



# ***City of North Miami Beach, Florida***

## **FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

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### **TRAVEL POLICY**

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Finance Director

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 7, 2012

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#### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures whereby expenses incurred during authorized travel to conduct bona fide City business which serves a direct, official and lawful purpose shall be reimbursed.

#### **II. SCOPE**

This policy applies to City officials, Board members, employees or other persons authorized to travel on City business.

#### **III. BACKGROUND**

It is customary and has been the City's policy to reimburse authorized personnel for expenses incurred while traveling on City business. Without a specific policy in place, the City is obligated to comply with Sec. 112.061 Florida Statutes. Because circumstances in the City of North Miami Beach vary substantially from those of the State of Florida, it is prudent to develop policies and procedures specific to the general practices, objectives and culture of the City.

#### **IV. GENERAL POLICIES**

- A.** Budgets for travel and auto expenses and educational programs will be justified during the annual budget process. Department Directors shall be responsible for monitoring the budget to ensure sufficient funds are available at the time of each travel request. Any deficiencies in the budgeted amounts must be absorbed within the division and be available prior to submittal of any advance payment or reimbursement request.
- B.** A Travel Authorization Form (see Exhibit A) must be completed prior to the incurrence of any travel related costs. The authorization form should be completed in its entirety and include reasonable supporting documentation such as conference registration forms and agendas, hotel, airfare, meal allowance, car rental and mileage estimates. Unauthorized travel expenditures will not be reimbursed by the City and any credit card charges for unauthorized travel expenses will be paid by the cardholder.
- C.** The Department Director is responsible for ensuring that the proposed travel is in the best interest of the City and that the estimated costs are reasonable. Travel Authorization Forms shall be signed by the Department Director and the City Manager or his designee for all municipal employees, personnel, board members or other authorized persons. Elected Officials, the City Manager, the City Clerk and the City Attorney shall authorize their own travel in the best interest of the City and must comply with all regulations stated herein.
- D.** Advanced registration for conferences, hotels, airlines, rental cars and similar expenses should be scheduled to obtain the most advantageous rates available.

- E. The City of North Miami Beach is a tax-exempt organization. A copy of the Consumer's Certificate of Exemption should be presented prior to purchases of applicable travel related expenditures.
- F. All travel must be via the most direct, practicable route. If a traveler takes an indirect route for personal convenience, any extra costs shall be borne by the traveler and reimbursement for expenses shall be based only on such charges as would have been incurred by a usual and customarily travelled route.
- G. Reimbursement shall be limited to the traveler with the exception of a temporarily or permanently non-ambulatory traveler who shall receive reimbursement for costs of subsistence, transit and lodging of any caretaker as if the caretaker were a traveler, so long as an estimate of the caretaker's expenditures are included on the Travel Authorization Form.

## V. SPECIFIC POLICIES

### A. METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION

The method of travel will be designated by the person authorizing the travel, keeping in mind the best interests of the City, the nature of the business, the number of persons traveling, the amount of equipment or material to be transported, the length of the trip, the physical status and condition of the traveler, and other pertinent and relevant factors.

1. Air travel will be by coach or economy class unless authorized in writing by the City Manager prior to the date of travel.
2. Airport parking will be reimbursed at the rate of the lowest available option. Airport shuttle services should be utilized when cost savings can be realized.
3. City employees are encouraged to use City vehicles when practical.
4. Travel by privately-owned vehicle will be reimbursed at mileage rates in accordance with I.R.S. regulations as published at <http://www.irs.gov> under the 'Credits & Deductions' tab as now in existence and as hereafter amended from time to time.
5. Mileage will be calculated using an Internet mapping site. Mileage reimbursement is computed based on the distance from the traveler's home or City worksite to the final travel destination, whichever is less.
6. City employees traveling by privately-owned vehicle who receive a monthly auto allowance will receive mileage reimbursement only for travel outside Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties.
7. No traveler shall be allowed mileage expense when gratuitously transported by another person or by another traveler who is entitled to mileage allowance.
8. Estimates for tolls, parking and rental car fees, and taxi, bus and limousine fares should be included on the travel authorization form and will be reimbursed at actual cost when substantiated by receipts.

### B. LODGING

1. Reasonable efforts should be made to obtain the most economically feasible form of lodging available for the destination and dates of travel.
2. Actual expenses for lodging, substantiated by receipt(s) in the traveler's name shall be reimbursed.
3. No lodging shall be reimbursed for travel within Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties.

### C. MEALS

1. Meal allowances will be provided for overnight travel only.
2. All meals and nonalcoholic beverages consumed during dates of travel will be reimbursed at the per diem rate provided by 41 CFR 301-11.6 as may be amended (the 'Federal Per Diem Rate') as published at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287> by the U.S. General Services Administration for domestic travel or as published by the U.S. Department of State at [http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp) for foreign travel.
3. On travel dates, per diem will be paid at 50% of the daily rate.

4. Per diem allowances shall be reduced for meals included with the registration of organized events, i.e. conferences, seminars, meetings, etc.
5. Receipts are not required to substantiate meal allowances, and meals purchased in excess of the allowance will be reimbursed only at the per diem rate.

**D. REGISTRATION FEES**

Registration fees, seminar materials and other like data are reimbursable when substantiated by receipts.

**E. INCIDENTAL EXPENSES**

Non-authorized, non-reimbursable expenses are those generated by activities and events which do not serve a direct purpose to the City. Such expenses include the following:

1. Laundry and dry-cleaning
2. Personal telephone calls
3. Entertainment & alcoholic beverages
4. Room service
5. Movie or cable television fees charged by hotels or airlines
6. Flight insurance
7. Items of a personal nature
8. Gratuities
9. Any other non-business related expenses

Other miscellaneous expenses not specifically provided for or excluded must be necessary, reasonable and allowable in accordance with applicable I.R.S. regulations.

**F. LAW ENFORCEMENT TRUST FUNDS**

In accordance with State of Florida Statutes, Chapter 932, the United States Department of Justice publication, *A Guide to Equitable Sharing of Federally Forfeited Property for State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies*, and the United States Treasury Department publication, *Guide to Equitable Sharing for Foreign Countries and Federal, State, and Local Law Enforcement Agencies*, which govern the use of confiscated and forfeited funds, travel expenditures will be authorized by the Chief of Police and approved by the City Council.

Due to the sensitive nature involved, travel authorization forms shall be submitted only upon request for payment of travel-related expenditures.

**VI. TRAVEL ADVANCES, REIMBURSEMENTS AND VENDOR PAYMENT PROCEDURES**

**A. ADVANCES**

1. A minimum of ten (10) working days is required to guarantee advanced funding for authorized travel expenses.
2. Requests for travel advances should be substantiated with adequate cost documentation and travel authorization. Pursuant to standard operating procedures; a separate request is required for each vendor and the traveler, in the case of requests for advances of per diem allowances.
3. Travel authorization forms and supporting documentation are required for all travel expenses charged to City credit cards at the time the credit card statement is submitted for payment regardless of the travel dates. Any credit card charges not in conformity with this policy will result in a deduction of the amount of disallowed charges from the traveler's salary.
4. All unused portions of travel advances shall be repaid within ten (10) working days from return date. Non-compliance will result in a deduction of the entire advance amount from the traveler's salary.

**B. REIMBURSEMENTS AND VENDOR PAYMENTS**

1. Reimbursement requests for travel expenses shall be submitted to the Finance Department with ten (10) working days from return date.
2. Reimbursement and vendor payment requests should be made pursuant to standard accounts payable operating procedures with supporting documentation to include:
  - a. Travel Authorization Form
  - b. Travel Expense Report (see Exhibit B)
  - c. Receipts for all travel expenses claimed, except per diem
3. Charges to personal credit cards will be reimbursed in accordance with item 2.

**VII. FRAUDULENT CLAIMS**

Any claim authorized or required to be made under any provision of this Policy shall contain a statement that the expenses were actually incurred by the traveler as necessary and ordinary expenditures made in the performance of official duties. Any traveler who makes a false or fraudulent claim shall be subject to disciplinary action and may also be subject to further legal action. A traveler who receives an allowance or reimbursement by means of a false claim shall be civilly liable in the amount of the overpayment for the reimbursement of the public funds from which the claim was paid, plus interest at 18% per year, plus court costs and penalties if applicable.

**VIII. EXCEPTIONS**

This Policy may not address every issue, exception or contingency that could arise in the course of City travel. Exceptions to this policy will require the approval of the City Manager. Accordingly, the basic standard that should always prevail is the exercise of good judgment in the use and stewardship of the City's resources. Expenditures determined by the City Manager to be excessive will be considered income of the traveler and shall accordingly be subject to FICA and withholding taxes.