



## **PERSONNEL POLICY**

### **SUBJECT: TRAVEL, TRAINING, PARKING AND AUTOMOBILE ALLOWANCE/ MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

DATE: January 1, 2017

Number: 209-16

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In accordance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (“O.C.G.A.”) TITLE 45 Chapter 7 Sections 20 through 34, it is the policy of Fulton County to reimburse expenses incurred on its behalf for travel, training, parking, and automobile usage for official business. The County shall not reimburse expenses incurred related to any personal use.

#### **I. Establishment and Implementation of Procedure**

The County Manager, in consultation with the Chief Human Resources Officer and the County Attorney, is authorized to establish and modify, as needed, a procedure for implementing this policy.



## PERSONNEL PROCEDURE

### SUBJECT: TRAVEL, TRAINING, PARKING, AND AUTOMOBILE ALLOWANCE/ MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

DATE: March 26, 2018

Number: 209-16

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#### I. TRAVEL & TRAINING

##### 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

###### 1.1 Objectives

The objective of these procedures are to:

- Provide guidance to Travelers, Department Travel Coordinators (“DTC”), approvers and auditors on cost-effective management of travel expenses that aid in conserving the use of County funds.
- Define the responsibility and accountability of Travelers, DTCs, and approvers of business-related and/or training travel.
- Define the consequences of not adhering to this policy.

###### 1.2 Standards

- Travel is contingent upon the availability of funds in the departmental budget. Each Department is responsible for managing its own Travel and Training budget and monitoring actual expenditures against budget authority.
- Travel/Training requests must provide support documentation which shows that the Traveler sought the most cost effective travel accommodations. Prior to seeking out-of-state travel and/or training, Travelers must to their knowledge certify that the trip is necessary and related to their employment with Fulton County.
- All travel expenses must be in compliance with the procedures herein established, unless granted exception per prior written approval by the County Manager or action of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners. The Traveler will be responsible for reporting and submitting supporting documentation for actual expenses incurred for authorized costs, except that receipts for the per diem amount for meals and incidentals are not required.
- Travel expenses will not be paid in advance, except for those items charged to the assigned departmental travel card(s) (“T-Card”) and meal per diems. “T-cards” should be used to purchase hotel accommodations, transportation (airline ticket, car rental, bus or train) and

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to pay for conference/seminar registration costs. Per Diem allowance will be paid via check no earlier than a week in advance of the dates of travel.

- Travel and/or training expenses incurred by Travelers **outside** the Atlanta Metropolitan Area are reimbursable according to the requirements outlined in this procedure. For mileage reimbursement for same-day travel within the Atlanta Metropolitan Area, Travelers should refer to Attachment J for further discussion and examples.
- Pre-approval by the department Head or County Manager is required for all Travel and Training expenditures. Expenses paid by a Traveler prior to authorization, may not be considered for approval/reimbursement until travel has occurred and a complete reconciliation package is submitted to Finance. Travel requests should be presented on proper forms and coordinated by DTC in compliance with policy procedures and federal per diem guidelines, unless a deviation from the same is approved in advance by the County Manager and approved by the Department Head. Approval for travel advances and/or eligible reimbursements are subject to funding availability. The County Manager reserves the right to review all travel and training requests.
- The Finance Department shall be responsible for managing all financial processes, systems and procedures as they relate to Travel and Training expenditures, consistent with the provisions contained in these procedures
- The Finance Department will not approve for reimbursement any expenditure without auditing the necessary documents if required to insure that such payment is lawful and proper.
- No amendments or other changes to these procedures shall be effective until the same is communicated to the Finance Department, the Purchasing Department, Department Heads and to DTCs.
- Expenses incurred for selection of accommodations based solely on Traveler's personal convenience, including extended travel, upgrades and cancellation or change fees, are not allowable for payment or reimbursement by the County.
- Reimbursement for transportation costs and/or mileage between an employee's residence and primary work location for the employee's normal commute is **NOT** allowed.
- Personal expenses, including extended travel expenses, not related to the business necessity of an employee's travel are not reimbursable. (*See* Section 6.2 lists of allowable and non-allowable reimbursable expenses).

### **1.3 Fraudulent Use of Travel Advance**

O.C.G.A. § 45-7-32(a) provides that it is unlawful for any person to use any travel advance received from public funds for nongovernmental purposes or to submit or approve, knowingly or through willful and wanton neglect, a fraudulent request for reimbursement of expenses. Any person in violation of this code section may be subjected to criminal and civil penalties.

Travelers who knowingly misrepresent the facts concerning travel for official business, or who file or sign any travel form which contains false statements given with the intent to defraud the County,

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may be subject both to administrative and/or disciplinary action up to and including possible termination and/or criminal action.

## 1.4 Definitions

**Actual Departure/Return Time:** the actual time a Traveler gets in a vehicle to leave for the destination and the actual time he or she returns after completing travel. For example, the Actual Departure time is equal to the time Traveler leaves home, and the Actual Return time is equal to the time Traveler returns home.

**Allowance:** a fixed amount of money permitted for authorized travel.

**Atlanta Metropolitan Area:** Region consisting of the following 29 counties: Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Morgan, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding and Walton.

**Business/Local Mileage Reimbursement:** reimbursement expenses incurred from transportation between Traveler's primary work location, other county offices, business meetings and other off-campus County business functions within the Atlanta Metro Area. Expenses related to business/local mileage differ from mileage expenses related to travel/training and are paid from a different object code -1346 Mileage payments.

**Commuting Mileage** - Total roundtrip miles traveled daily by a Traveler between his or her residence and primary work location.

**Department Head:** the director or senior officer of a department, institution, agency, court or a commissioner of Fulton County government.

**Department Travel Coordinator (DTC)** the coordinator for travel designated by the Department Head.

**Domestic Travel:** any travel within and between the United States and its territories.

**Emergency Travel:** travel required or requested by a Commissioner, or the County Manager, or required by adjudication or other court direction that is either necessary to support County functions or mandated for public safety reasons on approved short notice.

**Extended Travel** – Travel that goes beyond the official start or end date of a conference, training or seminar.

**Federal Travel Management Policy (FTMP):** a division of the U.S. General Services Administration which provides information on Federal travel management policies and travel-related activities for the Federal Government. FTMP sets the domestic per diem rates for Federal agency Travelers while on official business for the Government. The County will use the rate that is effective at time of booking to estimate lodging, meal and incidental expenses reimbursement. Any deviation from these rates must be preapproved in writing by the County Manager. A Traveler will be reimbursed for any increase in rates that occurs during travel. (*See* <http://www.gsa.gov>).

**Incidental Expenses:** fees and tips for certain personal services, including: porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel housekeeping, driver services, stewards or stewardesses and valet services. These policies do not create a contract of employment. Employment for non-classified employees remains "at will".

**International Travel:** any travel outside of the United States and its territories.

**Lodging Rate:** the base rate defined by the vendor prior to the application of taxes or the conference standard room rate, etc.

**Non-Reimbursable Expenses:** expenses generated by a Traveler which are not allowed pursuant to these procedures.

**Official Travel:** employees and officials may be required to travel both within and outside the local area for the purpose of representing Fulton County at meetings, professional associations, as well as for training to enhance their skills or maintain required certifications regarding the performance of their various positions and job duties within County government.

**Local Travel:** any travel occurring in the Atlanta Metropolitan Area.

Note: When official business requires that the Traveler stay overnight in the Atlanta Metropolitan Area, he or she shall follow the procedures for Non-Local Travel. Overnight lodging, however, within the Atlanta Metropolitan Area is not reimbursable, except in instances pre-approved by the appropriate Department Head or the County Manager.

**Non-Local Travel:** any travel outside the Atlanta Metropolitan Area.

**Per-Diem:** the allowance rate for lodging (excluding taxes), meals and incidental expenses. The County adheres to the federal meals and incidental expenses per diem rates, unless a deviation is preapproved by the County Manager. ([www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov))

**Prepaid or Prepayment:** amount paid to a vendor by the County on behalf of the Traveler, generally in advance of travel.

**Primary Work Location:** the location a Traveler regularly reports to for work.

**Reimbursement:** amount paid to Traveler or owed to the County for certain allowable business travel expenses upon reconciliation of travel costs.

**Same Day Non-Local Travel:** same day travel outside of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area, but Traveler elects to return same day.

**Training:** all travel costs associated with acquiring continuing educational requirements for the performance of the Traveler's work duties or maintenance of professional licensing. All costs related to the training (registration, hotel, air, etc.) should be budgeted and paid from object code -1306- Training.

**Travel:** all travel costs associated with events that do not directly result in obtaining continuing educational requirements. All costs related to the event should be budgeted and paid from object code -1302 – Travel.

**Traveler(s):** any individual authorized to travel on County business and/or for training. Any person required to travel for extradition or as a witness is also included in this definition.

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**Travel Advance:** an advance of funds provided to a Traveler to cover estimated travel expenses or amounts paid to a Traveler by the County prior to departure for payment of reimbursable items. Travel advances are paid by check to the Traveler or payment is made directly to a vendor. A travel advance represents a lien against wages.

**Travel Authorization:** written approval to travel on official business. County travel is authorized based on the type of travel being performed as follows:

<b>Types of Travel</b>	<b>Authorization Requires Signature By:</b>
Travel by Board of Commissioners or their staff	By each Commissioner for their respective travel, administered by the Clerk to the Commission.
Travel by elected judges	By each Judge
Travel by appointed judges	By the court's Chief Judge
Travel by Department Heads	County Manager.
Travel by County Executives and Constitutional officers	By each County Executive or Constitutional officer
Domestic travel by Travelers (other than Department Heads)	Department Head
Travel by appointed members of county boards, , guest speakers, job candidates, witnesses and other invitees	Department Head.

**Travel Card Reconciliation:** process used to determine whether the T-card statement balance at the end of each spending cycle is equal to the total amount of travel purchases by the T-card holder.

**Travel Expenses:** costs for registration, transportation, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses directly related to travel.

**Travel Purchasing Cards (“T-Cards”):** County-issued credit cards used to pay specifically for hotel, airline, conference registration or other approved business-related travel expenses.

**Traveler Reconciliation:** process by which the Traveler gathers receipts and other supporting documentation upon returning from a trip and compares actual allowable expenditures against travel advances to determine the amount, if any, of reimbursement due to the Traveler or to the County.

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## **2. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RESOURCES FOR TRAVEL AND TRAINING**

### **2.1 Internal Resources**

#### **(a) Fulton County Department of Human Resources Management**

The Fulton County Department Human Resources Management operates a countywide Training and Career Development Division (see Employee Central/Training Catalog for current course offerings). If internal training is available, the Training and Career Development Division is the primary source for coordinating and facilitating training for County employees. External training should only be utilized when a Traveler requires continuing education licensing or credits to perform job duties and when a comparable course is not offered internally to employees.

### **2.1 External Resources**

The use of travel agents or agencies is strictly prohibited, unless approved by the County Manager or the County utilizes a central travel procurement agency.

## **3. AUTHORIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

To carry out the goal of using County travel funds economically, prior to any travel, the appropriate Department Head, in consultation with the DTC and the Traveler, is responsible for:

- Reading and understanding the County's Travel and Training Policy and these procedures.
- Authorizing only reasonable and necessary travel and training to conferences, seminars and other similar events and, in the most economical manner.
- Ensuring that Travelers adhere to all procedural guidelines;

The responsibilities for authorizing travel and training are set forth as follows:

### **3.1 Department Heads' Responsibilities**

- Identify annual conferences, seminars and other training opportunities that are required or provide benefit to county employees and other authorized Travelers, and when possible submit estimated expenses and justification during the budget process.
- Ensure that travel and training expenses are not authorized beyond the approved departmental budget for travel and training.
- Appoint a designee as the department's DTC, who will coordinate and facilitate all matters related to travel and training for the department.
- Review and approve travel and training requests.
- Supervise the activities of the DTC and review and approve all reconciliations of T-Card charges.

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### **3.2 Departmental Travel Coordinators' Responsibilities**

- Manage departmental travel and training processes and procedures and administer T-card payments with proper regard for economy and in compliance with travel and training policy and procedures.
- Verify requests for travel and training are within the scope of the requestor's job duties or needs of the department.
- Function as the liaison between Travelers, the Department Head, Finance, Purchasing and Personnel Departments for travel related issues. Provide a copy of any policy and/or procedural updates to the Department Head and the Travelers to ensure strict compliance with all requirements set forth therein.
- Comply with all procedures as set forth by the Purchasing Department in the Travel Card Manual.
- Communicate with the Purchasing Department or the department's assigned Budget Analyst regarding any concerns or requests for adjustments to spending limits or categories of allowable costs (i.e., for object codes "Travel-1302", "Training-1306", and non-employee travel).
- Track, monitor and review all travel-and training-related reconciliations. Prepare monthly T-card payment/reconciliation. Review and certify all reconciliations for accuracy to ensure all expenses adhere to this policy, and submit completed reconciliation packages to the Finance Department in a timely manner for further review after approval and signature by the Department Head.
- Prohibit additional travel for any Traveler who has an outstanding travel reconciliation or an outstanding reimbursement due to the County.
- Monitor and maintain records of monthly expenditures and balances in the departmental Travel and Training budget and provide the same to the Department Head upon request.

### **3.3 Travelers' Responsibilities**

- Read and understand this policy and procedures before requesting travel or training from the County.
- Never use the T-card for any personal charges.
- Work with DTC to coordinate and facilitate all matters related to travel and training and complete required forms and provide other supporting documents (forms, original receipts, proof of attendance, and etc.) to substantiate travel and training requests and expenses.
- Verify applicable tax exemptions are deducted from lodging costs for travel within the State of Georgia.
- Requests for reimbursement must be submitted to DTC within 3 days of returning from travel.

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On an annual basis, sign and submit the “Travel/Training Advance Agreement form, which allows the County to (1) reimburse the Traveler upon their return for any expenses incurred that were not previously paid, and (2) deduct undocumented costs from the Traveler’s paycheck if funds are due to the County, or the entire cost of the trip if the travel/training reconciliation is not provided to Finance within the allotted time period.

- Complete reconciliation upon return from trip by calculating balance between travel advance and actual costs and record amount of reimbursement to self or to the County.

Note: The Board of Commissioners’ travel and training costs and any other reimbursements, as well as the Pool Car data will be reported on a quarterly basis and included on the Consent Agenda. This report will include department, Traveler, travel dates, paid dates, destination and amount.

### **3.4 The County Manager’s Responsibilities**

- Review and approve, any and all travel and training and policy exception requests.
- Approve use of Non-Agency funds for travel and training costs and notify Finance of his or her approval for said usage.
- Review and approve travel and training requests and submissions from Department Heads and County Executives who report direct to the County Manager.

### **3.5 Purchasing Department**

- Ensure T-card usage and reconciliations are in accordance with policy and procedural guidelines as outlined in Purchasing Card and/or Travel Card manuals and these procedures.
- Maintain and revise the Purchasing Card and Travel Card manuals to keep the same in compliance with these procedures.

### **3.6 Finance Department**

- Manage all financial processes, procedures and systems as they relate to travel and training expenditures subject to these procedures.
- Provide annual training to DTCs to ensure their understanding of this policy and proper T-card use.
- Monitor and track unreconciled travel and coordinate payroll deductions when necessary. Finance may request additional documents to substantiate any claim for reimbursement or advance payments consistent with these procedures.
- Not process future travel reimbursement requests for any Traveler with outstanding travel reconciliations.
- Serve as the final repository for copies of completed travel reconciliation packages.

### **3.7 Department of Human Resources Management:**

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Coordinate County training to employees and maintain listings of current, County-sponsored courses and training opportunities.

### **3.8 Office of the County Auditor:**

Conduct random audits of travel/training expense documentation as requested to ensure Traveler's and travel authorizers are adhering to County policy and procedures.

## **4. CATEGORIES OF TRAVEL & TRAINING COSTS**

### **4.1 Conferences, Seminars, and Conventions**

#### **Registration Cost**

Registration is a T-card eligible expense. Additional registration costs for recreational and entertainment activities will not be paid by the County and shall not be charged to the T-Card, unless pre-approved by the County Manager.

### **4.2 Lodging and Attendance**

#### **(a) Metropolitan Atlanta Area Travel**

An advance for lodging expenses or reimbursement for the same shall be authorized only when it requires overnight accommodations for the Traveler to conduct County business. Unless approved by the County Manager due to special circumstances, lodging within the Atlanta Metropolitan Area is not authorized. Mileage for use of a personal vehicle is eligible for reimbursement (See Section 6.2 for more details on mileage reimbursement eligibility criteria and the County's automobile mileage reimbursement process outlined in Attachment J).

#### **(b) International Travel**

Conferences, seminars or other requested travel or training is not allowed outside the United States and its territories without prior approval by the County Manager.

### **4.3 Reimbursable Lodging Room Rate**

Lodging, excluding applicable taxes, will be reimbursed up to the federal lodging per diem for the travel destination prescribed as follows:

- For Domestic Travel: [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)
- For International Travel: [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)

For travel in the State of Georgia, Travelers should ensure they follow the procedures to receive the tax exempt rate.

The total cost for lodging should include the room rate per night and all applicable taxes and fees. Travelers must submit an itemized lodging receipt upon returning from travel. The receipt must show all items as being paid in full. If the receipt does not show a zero balance, evidence must accompany the receipt to show the bill was fully paid.

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**(a) Conference Hotel Room Rates**

The County will pay rates above the federal lodging per diem for official conference hotels. Conference hotel rates are not transferable to other hotels. If there are multiple conference hotels, Travelers should select the hotel with the lowest available room rate, when possible.

**(b) Allowable Room Types**

Only the single, standard room rate can be advanced or claimed for reimbursement. If a room is shared by two or more Travelers, the entire room cost should be paid and the reimbursement claimed by one Traveler. When two county Travelers choose to share room, the conference room rate or federal lodging per diem remains applicable. Travelers may not combine individual allowances to procure room upgrades. Travelers are responsible for costs for room upgrades or additional guests that are not authorized County Travelers. Itemized hotel bills are required for reconciliation.

**(c) Government Room Rates**

Travelers should select accommodations from hotels that are reasonably priced and should always take advantage of government room rates when available.

**4.4 Payment Methods and Special Forms**

**(a) Departmental Travel Cards (T-card)**

One T-card is issued to the Department Head or his/her designated DTC in each County department. It is important for the T-card to be utilized effectively and with proper approvals, as all costs incurred are subject to review by various members of the County and auditors. These records are also subject to Open Records Requests. Refer to the Travel Card Manual for proper guidelines and procedures regarding usage and reconciliation of the T-Card.

**1. Financial Stewardship**

It is the responsibility of both the Department Head and DTC to monitor all travel expenses purchased using the T-card and to ensure any expenses for travel are within the department's budget appropriations. Any spending by a department in excess of its budget appropriation may result in discipline, up to and including termination, of the DTC and/or Department Head. The Finance Department, Purchasing Department, and the appropriate DTC are jointly tasked with ensuring costs are paid to the card provider timely and accurately. Personal use of the T-card is strictly prohibited. Any violation of this policy will result in financial restitution by the offending party to the County of all unauthorized charges.

**2. Infractions**

Unauthorized use of a department's T-card will subject that department to review and may result in suspension and/or revocation of all privileges associated with the T-card's use. If improper use of any T-card is substantiated, the County Manager has the authority to immediately revoke the department's T-card, and place a moratorium on further travel within the department. Any expenses incurred as result of unauthorized use of a T-card shall be the sole personal responsibility of the offending party(ies).

**(b) Credit Card Authorization**

The County encourages all hotel accommodations to be reserved in advance, via the T-card by the DTC. Therefore, a Credit Card Authorization form should also be faxed to the hotel to ensure the These policies do not create a contract of employment. Employment for non-classified employees remains "at will".

card used to acquire the room will remain the card used at time of checkout. This also ensures the Traveler will have no problems upon check-in. It is incumbent upon the DTC to verify the T-card's available credit prior to each transaction. The Traveler and the DTC must also confirm that the hotel will accept the T-card used to secure the reservation for payment upon check-out.

### (c) **In-State Lodging & Hotel/Motel Tax and Sales Tax Exemptions**

These forms are required for in-state travel to take advantage of the hotel/motel and sales tax exemptions. The Traveler must forward both forms to hotel prior to travel. The Hotel/Motel Tax Exemption Certificate (see Attachment F) can be obtained from the department's DTC. Sales Tax Exemption forms are acquired through Purchasing. The maximum lodging reimbursement (excluding taxes) shall be up to the federal lodging per diem for the travel by destination unless as provided otherwise in these procedures.

## **4.5 Traveler's Responsibilities for Lodging and Attendance**

- Must obtain the most reasonable lodging rate available.
- Make reservations well in advance.
- Obtain government rates whenever possible.
- Avoid high cost hotels and motels.
- Communicate changes in reservations with the hotel/motel.
- Utilize the Hotel/Motel Tax Exemption Request form.
- Mention conference or seminar name to ensure the conference rate for blocked rooms.
- Attach a copy of the conference literature to Reconciliation package indicating the conference hotel rate included in the package.
- Secure and review itemized bill of lodging charges to submit within three (3) business days from date of return with the travel/training reconciliation.
- Document any emergencies that preclude attendance to conferences, etc.
- Ensure Department Travel Coordinator has confirmed the T-card is an acceptable form of payment upon Traveler check out.

## **5. ALTERNATE TRAVEL PLANS**

Any change to travel plans, which incurs additional expense(s) must be justified as official County business and approved in writing by the Department Head or the County Manager. Any unapproved changes to travel route or length of stay must be made by the Traveler and he/she shall be responsible for all associated costs, which may or may not be eligible for reimbursement. Transportation expense reimbursements are allowed only for uninterrupted, direct route travel – from authorized point of departure to destination and from the destination back to the original point of departure. Exceptions will only be made for Travelers who are traveling to more than one destination on a single trip for pre-approved, official County business.

### **5.1 Extended Stay**

Extended stays will be treated as an exception to this Policy and will require approval in writing by the appropriate Department Head or County Manager.

### **5.2 Special Housing**

Special housing provisions are allowable for Travelers who are attending school for training if it requires accommodations for more than one week and the cost is less than staying at a hotel/motel within the vicinity of the training facility.

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## **6. TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES**

### **6.1 Group and Gratuitous Transportation**

When two or more Travelers are in route to the same destination, maximum use shall be made of special group travel discounts and joint use of transportation options including taxi cabs, County-owned or privately owned vehicles to share transportation costs. Travel with representatives of other government units is encouraged whenever possible. However, no Traveler will be allowed either mileage or transportation expense reimbursement when they are gratuitously transported by another person or when transported by another Traveler who is entitled to reimbursement.

### **6.2 Authorized Travel Modes**

#### **(a) County-owned Vehicle**

Travelers are encouraged to utilize County-owned vehicles, when available, for travel within the State of Georgia of trips of 4 hours or less, unless written authorization has been granted by the County Manager to rent a vehicle.

The Department of Facilities and Transportation should be contacted prior to traveling to determine if a County-owned vehicle is available.

A gasoline credit card issued by the County should be used only for the purchase of gasoline when utilizing a County-owned vehicle for official County business. If one is not made available for use, the County will reimburse the Traveler for actual expenses incurred for gasoline. The original gasoline receipts must be included with the reconciliation voucher. Credit card statements will not be allowed to verify fuel reimbursement requests.

#### **(b) Personal Vehicle (Mileage Reimbursement)**

When no County-owned vehicle is available, the Traveler may use their personal vehicle. Reimbursement for use of a Traveler's personal vehicle shall be limited to the mileage allowance provided by the County. No additional reimbursement for fueling costs is allowed. Travelers utilizing their personal vehicles for official County business travel will be reimbursed mileage according to the allowable mileage rate set by the IRS and published on its website as "Standard Mileage Rates" (<http://www.irs.gov>). The County will distribute IRS mileage rates to Department Heads and to DTCs when rates are updated.

The Traveler may use a published road atlas (Google Maps, MapQuest, etc.) or documentation of actual miles driven to calculate the distance between departure and destination points. For travel where the Traveler is departing from his or her residence during regular working hours, any mileage in excess of their normal commute mileage is allowable. If the Traveler's normal place of employment is a residence, or travel will be done on a holiday or weekend, the Traveler may use place of residence as the departure point to calculate travel with no deduction for normal commuting mileage. However, NO reimbursement shall be made for use of a personal vehicle for an employee's normal commute.

Mileage from a Traveler's residence to the airport for out of state business travel is allowable with proper receipts to substantiate airport parking. However, the County encourages Travelers to utilize public transportation (taxi, shuttle, or mass transit) for this travel when available.

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When a personal vehicle is used at the Traveler's preference in lieu of airfare, reimbursement will be limited to the cost of the lowest priced airfare between the nearest commercial airport serving the origin and destination points based on the documented quote for airfare obtained for the trip.

**(c) Rental Vehicle**

Temporary County-owned vehicles should be used when available and most economical. If a County-owned vehicle is not available, County employees should select the most cost-effective between a rental vehicle or mileage reimbursement for use of their personal vehicle. Travelers must use the County's contracted rental car vendor. When renting through the county's preferred vendor, additional insurance is not required and is automatically included with each rental.

Reimbursement expenses for a rental vehicle will not be authorized without prior approval by the Department Head. If approved, the rented vehicle should be secured through the County approved Vendor and for the lowest cost available at the time of booking. Rentals are limited to mid-size or smaller, but upgraded sizes may be approved, based on the number of County Travelers being transported, or special accommodation request approved by the Department Head in advance of travel. The request for a rental car should be submitted for approval on the initial Travel and Training Expense Form, if known at the time the trip is planned

Reasonable fuel expenses will be reimbursed with original receipts. Travelers must return rental vehicles with the same amount of gas that it had when it was picked-up, to ensure there are no overcharges for gas upon return of the rental car.

If a rental vehicle is used for both business and non-business purposes, the Traveler will be responsible for reimbursing the County for the non-business portion.

***1. Insurance***

Any Traveler who has a traffic accident while operating a County-owned vehicle or while operating their own personal vehicle on County business should report the accident to the police, and their supervisor as soon as possible. The Traveler should contact the Fulton County Risk Management Division regarding any questions related to insurance coverage at (404-612-7637).

NOTE: The County liability policy is only in effect while the employee is using the rented vehicle for official County business. For this reason, personal use of the vehicle, including allowing friends or family members to ride in a County rented vehicle, is prohibited.

***2. Maximum Allowable Rental Days***

There is a ten (10) day maximum for the rental of vehicles within the State of Georgia unless rented from a County authorized contract. There is no maximum time limitation for the use of rental vehicles out of the State of Georgia.

***3. Payment***

Payment for expenses associated with a rental car may be paid in advance on County T-card.

**(d) Common Carrier (Air, Rail, and Bus)**

The Traveler may utilize air, rail or bus when traveling for County business. Reimbursement for air, rail, or bus fare is limited to the standard fare and must be substantiated by a receipt.

***1. Air Travel***

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When traveling by commercial air, the original transportation receipt must be submitted with the Traveler's reconciliation.

All attempts shall be made by the DTC to secure airfare at the government rate when available. Travel is limited to a nonrefundable "economy" or "coach" fare. This shall be the standard mode of travel for the County. Travelers who require air travel must utilize the DTC to secure the lowest available airfare and must submit proof of quotes in the required format. Upgrades to Business or First Class must be paid for by the Traveler at the time of booking the ticket.

The selection of the air carrier should be based on the lowest airfare offered to fit the Traveler's schedule. Airfare quotes should include at least three (3) lowest non-refundable available rates. If there is more than a 25% increase in airfare between the time the travel is initially approved and when the flight is actually booked, the higher fare shall require approval, in writing, from the Department Head prior to payment.

The County will only be responsible for roundtrip airfare costs between the cities of the primary work location and the travel destination. Travelers who select to fly between different destinations for personal reasons, will be responsible for airfare costs exceeding those of the cost of travel between home and the approved travel destination.

***a) Advance Purchase***

It is important that the Traveler and the DTC expeditiously coordinate travel and training requests to take advantage of lower airfares that are available 21-28 days in advance of travel. Tickets should be booked at least 14 – 21 days, to receive the lowest non-refundable rate available. Tickets not purchased by the 14th day proceeding travel will require written approval from the Department Head prior to purchase.

***b) Additional Passengers***

No travel-related costs for additional passengers, including baggage costs, will be covered using County funds.

***c) Baggage Fees/Lost Stolen Baggage***

Baggage fees for one checked bag up to the airline carrier's standard rate are T-card eligible expenses. Receipts must be included in reconciliation. Travelers are allowed one piece of luggage and any excess when traveling with heavy or bulky County business-related materials or equipment. Excess baggage fees for personal belongings are not reimbursable.

The County will not reimburse the Traveler for lost or damaged baggage while traveling on County business. The Traveler must communicate and seek resolution directly with the airline carrier.

***d) Trip Protection***

The purchase of trip protection, either through trip insurance or the purchase of a refundable ticket is allowable following careful consideration of costs and business necessity. This expense is subject to approval as outlined in travel authorization signatories in Section 1.4.

***e) Cancellations***

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It is the Traveler's responsibility to coordinate travel plans with the DTC. Any cancellations or rearrangements should be communicated as soon as possible in case the airfare can be applied to future travel. Non-refundable airline tickets for a canceled trip are credited by the airline carrier and must be used by the Traveler within the deadline established by the air carrier. The Traveler may be required to reimburse the County if the airline ticket is not used within one year of issuance or prior to end of Traveler's tenure with the County, whichever is sooner. If the cancellation is without cause or merit, the current value of the ticket may be subject to payroll deduction.

Any remaining credit from tickets cancelled due to conference rescheduling should automatically be held over and used towards airfare for a new conference date. The DTC shall NOT sell or transfer any tickets to Traveler for personal use without prior written approval by the County Manager. Such an act will be in violation of this Policy and may result in disciplinary action against Traveler and DTC.

The DTC is required to submit to Finance (Travel) names of Travelers with cancelled airline tickets at the end of each month.

## ***2. Bus or Rail Travel***

For transportation by bus, railroad, taxi, or other conveyance, the actual fare for standard seating will be reimbursed.

## **6.3 Ground Transportation**

Ground transportation expenses include, but are not limited to, costs for rental cars, parking, tolls, public transportation, airport shuttles, car services, valets and taxicabs. Pre-approved rental cars and hotel parking fees may be eligible for payment on the departmental travel card with DTC approval.

Self-parking fees at the Traveler's hotel are eligible for pre-approval and inclusion in hotel payment via the T-card. The DTC is allowed to submit credit authorization for both hotel fees, applicable taxes and approved parking fees. All items should be included on the hotel folio receipt and provided in the reconciliation package. Tips should not be included, as they are not allowable reimbursement costs separate from per diem rates.

Travelers may utilize airport parking and shuttle services. The County will reimburse parking fees only up to the Economy Rate and shuttle service fees will be reimbursed at actual costs with receipts. Tips for transportation services are included in each Traveler's Meal and Incidental Expenses rate and are not reimbursable expenses. Fees for limousine or car services, other than taxi cabs are not allowable for reimbursement, unless they present costs savings to the County.

For reimbursement purposes, cab fare costs for group Travelers must either be paid by one Traveler, who during reconciliation can submit the original receipt for reimbursement, or each Traveler must obtain an individual receipt verifying payment for their portion of the fare. Photocopies of receipts will not be accepted.

Ground transportation for non-conference sponsored activities and travel are deemed personal in nature and are not reimbursable.

Parking fees incurred by Travelers, while on official County business, should be restricted to the most economical parking fee rates at the parking facilities. Except for hotel parking fees, included

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on the hotel folio, street parking fees are not eligible for payment on the T-card, without prior County Manager approval. These expenses are reimbursable with submission of a complete reconciliation package, after completion of travel and must be substantiated by original receipts that include the purpose of the trip(s).

#### **6.4 Travel Incentive Programs**

Travelers may not personally earn, receive or retain promotional items or benefits as a result of official County business-related travel, including: frequent flyer miles, points, cash back or travel rewards. Any Traveler who violates this procedure may be subject to discipline and the loss of County sponsored travel privileges and/or use of the T-Card.

#### **6.5 Travel Advance Exemptions**

Requests for advance of ground transportation costs, not usually eligible for advance, may be allowed on a case by case basis by the Department Head with prior approval of the County Manager.

### **7. MEALS AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSES/REIMBURSABLE RATES**

#### **7.1 Meal Per Diems**

Only travel that is eligible for overnight stay entitles the Traveler to receive a per diem amount for meals and incidental expenses (“M&IE”) at a rate consistent with IRS regulations for accountable reimbursement plans. The per diem amount is inclusive of taxes, gratuity and any additional costs associated with a meal. The term “incidentals” includes, but is not limited to expenses for personal services (i.e., tips for porters, servers, baggage carriers, drivers, housekeeping, and etc.).

Generally, Travelers will not be provided the full per diem amount on the departure and return dates. In accordance with GSA guidelines, first and last day calendar day travel is calculated at 75% of the daily per diem rate.

##### **(a) Travel within Atlanta Metropolitan Area**

Meal per diem is not allowable for travel within the Atlanta Metropolitan Area.

If a conference, seminar or training requires travel for more than two (2) consecutive days and is within the Atlanta Metropolitan Area, but is at least 50 miles from Traveler’s normal workplace, the Department Head may approve an overnight stay if accommodations and per diem are more cost effective than mileage reimbursement for the total roundtrip travel.

##### **(b) Day Trips**

A Traveler in travel status for day trips (outside of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area) is allowed meal reimbursements based on federal per diems. It is also allowable for a Traveler who decides to return on the same night from a trip that qualifies for overnight accommodations. Note: The IRS considers all meals reimbursements not associated with overnight travel taxable.

##### **(c) Overnight Travel**

Meal per diem allowance shall be based on the federal meal per diem rates found here: [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov). To receive the full meal per diem it is necessary for Travelers to be in overnight. These policies do not create a contract of employment. Employment for non-classified employees remains “at will”.

travel status and be eligible for both breakfast and dinner. All taxes, gratuities and tips are included in the maximum allowances for meal per diem.

**(d) Conference /Convention Meals**

Travelers shall not be provided per diem for meals included as part of a conference or convention registration fee paid by the County. Travelers who elect to eat elsewhere shall do so at their own expense and no reimbursement will be allowed. Exceptions may be made for Travelers with medical requirements or religious beliefs that prevent them from eating the meal provided as part of the conference. If approved, the Traveler will be reimbursed in the same manner as all other meals.

Banquets not included in the registration fee will be paid at the stated rate, provided the meal is an integral part of the convention or conference (for example, a banquet at which industry/political leader(s) will be a special guest or keynote speaker and where there is special opportunity to promote County initiatives). The Traveler will not be reimbursed for meals that are complimentary or provided by any other person or entity without charge. The meals and incidentals per diem may be reduced by an amount comparable to the allowance rate for such meals.

**(e) Hotel Meals**

Continental breakfast included in the registration fee should not be considered a meal; therefore, the meal per diem is allowable for included continental breakfasts. However, if the hotel provides a full hot breakfast, per diem is not allowed, as it is provided as part of the lodging fee paid by the County.

**(f) Airline Meals**

Meals or snacks served on airlines will not affect the daily meals and incidentals allowance.

**(g) Alcohol Allowances**

An alcoholic beverage is never a reimbursable expense, **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**7.2 Reimbursable Expenses/ Incidental Expenses**

**(a) Allowable Reimbursable Expenses**

It is the County's policy to reimburse Travelers for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred while conducting official County business. However, there are some expenses that will be considered personal in nature and will not be reimbursed.

The following are allowable expenses that are reimbursable:

- Telephone reimbursement for County-related business calls. Must indicate business purpose in order to claim reimbursement.
- Fax and postage expenses incurred relative to County business. Receipts are required with justification.
- Laundry expenses while away on County business for one (1) week or more.
- Parking and toll charges, in state or out of state.
- Baggage claim fees for business related materials or equipment and one piece of luggage.
- Reasonable internet café/hotel Wi-Fi service charges that are incurred to facilitate County business.

**(b) Non-Allowable/Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

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- Personal long distance phone calls
- Entertainment expense
- Laundry if travel is less than one (1) week
- Valet services
- Personal grooming
- Personal reading material
- Alcoholic beverages
- Direct expenses for the use of a personal vehicle (Ex. tires, oil change, etc.)
- Personal travel insurance
- Traffic fines and court costs
- Souvenirs from trip
- Movie rental
- Extended travel expenses that do not provide cost savings to the County

These lists are not all-inclusive. The Department Head shall approve or disapprove all other expense reimbursements not clearly defined in the policy.

**(c) Incidental Expenses**

Incidental expenses are fees and tips that are incurred for personal services during the normal course of business travel. Expenses in this category are covered by the Meal and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) per diem rate, established by the General Services Administration. Such expenses do not require substantiation by receipts. Location-specific information for M&IE can be found at [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem).

Outlined below are travel expenses included in the Traveler’s M&IE per diem rate.

- Tips for meal services
- Tips for airport baggage handlers and hotel porters
- Tips for hotel housekeeping
- Tips for transportation services

**(d) Extraordinary Travel or Costs**

In instances of travel not covered or clearly defined in this policy, or where the actual necessary costs exceed the maximum reimbursement allowed and the travel is in the best interest of the County, the Department Head or the County Manager (or assigned proxy) may approve reimbursement of actual cost beyond the maximums stated herein. However, the terms of reimbursement must be determined before the travel occurs or before the cost is incurred and expenses must be substantiated in the reconciliation.

**(e) Non-County Sponsored Travel/Training**

The Fulton County Board of Commissioners, through Resolution #12-0823, prohibits the use of any funds from County Contractors, defined as “a person, business or entity, however formulated, that: (1) is seeking official action from Fulton County; (2) is seeking to do or is doing business with Fulton County; (3) represents a person who is seeking official action from Fulton County; or (4) has an interest that may be affected by the performance or non-performance of official duties by the Traveler, officer, elected official or Commissioner” for travel expenses for any party subject to all other terms and conditions within this policy, unless such expenses are specifically authorized by a written County contract or solicitation.

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If travel for an authorized Traveler is being sponsored by a third party, the County will not be responsible for advancing full or partial expenses for any portion of travel that will be either advanced or reimbursed by the third party. All expenses reimbursable by the sponsor to the Traveler are the sole responsibility of the Traveler.

## **8. TRAVEL/TRAINING ADVANCES AND RECONCILIATION**

The use of T-cards minimizes the financial burden of a Traveler while traveling on behalf of the County. Travelers will receive a check issued by the Finance Department for their per diems pursuant to this policy.

By signing the appropriate Travel and Training Form, the Traveler acknowledges compliance with County procedures and certifies to the accuracy and propriety of all expenses and allowances listed are necessary in the performance of official County business. This instrument also authorizes the County to deduct, via payroll or other county payment, any monies owed from the Traveler for unreconciled travel costs. It is the responsibility of the Traveler to reconcile the travel expenses within the required period of time (3 days), upon returning from trip.

Cancellations or indefinite postponement for authorized travel/training must be communicated to the Departmental Travel Coordinator. The DTC must ensure that any prepayments that can be rescinded are credited back to the travel card.

### **8.1 Payment Methods**

Cash, ACH or EFT payments are strictly prohibited, unless otherwise authorized under an approved modification in business practices.

### **8.2 Travel/Training Reconciliation**

Travelers are required to reconcile travel and give a completed package to the DTC within three (3) business days from the date of returning from travel for review and certification. Completed reconciliations should be forwarded from the DTC to Finance for final review, approval and payment of any owed reimbursements.

Original receipts are required for hotel and all allowable expenses noted in Section 7.2a of these procedures policy. Credit card statements in lieu of original receipts will not be accepted. Receipts must be marked paid or show a zero balance. Personal expenses must be paid by the Traveler and cleared from the final bill at checkout. Unallowable taxes paid on the County T-card for hotel expenses within the State of Georgia must be reimbursed, reversed or credited back to the County before the final reconciliation can be approved.

The DTC shall at the end of each month, complete a report including outstanding travel reconciliations for their respective department and submit those names to the Department Head and to the Accounting Division of the Finance Department. It is the DTC's responsibility to communicate each deficiency to the individual departmental Traveler, which should include monies advanced on Traveler's behalf (i.e. hotel, conference or seminar registration) and any other advances associated with the trip.

Accounting will not directly contact Travelers who have not submitted reconciliations, but will assist the DTC and the Purchasing Department with any discrepancies found in reconciling.

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Reconciliation files that are not completely closed after 30 days from the return date of travel will be reviewed for payroll deduction. The Accounting Division will submit the names of Travelers with outstanding travel balances due that are **30** days old to the Payroll Division of Finance to proceed with the payroll deduction for any amounts due to the County. The signature of the Traveler on the Advance Agreement Form is authorization to deduct any monies due back to the County from the Traveler’s payroll check or in a manner pursuant to any other Fulton County Policy or Procedure.

Payroll check deductions will be broken down into multiple installments to be determined by the County. However, if the amounts due the County are under \$100.00, the total amount due will be deducted on one paycheck rather than over multiple paychecks.

Federal tax guidelines require that all requests for reimbursement must be made in a timely manner, meaning that all requests for reimbursement must be made no later than 60 days after the date the expense was paid or incurred. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the non-reimbursement of the request.

**(a) Timetable Guide for Executing a Travel and Training Request and Reconciliation**

Please note that the time frames set forth below are subject to change by the County Manager or the Department Head, if the travel is being approved by the Department Head. Changes affecting the below time frames will be communicated in writing by the Finance Department to the Purchasing Department, Department Heads, DTCs, and employees.

<b>Travel/Training Request Action – Prior to travel</b>	<b>Number of Business Days to Complete</b>
<b>Traveler/Traveler</b> submits travel or training request to the DTC.	20 days before the requested travel departure, when possible.
The <b>DTC</b> reviews the request and submits it for approval to the Department Head.	2
The <b>Department Head</b> reviews the request; either approves the request and returns it to the DTC for processing or rejects it and returns it to the Traveler with no further action necessary.	5
The <b>DTC</b> processes the approved travel and training request (i.e. pays registration fees, secures transportation and lodging and reserves ground transportation, if needed).	5
*To provide the greatest cost benefit to the County, airline tickets should be purchased at least 21-28 in advance of travel.	
DTC forwards Per diem Package to Finance for processing	14 days before travel departure date
<b>Travel/Training Reconciliation – Upon return from travel</b>	
<b>Traveler</b> completes reconciliation for the trip by gathering receipts and other supporting documentation and calculating amount advanced and	

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amount to be reimbursed on the Travel/Training Expense form and submits to the DTC.	3
The <b>DTC</b> reviews the reconciliation package submitted by the Traveler for accuracy, verifies actual costs and reimbursement amounts and ensures all supporting documentation is attached. Once approved by the Department Head, the DTC forwards completed reconciliations to Finance.	5 days
<b>Finance</b> completes final review of completed reconciliation package to verify actual costs and reimbursement amount and processes a check for any amount due from the County to the Traveler.	20 days
On the last business day of each month, the <b>DTC</b> submits to Finance a comprehensive list of names of Travelers with outstanding travel reconciliations.	30 days
<b>Finance</b> forwards to Payroll a list of names of Travelers with unreconciled travel over (30) days past the return date from travel. The Payroll Division of Finance ensures a Travel/Training Advance Agreement form is on file before withholding funds that are due from the Traveler to the County and begins the process for payroll deduction.	10 days

**9. PROCEDURES AND EXCEPTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE OFFICES OF THE SHERIFF AND DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

The Fulton County Sheriff’s Office is subject to all conditions set forth in this policy, except in cases where the nature of its travel precludes adherence to certain procedures within. These exceptions are outlined as follows:

**9.1 Extradition Travel**

All extradition travel must have signatory approval of both the Sheriff’s Office and the District Attorney’s Office. Costs for extradition travel will be equally (i.e., 50/50) shared between both the Sheriff’s Office and District Attorney’s Office. The DTC will be responsible for reviewing and/or completing the travel package and making travel arrangements. A payment voucher should be executed by both the Sheriff’s Office and the District Attorney’s Office for per diem and approved travel advance. All other items should be paid in advance via the T-card where possible.

**9.2 Payment of Travel Advance**

The Sheriff’s Office and the District Attorney’s Office will each be assigned a T-card solely for extradition travel (i.e., separate from the T-card assigned for all other travel). This T-card should only be used to secure pre-payment eligible items (transportation and lodging) for extradition travel. Extradition Travelers must adhere to the federal per diem allowance rates for lodging, meals and incidental expenses found here ([www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)). When requesting travel allowance or per diem, a joint payment voucher must be executed by both the Sheriff’s and District Attorney’s Offices and submitted to Accounts Payable in the Finance Department for processing. Accounts Payable in the Finance Department shall notify the Treasury/Cash Management Division of any forthcoming cash advance requests. Traveler will be contacted by the Finance Department when a cash advance is available for retrieval. The signature of each Traveler or the DTC is required for the release of funds.

**9.3 Petty Cash for Per Diem and Travel Allowance**

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The Sheriff's Office and the District Attorney's Office shall jointly establish and maintain a joint petty cash account within the Finance Department solely for the purpose of funding approved travel allowances and per diem for extradition travel. This petty cash account shall be equally funded by both Offices from their annual budget appropriations for extradition travel and must maintain a minimum reserve of \$5,000.00 (i.e., \$2,500 per Office). The Sheriff's Office's procurement unit is responsible for ensuring reserves remain at or above the minimum balance, and oversee the transferring of money from the Offices' extradition travel budgets when the balance of the petty cash account reaches a threshold of 85% of entire minimum balance. All outstanding reconciliations must be cured prior to the transfer of additional money to this petty cash account. At the end of the calendar year, all funds remaining in this reserve account shall be equally distributed between the Sheriff's and District Attorney's Offices and transferred back to the original object codes.

#### **9.4 Reconciliation**

Reconciliation of extradition travel shall follow the same provisions set forth within this policy. A copy of the completed reconciliation package should be provided to the Finance Department for record keeping.

### **10. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES OR EXCEPTIONS FOR THE OFFICES OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY, PUBLIC DEFENDER, SOLICITOR GENERAL, AND CHILD ATTORNEY**

#### **10.1 Witness Fees and Travel Expenses**

The Offices of the Fulton County Child Attorney, County Attorney, District Attorney, Public Defender and Solicitor General are authorized by O.C.G.A § 24-13-25 - Witness fees - to tender payments for witness/victim's travel expenses to court from a location in or out of state that requires payment for witness mode of travel.

Travel expenditures for witnesses are governed by all provisions outlined in this Fulton County Travel & Training Policy and in accordance with federal lodging rates. Travel expenses for witnesses shall be covered for the duration of their testimony. The District Attorney shall maintain a separate Witness Travel Account (Witness Fees - object codes 1167/1168) for expenses related to witnesses/victims.

#### **10.2 Payment of Witness Fees and Expenses**

Payments in these categories may be issued directly to victims/witnesses for any fees incurred for the purpose of appearing in court of law and providing testimony. Travel expenses for lodging and transportation are paid by the Department Travel Coordinator directly to vendors, via the T-card. In some instances, the witnesses/victims will receive mileage reimbursement.

### **11. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR GRANT FUNDED TRAVEL**

Travel is generally an allowable cost if required for the governmental operations funded by a grant. *Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments* (2 CFR Part 225) developed by the Office of Management and Budget further outlines federal policy for Grants administration and accounting and provides more specific guidelines on training and travel expenditures: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/fedreg/2005/083105\\_a87.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/fedreg/2005/083105_a87.pdf).

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On a case-by-case basis, travel costs may be restricted or excluded from specific grants. More specific instructions for utilizing grant funds for travel can be found in the “Cooperative Agreement - Special Conditions” provided with each grant award. Restrictions on travel are generally noted. For instances where County policy and an individual grant’s conditions for training or travel differ, the Traveler shall abide by the terms and conditions of the grant.

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## II. AUTOMOBILE ALLOWANCE / MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

### 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

#### 1.1 Types of Allowances

This procedure permits reimbursement for the use of privately owned vehicles for essential official County business, referred to as business/local mileage. Department heads may recommend appropriate vehicular allowances for incumbents of pertinent positions. These allowances are of two types:

- A. Rate per mile as established by the IRS Standard Mileage Rate and determined by action of the Board of Commissioners, or
- B. A flat monthly rate as authorized by the Board of Commissioners for each position

#### 1.2 Business/Local Mileage versus Travel Mileage Reimbursement

Procedures for travel outside the Metro Atlanta area or training (meets licensure/certification requirement) differ from reimbursement for *business* or *local mileage*, which occurs in the performance of an employee's routine job duties. Included in travel mileage reimbursement is travel for business meetings, conferences, or other professional events that are held within Metro Atlanta and allowable under this policy.

Mileage reimbursement for other travel related to conferences, seminars or training, outside of the Metro Atlanta area, must be requested in accordance with the guidelines established in the travel in *Private owned Vehicle (Mileage Reimbursement)*, Section 6.2(b) of the Travel & Training section of this procedure.

#### 1.3 Applicability

Members of the Board of Commissioners shall be ineligible for mileage reimbursement for travel within Fulton County.

#### 1.4 Approval for Business/Local Mileage Reimbursement

Each recommendation must be concurred by the County Manager and approved by the County Commissioners. Inasmuch as authorization by the County Commissioners constitutes approval for the allowances of a specific position only, the allowance may be transferred from one incumbent to a successor in the same position. However, authorization for the allowance to be transferred from one position to another requires Commission approval.

#### 1.5 Ordinary Home to Work Travel (Commuting Miles)

Commuting expenses incurred in traveling between a traveler's residence and County office or for mileage/expenses incurred in any other travel of a personal nature are not reimbursable. If mileage incurred in a single day to a place outside the office exceeds normal commuting mileage (commuting to the office and back), the difference between mileage incurred that day and commuting mileage is reimbursable. Round-trip mileage between a traveler's residence and primary work location is a personal commuting expense and is not eligible for travel reimbursement.

#### 1.6 Examples of Potential Allowable Reimbursable Mileage

- A traveler drives directly from his/her residence to attend a business meeting, conference or seminar or a temporary work location within the Atlanta Metro Area in excess of their daily roundtrip commute.
- A traveler drives from a primary to an alternate work location or work station.
- A traveler drives from his/her residence to primary or temporary work location on the weekend to conduct County business outside of their normal work hours.

**Example 1):** A traveler's residence is in Alpharetta and their primary work location is in Atlanta at the Fulton County Government Center. The traveler's normal commute mileage is 60 miles roundtrip (RT).

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- a. The traveler leaves in the morning from his/her residence to represent the County at a health fair in College Park and then returns to his/her residence. The total distance travelled to the health fair is 60 miles RT. The traveler's total (business) miles (60) are equal to the normal round trip commute miles (60), so there is **no reimbursement** for business mileage for this trip.
- b. The traveler leaves in the morning from his/her residence to attend a meeting in Doraville, which is 50 miles away, and returns to his/her residence afterwards. The total distance traveled is 100 miles RT. The traveler's reimbursable business mileage is 40 miles (100 miles traveled, less 60 miles normal commute mileage = 40 business miles).

The normal commute miles must always be subtracted when a traveler travels from their residence to a meeting or temporary work location. If the total miles travelled exceed the traveler's round trip commute miles, the miles in excess of his/her normal commute is eligible for reimbursement. If a traveler's normal daily commute is equal to or greater than the business mileage, the trip is not eligible for mileage reimbursement.

**Example 2):** A traveler's normal commute mileage is 15 miles one way. Traveler leaves from home on Saturday and drives to the Fulton South Service Center outside of his/her normal work schedule and returns to his/her residence later that evening. The traveler's total reimbursable business travel is 30 miles. If travel occurs on a weekend or holiday and is outside of the normal work schedule, mileage is calculated from the point of departure with no reduction for normal commuting miles.

**Example 3)** A Traveler leaves their primary work location in the evening and goes home. Once home, his/her supervisor calls and needs the traveler to go to a customer site for an emergency work assignment, then return home; a total roundtrip of 35 miles. The Traveler is allowed to claim the 35 miles as mileage reimbursement for the second trip and is not required to deduct normal commuting miles.

#### **Allowable Exceptions (Requires County Manager approval)**

Under normal circumstances, commuting miles is not reimbursable and is a personal expense. However, if a business trip originating from the traveler's residence is greater than the distance from the Traveler's residence to the County department, the department head may elect to reimburse the traveler for the difference.

## **2. Steps to Obtain Automobile Allowance/ Mileage Reimbursement**

### **2.1 Department Head**

When a Department Head determines that the incumbent of a particular position must engage in essential and frequent travel within the County, the Department Head may request that the incumbent of the position be authorized reimbursement for the use of his own private vehicle. After evaluation of the extent and frequency of the required travel the department head will determine the appropriate type of reimbursement; that is, rate per mile or flat monthly mileage allowance. Additionally, if the travel requirement is for other than a permanent basis, the recommendation will indicate the period during which the reimbursement is desired. The request for reimbursement, fully supported, will be submitted to the County Manager for approval.

### **2.2 County Manager:**

- (a) Reviews the departmental request for reimbursement.
- (b) Submits the departmental request with his own recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for consideration.
- (c) Advises department head as to Commission action.

### **2.3 Implementation When Flat Monthly Mileage Allowance is Authorized:**

- (a) Department Head will ensure that mileage allowance is established on the payroll system for each authorized incumbent.

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- (b) The allowance is paid biweekly on the normal payroll check.
- (c) The allowance is not payable:
  - a. If any employee is off duty for a full month.
  - b. When any employee is on leave immediately prior to retirement or separation.
- (d) The allowance is payable on a pro-rata basis when any County employee is on duty for any part of the month.

**2.4 When Rate Per Mile is Authorized:**

- (a) Daily business mileage driven by employees in excess of their normal daily round-trip commute mileage, which is defined as mileage between their home and normal place of work.
- (b) The amount of mileage claimed by an employee shall be limited to not more than 1,000 miles per month. Authorization for mileage in excess of 1,000 miles in a single month shall be requested by the department head. Such request shall be sent in writing to the Director of Finance.
- (c) Elected and non-elected Department Heads should ensure that adequate planning of trips is done so that sharing of vehicles on County business in the same area reduces mileage claims.
- (d) For routine deliveries, departments are encouraged to make use of motor pool vehicles rather than using the employee's vehicle and thereby increasing mileage reimbursement.
- (e) Employees including Department Heads who are assigned a County vehicle and such vehicle subsequently becomes immobile for any reason shall be required to furnish their own substitute vehicle and the County shall reimburse the employee at the current rate on a mileage basis in accordance with this procedure. Department Heads should furnish a memorandum of explanation to the Director of Finance together with the document outlined below in order for payment to be made to the individual.
- (f) Department Heads will forward to the Finance Department by the third working day of the month all monthly automobile mileage reports prepared by personnel authorized the rate per mile vehicle allowance. Department Heads are responsible to ensure that these reports are checked for accuracy and completeness, as well as agreement with the employee's attendance record. No County mileage will be reported on holidays or weekends unless explanation accompanies the report form for mileage allowance.
- (g) Employees utilizing their personal vehicle for County business twice a month or less frequently may qualify for modified use of the approved mileage report form. Employees will need to submit the mileage report form; however, in lieu of the odometer reading, employees may submit a published road atlas (MapQuest, etc.) documenting commuting miles and county miles. Detailed instructions are available on Employee Central - Form# 00348 – Instructions Completing the Fulton County Mileage Expense Form.
- (h) Mileage reports are subject to audit by the Finance Department and/or the Office of the County Auditor.
- (i) Checks for rate per mile, received by the Finance Department on the third working day of the month will be mailed to the employees address in the County's vendor system. The Finance Department will attempt to process any requests within 15

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working days. Address changes must be submitted to the Purchasing Department in a timely manner to prevent delays in the delivery of the check by the post office.

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