

TOWN OF SAHUARITA TRAVEL AND TRAINING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY:

The policy of the Town of Sahuarita is to encourage training opportunities of employees and supervisors so their services rendered to the Town will be made more effective. Attendance at conferences, seminars, meetings and conventions which would be of direct benefit to the Town will be authorized by the Town Manager or Department Director consistent with the budget.

PROCEDURES:

Approvals

Employees desiring to attend schools, conferences, conventions, seminars, and other official meetings, shall submit a travel claim to their Department Director, or to the Town Manger if the Director is traveling, for approval at least two (2) weeks prior to the anticipated date of travel. Once approved by the Department Director, the original travel claim is sent to the Finance Department for verification of available funds in the respective department's travel and training budget line. Sufficient time should be allowed to receive a check prior to departure if an advance is requested.

Allowances

Employees are eligible for an allowance when they perform official travel away from their official station. Travelers are eligible to be reimbursed for per diem meal and incidental allowances if they are in travel status for more than 12 hours. If in travel status for 12 hours or less, employees will be reimbursed for actual expenses. The maximum allowances are set by the U.S. General Services Administration. These rates are updated annually and can be found at .policyworks.gov/ and Appendix A.

The per diem or actual expense allowance starts on the day the employee departs from their home, office, or other authorized point and ends on the day he/she returns to their home, office, or other authorized point. The employee must record the date and time of departure from, and arrival at, the official station or any other place travel begins and ends.

Lodging

When overnight lodging is required the traveler will be reimbursed for actual lodging costs. If the traveler elects to stay at a lodge that is not at the same facility where the conference, seminar, or training is being held, then the lodging rate is not to exceed the maximum allowed for the location. Employees will be reimbursed at the single occupancy rate.

Meals

A traveler may not claim reimbursement for more than three (3) meals in any single calendar day or in any period of 24 consecutive hours. Reimbursement of meals and incidental expenses shall not exceed those amounts allowed for the location as determined by the U.S. General Services Administration. To be reimbursed for any meal, the traveler must show where and when the trip began and ended.

A travel day of 12 or more hours shall be considered a full day and entitle the traveler to reimbursement for up to three (3) meals. When the travel day is less than a full day as described above, the following guidelines shall be applied to the reimbursement of amounts spent for meals:

- The traveler qualifies for breakfast reimbursement when travel begins two (2) or more hours before the start of the traveler's normal shift and the traveler is in travel status for at least four (4) continuous hours.
- The traveler qualifies for lunch reimbursement when traveler's workday has a length of at least eight (8) working hours.
- The traveler qualifies for dinner reimbursement when travel extends two (2) or more hours after the end of the traveler's normal shift and the traveler is in travel status at least four (4) continuous hours.

The traveler is not entitled to a meal allowance for substantial meals (i.e., hot or full-service) included in conference registration fees or provided on a complimentary basis by the facility at which the traveler is lodged. Meals satisfying special dietary needs will generally be provided by the hotels, conferences, etc. if requested by the traveler. It is the traveler's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for such special meals. If the traveler's request for a meal satisfying a special dietary need is denied, in order to claim a reimbursement for a meal expenditure, the traveler must provide a statement that details and certifies: to whom such request was made; by whom such request was denied; the reason given for the denial, and the special dietary needs of the traveler that could not otherwise have been accommodated.

Recordkeeping

A travel claim, along with the applicable documents and/or receipts, is required to be completed and returned to the Finance Department within five (5) working days of the employee's return to work.

All expenses, including meals, for which the traveler will be reimbursed for actual costs must be itemized. Receipts are not required for per diem meal and incidental allowances when the traveler is in travel status for more than 12 hours.

When possible, the Town credit card should be used to arrange and pay for transportation and lodging. If a Town credit card is used for travel purposes (meals, lodging, etc.) the customer copy from each transaction shall be attached to the travel claim along with other required receipts after travel is complete.

Travel Advances

Employees are allowed to receive an advance for travel after obtaining the necessary approvals. Advances are limited to **anticipated** cash transactions (i.e., expenses that cannot be charged and must be paid using cash, a personal check or travelers check), including:

- M&IE covered by the per diem allowance
- Miscellaneous transportation expenses such as local transportation system, taxi fares, and parking fees
- Gasoline and other variable expenses covered by the mileage allowance for advantageous use of privately owned automobile for official business, and

- Other authorized miscellaneous expenses that cannot be charged and for which a cost can be estimated.

After an employee has the proper authorization to travel, if a cash advance is needed, the employee is required to obtain approval from the Finance Director or Town Manager, as applicable, for the advance. After acknowledging the employee's receipt of the advance, the Finance Department will retain a copy of the travel claim and forward the original with the per diem check to the requesting party.

Employees must file a travel claim which accounts for the advance after completion of the travel assignment. If the amount advanced is less than the amount of the voucher on which it is deducted, the net amount will be reimbursed. If the advance exceeds the reimbursable amount, the excess must be immediately refunded.

If the traveling employee cancels his/her plans to travel after receiving the approved travel claim from the Finance Department, he/she is responsible for reimbursing the Town for any prepaid travel expenses paid by the Town that cannot be refunded to the Town because of deadline constraints.

Vehicle Usage

Use of Town vehicles in lieu of personal vehicles is encouraged and preferred. However, the use of personal vehicles is acceptable dependent upon the reasonable circumstances of any given travel situation. Personal vehicles must be legal to drive in the State of Arizona (i.e., properly licensed and insured). **Under no circumstances is smoking allowed in any Town vehicle. In addition, the consumption of alcoholic beverages prior to and during the operation of a Town vehicle is strictly prohibited.**

If an employee travels using his or her personal vehicle, he or she must obtain the approval from the Department Director or Town Manager, as applicable, prior to use of the personal vehicle. Upon completion of the trip, the employee shall complete a *Personal Vehicle Reimbursement Worksheet* and submit it to the Finance Department for reimbursement. Actual start and stop mileage should be noted on the *Worksheet*, otherwise, the shortest road-mile distance between the two travel points will be used for reimbursement calculation. Mileage will be reimbursed based upon the mileage allowance of \$0.445 per mile.

Miscellaneous Expenses

When the following items have been authorized and are for business purposes, they will be reimbursed as a miscellaneous travel expense. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Expenses related to transferring, storing, and checking baggage
- Use of computers, printers, faxing machines, and scanners
- Services of typists, data processors, or stenographers
- Storage of property used on official business
- Official telephone calls/service
- Lodging taxes
- Energy surcharge and lodging resort fees(s) (when such are not optional)