

TRAVEL POLICY

WARREN COUNTY

Section 1. Purpose:

The intent of this policy is to make uniform provisions for the reimbursement of necessary expenses of county employees and board members who are required to travel in the performance of their duties and in the interest of Warren County.

Section 2. Policy Administration:

The respective department heads are responsible for the administration of the provisions of this policy and are authorized to approve travel reimbursements except where otherwise stated.

Section 3. Definitions:

- A. Covered Parties – All county employees and Board Members are covered by this policy. Non-county employees traveling on official business whose expenses are paid by the County are subject to this policy to the same extent as County employees. **Expenses for family members will not be paid by the County and should be paid directly to the vendor by the traveling party.**
- B. Authorizing Party – The employee's department head will be the party responsible for authorizing travel and approving expense reports. This authority may be delegated to a supervisor by the department head. The County Manager shall approve all department head travel, and a designated member of the Board of Commissioners shall approve travel of the County Manager and other Board members. All out-of-state travel must be pre-approved by the County Manager. All requests shall be approved in accordance with this policy.
- C. Third Party Paid Travel – When a third party (i.e., the State or grantor agency) will reimburse the County for all or a portion of travel expenses, this information must be provided in writing to the Finance Office at the time the "Authorization for Overnight Travel" form is submitted.
- D. Necessary Expense – All reasonable charges incurred by an employee caused by travel in the interest of the county, including transportation, meals, registrations, internet access, taxi fares for business purposes and parking fees will be reimbursed. Non allowable expenses include fines, alcoholic beverages or illegal expenses, valet parking, laundry charges, personal telephone calls, movie rentals, tips or similar personal expenses.
- E. Duty Station – The location at which the employee spends the majority of his or her working hours.
- F. Travel Period – The month in which the travel takes place.
- G. Authorized Transportation Modes – Following are authorized modes of transportation available to employees and officials traveling on county business:
 - i. County-owned vehicles. Should be used when a vehicle is available to an employee. When a county vehicle is used it should be picked up at the duty station on the day of travel. However if the meeting destination is closer to

- your home than your duty station or if your departure time is before 7:00 a.m., a county vehicle can be driven home the night before the meeting and returned the next working day.
- ii. A county vehicle should be used for all travel when a vehicle is available (i.e., to a conference/seminar/meeting and for local travel). It is the responsibility of the department head to ensure this policy is administered. If no county vehicle is available, use of a personal vehicle must be approved in advance by the department head in order to receive mileage reimbursement. In addition, when making trips for local travel (post office, interdepartmental mail, etc.) and a county vehicle is not available contact another department in the vicinity of your office to coordinate the use of their vehicle or contact the Buildings and Grounds Department for assistance with your in town interdepartmental task.
 - iii. Reimbursement may be approved for direct expenses for county owned vehicles when charges cannot be made to the County, and county gas or services is not available.
 - iv. Privately owned vehicle. May be used when a county vehicle is not available. Reimbursement for expenses is limited to the mileage allowance.
 - v. Public Transportation. Air Travel will be reimbursed for coach fare with every effort being made to take advantage of the greatest discounts available. Employee may be allowed air travel if cost of airfare plus any fees for parking, taxi or rental cars does not exceed cost of driving personal vehicle.
 - vi. Rental Cars. Rental cars will be allowed only when no other, more economical mode of transportation is available and must be approved in advance by the authorizing party. A receipt from the rental company is necessary for reimbursement.
- H. Mileage Allowance – The amount authorized to be paid on a per-mile basis for travel in a privately owned vehicle.
- i. Mileage is computed from the duty station or from home to the conference/workshop location, whichever is less.
 - ii. The mileage allowance shall increase/decrease in accordance with the mileage rate for the State of North Carolina. Upon recommendation from the Finance Director, the County Manager will adjust the rate accordingly. (Current business standard rate set by the Internal Revenue Service and the NC Office of State Budget and Management is .510 cents per mile effective January 1, 2011)
 - iii. Mileage verification using Mapquest.com should be attached to all travel requests.
 - iv. Employees attending the same meeting/workshop should carpool. If an employee chooses not to carpool and drives separately, mileage reimbursement will not be allowed. Extenuating circumstances must be approved in advance.
- I. Meal Allowance – The following schedule shall be used to reimburse the cost of meals in connection with overnight business: ma

	In-State	Out-of-State
Breakfast	\$ 6.00	\$ 8.00
Lunch	7.00	12.00
Dinner	17.00	20.00

The above amounts are inclusive of tips. Meals will be reimbursed for overnight travel only. The number of meals for which an allowance is due on days of partial travel shall be determined as follows and must be approved on the Authorization for Overnight Travel:

Breakfast - Depart duty station prior to 7:00 a.m. (if the calculation does not allow for breakfast, it also does not allow for a hotel accommodation the night before.

Lunch - Depart from duty station prior to 11:00 a.m. on day of departure. Return to duty station after 1:30 p.m. on day of return

Dinner - Return to duty station after 8:00 p.m. on day of return

No receipts are required for meals. No reimbursement will be made for a meal included in a registration fee.

- J. Non-overnight Travel – In order to comply with IRS regulations, there will be no meal reimbursement during travel that does not require overnight travel. If a registration fee for a one-day program includes a meal, or if lunch or dinner is a part of a meeting or conference, the full cost of the registration is reimbursed, inclusive of the meal.
- K. Airfare may be requested in advance as a cash advance or reimbursed on the expense report. In each case, the receipt must be attached to the travel expense report.

Section 4. Procedures for Travel:

- A. Authorization for Overnight Travel – Requests for overnight travel **must be approved in advance**. Overnight travel expenses incurred without prior approval by the authorizing party and the Finance Office will not be reimbursed. The computation of meal allowances on days of departure and return will be determined by using the timetable indicated in Section 3.I. of this policy.
 - i. One (1) hour of travel time will be allowed for each fifty (50) miles traveled.
 - ii. Overnight stay will be authorized for the night before the meeting if the meeting/session time plus thirty (30) minutes allowance for registration, using the breakfast allowance calculation in Section 3.I., requires you to leave prior to 7:00 a.m.
 - iii. The “Authorization for Overnight Travel” form must be submitted to the Finance Office at least ten (10) working days prior to travel.
 - iv. A copy of the meeting/training announcement, including the agenda, must be attached to the “Authorization for Overnight Travel” request form.

- v. The Finance Office will determine whether the request is in accordance with the provisions of this policy and may approve or deny it.
- vi. An approved copy of the "Authorization for Overnight Travel" form will be returned to the department as evidence that travel has been approved by the Finance Office.
- vii. Travel advance requests should be submitted on "Check Requests for Approved Travel" form. Travel advance requests should not be submitted to Finance Office until "Authorization for Overnight Travel" form has been approved and returned to the department. **(Do not submit travel advance check requests with "Authorization for Overnight Travel")**

B. Explanations of Travel Advance Requests:

- i. Registration – The Finance Office will issue a check to the sponsoring agency for registration fees for meetings and conferences. A "Check Requests for Approved Travel" form must be submitted to the Finance Office no less than five (5) working days prior to travel in order for a check to be issued. For non-overnight travel registration request, a copy of the workshop/meeting notice must be attached
 - ii. Hotel Deposits – The Finance Office will issue a check payable to the hotel. A "Check Requests for Approved Travel" form must be submitted to the Finance Office no less than five (5) working days prior to the date of travel in order for a check to be issued. A full itemized bill from the hotel must be attached to the monthly expense report, not a copy of a credit card receipt. Hotel charges will be paid at the single rate for employees or officials traveling with their families. Every effort should be made to stay at hotels offering a government rate.
 - iii. Cash Advance –Cash Advances may be requested, using the "Check Requests for Approved Travel" form when miscellaneous expenses are \$50.00 or more and were previously approved on the Overnight Travel Authorization. **NO CASH ADVANCE WILL BE ISSUED FOR LESS THAN \$50.00.** A receipt for parking, taxi fares and airfare must be submitted when travel is cleared. Cash advances will not be issued prior to three (3) working days of departure. Cash advances should be settled within thirty (30) days following the trip. No future advance will be issued until the prior advance is settled. If an advance is not settled within sixty (60) days following the month of travel, the cash advance may be deducted from the employee's payroll check.
 - iv. No advances for any purpose will be issued if expense reports are outstanding more than sixty (60) days following the month of travel.
 - v. Please use travel forms designed by the Finance Office. Altered forms will be returned to the department for resubmission on correct forms. These forms can be obtained via e-mail from the finance office.
- C. Travel Expense Reports – Expense reports should be submitted monthly, by the 5th day of the month following the month of travel. Travel reimbursement checks are written to employees on the 10th of the month

following the travel period. Expenses should be itemized for each day. All expense reports should be signed by the supervisor before submission to the Finance Office. All unsigned expense reports will be returned to the department for signature and may result in a check not being issued by the 10th of the month. If funds are due the County, funds must be submitted to the Finance Office with the expense statement. Expense statements must include original receipts for allowable charges ((i.e., registration (if paid by the employee), hotel, parking, airfare, car rental, taxi fares, etc.)). One "safe arrival" personal phone call, not to exceed \$5.00, will be allowed if documented.

This revised policy is adopted this 3rd day of November, 2014.



Bertadean W. Baker
Bertadean W. Baker, Chairman
Warren County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Angelena Kearney-Dunlap
Angelena Kearney-Dunlap
Clerk to the Board

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