, County Attorney, Sheriff/Coroner, Justice of the Peace, Clerk of Court, Treasurer/Clerk and Recorder, and County Superintendent of Schools will be allowed actual travel expenses for attending their respective association meetings or conventions held within the state (Section 7-5-2142, 7-5-2143, 7-5-2144 and 7-5-2145 MCA)

12. Travel Expenses for Non-County Employees

The County will pay travel costs for someone who is not an employee if the person is traveling at the specific request of the County; is serving as a volunteer to a County program; or, is providing services under a County contract, which includes provisions for reimbursement for travel related costs. Grant-related travel must be consistent with this policy, unless the grant provides otherwise. It is strongly recommended that departments consult with the County Finance Department before travel arrangements are made for a non-county employee. Non-county employees are not eligible for travel advances.

V. **Closing**

Provisions of this policy will be followed unless they conflict with negotiated labor contracts which will take precedence to the extent applicable.

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the County Finance Department.

VI. **References**

- A. Lewis and Clark County Credit Card Policy
- B. Montana Code Annotated,
- C. US General Services Administration

VII. **Attachments**

None