

Category: 300
Number: 351

Subject: **TRAVEL AND EMPLOYEE EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for travel and employee reimbursement of expenses incurred by County Officials and Employees as a result of their official duties established by the Board of Commissioners and in accordance with the specific provisions enumerated herein. This policy is intended to reimburse for employee expenses. If you are traveling with non-employees, those individuals shall cover their own expenses.
2. **AUTHORITY:** The Saginaw County Board of Commissioners.
3. **APPLICATION:** The rules and regulations herein set forth apply to all personnel paid by Saginaw County, pursuant to Policy # 301 as well as applicable volunteers.
4. **RESPONSIBILITY:** The Board of Commissioners shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Administrator shall be responsible for the administration of this policy.
5. **DEFINITIONS:** NONE
6. **POLICY:**
 - 6.1 Employee requests for reimbursement of travel and expenses. Employees shall submit an employee expense claim through the Employee Self Service (ESS) portal. The employee expense claim shall not cover a time period of more than 30 calendar days.
 - 6.1.1 Employee travel and expense reimbursements must be submitted and received by Financial Services within 45 calendar days after month end in order to be eligible for reimbursement. Employee travel and expense reimbursements submitted and received by Financial Services after 45 calendar days of month end will under no circumstances be reimbursed.
 - 6.1.1.1 Each conference should be submitted under a separate employee expense claim and should not be combined with other travel or conferences.
 - 6.1.2 Economical use of County funds has priority over personal convenience or preference.

- 6.1.3 Employee travel and expense reimbursements must include all supporting documentation such as: itemized and detailed receipts for all expenses, detailed conference agendas, approval for out of state travel and any other necessary documentation. Failure to include itemized and detailed receipts for expenses will render those expenses ineligible for reimbursement. Altered documents (i.e. itemized and detail receipts with items crossed out) will not be accepted.
- 6.1.4 Each employee must submit their own travel and expense reimbursement request. An employee cannot be reimbursed for another employee's travel and expenses.
- 6.2 Mileage. Mileage will be paid at the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service to those officials and employees required to use their privately owned vehicle in conducting County business.
- 6.2.1 When traveling to out-of-county activities transportation should be shared whenever possible.
- 6.2.2 All mileage shall be computed from the normal work location to the destination point and return except in the following situations:
- 6.2.2.1 Mileage will be computed from residence to destination if actual departure is from the residence and if the distance is less than the distance from work location to destination.
- 6.2.2.2 If the distance is greater from the residence, the employee may still leave from there, but mileage will be calculated from the work location to destination.
- 6.2.2.3 Under no circumstances is mileage allowed between residence and normal work location.
- Normal work location may be altered from time to time by the employee's supervisor or department head as deemed necessary. For example, a change in work location, or mandatory trainings and meetings.
- 6.2.3 Charges for gasoline, oil, repairs, antifreeze, towage and other expenditures will not be allowed as reimbursable items when privately owned vehicles are used.

- 6.2.4 If choosing to drive to an approved and authorized out-of-state conference or training, reimbursement for mileage shall be at the prevailing mileage rate, provided that the total reimbursement for mileage does not exceed the commercial air carrier coach rate to the same destination.
- 6.3 Transportation. Expenses associated with transportation while travelling shall include the following:
 - 6.3.1 Rideshare, taxi and shuttle service may be used to transport to and from conference locations as necessary. Detailed receipts must accompany the reimbursement request and no tips are allowed.
 - 6.3.2 Rental cars must be pre-approved by the County Administrator. Personnel will be allowed to rent a vehicle while out of town, provided that advance approval from the County Administrator has been obtained and proof is provided that the cost is less than alternative methods of transportation. Must include County Administrator's approval in reimbursement request.
 - 6.3.3 Airfare is allowed at the lowest economy or basic fare available at the time of booking based on preapproval and budget, and if required by the distance and/or timing of the conference or training and may be booked using a County issued credit card. The County has a preference for using MBS [Midland/Bay/Saginaw Airport] to support local airport usage, but lowest cost (taking into account mileage, parking, hotel, meals, etc. to travel to another airport) should be the primary consideration. If personnel wish to book using their own resources, reimbursement will only be approved for the lowest economy or basic fare available at the time of booking.
- 6.4 Meals. Meals will be reimbursed based on actual costs incurred by the employee up to a maximum amount of \$50 per day.
 - 6.4.1 Official travel, which takes the individual outside the boundaries of Saginaw County during the entire mealtime hours, will render eligibility for a meal allowance, based on when the employee was required to leave and return.
 - 6.4.2 Employee is required to submit itemized and detailed receipts.
 - 6.4.2.1 Alcohol is not an allowable expense and if included on your itemized and detailed receipt, will render the entire meal ineligible for reimbursement.
 - 6.4.2.2 Gratuity is acceptable for reimbursement up to 15% of meal total.

- 6.4.2.3 In no circumstances will the daily meal reimbursement plus gratuity, if added, be reimbursed at a rate higher than \$50 per day.
 - 6.4.3 Per policy 243 Section 6.5.2 the credit card shall not be used to pay for any employee eligible reimbursable food, beverages or meals. Food purchased for departmental training sessions and departmental board or commission meetings or lunches, conferences or related travel must have prior written approval by the Administrator. This exemption does not apply to food/beverage purchases for resale and/or departmental program use.
- 6.5 Accommodations. Actual expenditures for overnight accommodations subject to the following restrictions and limitations:
 - 6.5.1 If the temporary work location duration is more than one day, the nights between such workdays may be spent in the immediate vicinity of lodging at established rates.
 - 6.5.2 If the destination is more than 50 miles from normal work location and if the employee must be at the destination at or before 9:00 a.m., an employee may leave the afternoon of the day prior to the start of the conference and be covered for overnight accommodations.
 - 6.5.3 Coverage for out-of-state travel is limited to the lowest cost available at prevailing rates for accommodations normally used in business.
 - 6.5.4 Baggage claims/charges. Air travel baggage claims or baggage charges while traveling on County business are limited to one checked bag each way within the airlines standard weight limit.
 - 6.5.5 Parking. Expenses are covered at the standard rate. This includes Hotel parking, airline parking, conference center parking, and other parking facilities.
 - 6.5.6 Valet. Valet parking is not a covered/reimbursable expense.
 - 6.5.7 Employees must include detailed hotel folio in reimbursement request.
- 6.6 Budget for Travel Related Expenses. Expenses associated with attendance at meetings, conferences, and seminars shall be requested by the Department Head during the preparation of the annual budget. Routine mileage allowance associated with day-to-day business within the County will be a separate line item.

- 6.6.1 Department Heads are allowed to attend their national and state professional conferences or conventions, provided it is within the travel budget and has been approved by the Administrator. Employee expenses to be reimbursed for out-of-state travel shall be in proportion to the cost/benefit of the conference to be attended and shall require Department Head recommendation and submission of a request to the Administrator as applicable on an approved form.
- 6.6.2 Travel within the State requiring overnight stay will be allowed subject to approval of the Department Head and to availability of funds within the department budget. No additional funds will be transferred to the travel account after adoption of the budget, unless approved by the Administrator.
- 6.6.3 Travel within the State of Michigan for the purpose of transacting County business, i.e., meeting with State Officials or to discuss common concerns with other governmental officials will be allowed subject to approval of the responsible Department Head and if no overnight stay is required.
- 6.7 The County credit card may be used for advance payment of anticipated expenses in compliance with the established credit card policy, number 243. Payment to employees, elected officials, department or agency personnel employed by (or conducting business with) Saginaw County for travel, meals, lodging or attendance at events, will not be advanced prior to the event in question.
- 6.8 Non-reimbursable. expenses Saginaw County maintains a strict policy that expenses in any category that could be perceived as lavish or excessive will not be reimbursed or charged to the county purchasing card as such expenses are considered inappropriate by county government. Expenses that are not allowable include, but are not limited to, travel insurance, first class tickets or upgrades, airline seat upgrades, tips for maid or valet services, hired car travel, participation in sporting events, unapproved entertainment, movies, mini-bar items, damage to personal vehicles, theft and loss of goods, expenses for spouses, friends or relatives, laundry, cleaning or pressing of clothing, alcohol, valet.
- 6.9 Documentation. All requests to purchasing card changes and/or reimbursement requests shall be accompanied by supporting documentation necessary to justify that the expense is eligible and within reasonable expenditure guidelines. This documentation includes, but not limited to, itemized and detailed receipts.
- 6.10 Violation of Policy. If there is any violation of this policy no reimbursement of expenses will be allowed. Should the departmental credit card be used in violation of this policy, the employee will be required to reimburse the County for those expenses, or the credit card will be terminated.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES: NONE

8. Administrator/ LEGAL COUNSEL REVIEW: The County Administrator has determined that this policy as submitted to the Board of Commissioners contains the necessary substance in order to carry out the purpose of the policy. County Civil Counsel has determined that this policy as submitted contains content that appears to be legal activities of the Saginaw County Board of Commissioners.

Approved as to Substance:
Saginaw County Administrator

Approved as to Legal Content:
Saginaw County Civil Counsel

ADOPTED: April 23, 2002

AMENDED: November 17, 2009; October 19, 2010; November 16, 2010; January 18, 2011;
March 22, 2022; November 19, 2024; January 21, 2025; January 20, 2026