

Appendix G

TRAVEL POLICY

I. PURPOSE

This document outlines the Policies and Procedures for individuals traveling on Luzerne County business using County funds, and applies to both day and overnight travel.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Authorized Travel: Travel to be performed by County employees that is reviewed and approved in the budget process and for which funds are included in the adopted budget. Department Heads will manage the allocation of available resources to accomplish travel most efficiently and effectively throughout the year.
- B. Daily Travel: All travel not requiring overnight accommodations and/or performed within the boundaries of Luzerne County by employees in accomplishing their assigned duties is considered daily travel. Daily travel for Department Heads is at the discretion of the Department Heads. Daily travel for all other employees requires advance approval as outlined in Section VIII – Travel Approval, below.
- C. Extended Travel: All overnight trips to attend meetings, conferences, training, or other work-related functions are considered extended travel. Extended travel requires advance approval as outlined in Section VIII – Travel Approval, below.
- D. International Travel: Travel to locales outside the 48 contiguous United States is considered international travel. International travel requires advance approval as outlined in VIII – Travel Approval, below.

III. GENERAL POLICIES

- A. Applicability: This policy shall apply to all employees and members of boards, commissions, and authorities of Luzerne County engaged in travel required to conduct Luzerne County business. Employees are not guaranteed attendance at conferences and training seminars. County Administration/Department Heads will determine the appropriateness of all travel undertaken by staff and have the authority to approve or disapprove requests for conferences, training, seminars and other business travel. Supervisors are encouraged to provide these opportunities appropriately and fairly.

Travel undertaken by sworn officers of the Sheriff's Office for the purposes of prisoner extradition is subject to extradition policies and procedures as contained in the Sheriff's Office Standard Operating Procedures Manual.

- B. Responsibility: Each Department Head is expected to exercise sound and prudent judgment when approving, arranging for, and incurring travel expenditures.

It shall be the responsibility of the Department Head to determine who is eligible for reimbursement for Internet access, if the place of lodging does not provide this service for free. The fee(s) for Internet access shall be included in the itemization of anticipated travel expenses when submitted for advance approval. Each employee participating in County-funded travel shall submit a Travel Authorization/Reimbursement Form (Appendix II) to obtain advance approval for travel as outlined in Section VIII - Travel Approval, below. All travel-related expenses are to be itemized on one form; expenses may not be divided between two forms to avoid the expenditure limit as defined in paragraph III-C below. In the event the total expenses are anticipated to exceed the expenditure limit as defined in Section III-C below, the request for advance approval must comply with the schedule for submission as a Commissioners agenda item. Within ten (10) business days of return from travel, the original, approved Travel Authorization/Reimbursement Form shall be submitted to the Budget & Finance Office with all appropriate receipts, details of expenses, explanations, and, if applicable, refund of unused travel advance funds. If the individual incurring travel expenses is a Row Officer, that individual shall request the County Manager/Chief Clerk to review and sign the reimbursement form. It is the responsibility of the Department Head to ensure the refund of any unused travel advance is submitted with the Travel Authorization/Reimbursement Form to the Controller's Office within ten (10) business days of return from travel.

- C. Expenditure Limits: Expenditures for any individual employee to attend any single meeting, conference, training, seminar or other work-related function shall not exceed \$1,500, except as allowed in Section III-D, below. The \$1,500 limit is inclusive of travel, registration, and all other costs associated with attending such work-related functions. If an employee exceeds the \$1,500 expenditure limit without obtaining approval of the Commissioners prior to scheduling travel, such employee shall be personally responsible for all expenditures exceeding that amount.
- D. In those instances where funds for certain desired travel exceed the \$1,500 limit referenced in Section III-C, the requesting agency may make an appeal for an exception to policy. Such an appeal must demonstrate good cause and must be made through the County Manager/Chief Clerk, and shall be made prior to expending any County funds on the desired travel.
- E. Advance Payments: Only registration, per diem and advance conference fees may be paid prior to travel. All other travel payments shall be in the form of employee reimbursements after travel unless prior approval for advance payment is obtained from the County Manager/Chief Clerk.

- F. Excessive Expenses: Persons traveling on official County business will exercise care in incurring expenses to minimize the cost to the County Government. Excessive and unnecessary expenses will not be reimbursed. Those with authority as specified in Section III-A above will determine if expenses are excessive.

Examples of non-reimbursable excessive expenses are:

- Travel or accommodations upgrades
- In room movies, hotel gym or spa expenses
- Theatre, concert and sporting event tickets
- Other incidentals such as medicines, toiletries, snacks or hotel personal services
- Any additional meal expenses over and above those mentioned in this policy
- Any costs incurred by the individual's guest(s) or individuals accompanying the county employee
- Any Alcohol expenses

- G. Joint Travel: When it is known that two or more employees will be traveling to the same destination, maximum use shall be made of special group travel discounts, joint use of taxicabs and joint use of County-owned, leased or privately-owned vehicles. County Government strongly urges such employees to carpool or use commercial transportation where feasible.

IV. POLICY ADMINISTRATION

The administration of this policy shall be as follows:

- A. County Administration will adopt provisions of policy, set rates of reimbursement, and make any significant alterations.
- B. County Manager/Chief Clerk will implement all provisions of this policy, authorize exceptions as permitted and make changes to operating procedures as necessary.
- C. County Manager/Chief Clerk approval is required prior to making any travel arrangements when multiple employees in one department plan extended travel, as defined in Section II-C above, to the same event.
- D. Budget & Finance Department will administer the policy (review practices for policy compliance, keep records, prepare advances and checks, note discrepancies, etc.).

V. TRANSPORTATION

It is expected that the most direct, practical and economical mode and route of travel is arranged and used. Transportation is paid only if it is reasonable and necessary to accomplish the County's business.

- A. County Vehicle: County vehicles should be used for daily or extended travel when available and cost beneficial to the department.
- B. Personal Vehicle: Employees are permitted to use their personally owned automobiles when a County-owned vehicle is not available, or when the use of a personally owned vehicle is cost beneficial to the department. In the event of an accident, the employee's insurance will be sole and primary.
- C. When traveling to training, conferences, etc., the distance normally traveled from home to worksite (or the equivalent distance) is not reimbursable.
- D. If an employee is required to return to work after going home for the day, the department head, depending on circumstances, may approve mileage reimbursement for the return trip.
- E. In the event daily work related travel in a personal vehicle exceeds twenty (20) miles per day that travel, in its entirety, the employee shall be eligible for mileage reimbursement under the terms of this policy. County Commissioners and Row officers are excluded from this reimbursement.
- F. Commercial Transportation (Airplane, Rental Car, Taxicab, etc.): It is expected that the most economical and efficient mode and route of travel is used when travel is necessary to accomplish the County's business. Transportation should be shared by employees traveling together whenever possible. Rental cars may be used only when necessary for official purposes while traveling. Rental cars may not be used for personal purposes when traveling.

VI. LODGING

- A. Accommodations: Accommodations will be reimbursed on a single occupancy basis only, unless there is more than one County employee traveling and a room is being shared voluntarily. Accommodations shall be arranged at (or closest to) the site of business. Accommodations will be reimbursed at the conference rate or government rate plus applicable taxes, whichever is lower and available. A receipt for lodging expenses shall be required and must accompany the Travel Authorization/Reimbursement form to ensure reimbursement. Extended travel must be necessary and reasonable to accomplish the County's business to be eligible for reimbursement. Prior approval for extended travel must be obtained in accordance with Section VIII – Travel Approval, below or in the case of non-elected County officers and employees attending annual meetings of their associations, refer to the County Code section 443

- B. Non-Canceled Hotel Reservations: Employees will communicate travel plan changes to the hotel as soon as possible if a confirmed reservation is being held. Since hotels may charge for non-canceled reservations, these charges will not be reimbursed if the traveler is negligent in canceling those reservations.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

- A. Allowed Expenses: Taxes and surcharges paid by the traveler for lodging will be reimbursed. Tolls and parking fees are reimbursable. A receipt is required for reimbursement of all claims.
- B. Telephone and Facsimile Charges: Telephone and facsimile charges will be on the Authorization/Reimbursement form.
- C. Internet Access Charges: Internet access charges will be reimbursed only if an approved business justification is provided on the Travel Authorization/Reimbursement form.

VIII. TRAVEL/REIMBURSEMENT APPROVAL

Travel By:	Daily Travel	Extended Travel	International Travel	Total Travel Expenses ≥ \$1,000 < \$1,500	Total Travel Expenses ≥ \$1,500
Departmental Staff *	Department Head/Row Officer		County Manager/Chief Clerk		Board of Commissioners
Department Head *	Self	County Manager/Chief Clerk or designee	County Manager/Chief Clerk		Board of Commissioners
Human Services Directors' *	Self	Director of Human Services	County Manager/Chief Clerk		Board of Commissioners
County Manager/Chief Clerk *	Self	Chairman, Board of Commissioners			Board of Commissioners
Member Board of Commissioners	Self	Chairman, Board of Commissioners			Board of Commissioners
Non-BOC Boards, BOC Committees, * BOC Commissions	County Manager/Chief Clerk				Board of Commissioners

***County Code Section 443 applies for all authorized non-elected County officers and employees attending annual meetings of their associations.**

Appendix I to Travel Policy and Procedures

PER DIEM RATES (Effective September 17, 2008)

I. Mileage:

Shall be reimbursed at the rate of reimbursement adopted by the state, which follows the current IRS rates. The current IRS rates can be found at the following site: www.gsa.gov

Officials and employees of the County required to use their private vehicle in the performance of their official duties (routine mileage) will be compensated for business miles traveled at the current mileage rate. Business miles will be calculated starting from the location where the official or employee normally reports for work on a daily basis and ends at the last location prior to returning to their residence.

This reimbursement is based on the premise that the place of business is the headquarters of the employee. If the trip is begun or ended at a place other than the headquarters, reimbursement is allowed from the starting point, only when the cost from the starting point to the destination is less than the cost from headquarters to the destination.

II. Meals:

A. Daily Meal Rates:

1. Breakfast \$10.00
2. Lunch \$12.00
3. Dinner \$23.00

B. Daily Per Diem: \$45.00

The above reimbursement amounts are a base line and the employee will receive the lesser of the above stated rates or the GSA rates as stated at www.gsa.gov for the town or location they are traveling too.

III. Lodging:

GSA rate as stated at www.gsa.gov or the conference facilities rate, whichever is lower, plus applicable taxes is acceptable. Preference is given to conference facilities due to potential additional expenses that may be incurred due to commuting to and from conference venue and the safety of the attendee. If there is an abnormal discrepancy in the cost of other facilities in the area, the GSA rate and the conference facilities rate, approval from the County Manager/Chief Clerk is necessary with proper justification from attendee and or their Manager/Director.

If there is 3d facility nearby the conference facility with a lodging rate which is less than both the conference facility and the GSA rates, and the attendee wishes to avail him- or herself of such accommodations, such documentation should be brought to the attention of the County Manager/Chief Clerk by either the attendee or their authorizing Department Head/Director for prior approval.

IV. Incidentals:

\$3 per day

Incidental amount will only be paid for overnight travel.

Appendix II to Travel Policy

Luzerne County Travel Authorization/Reimbursement Form

Travel Request Detail

Requesting Employee Information

Name _____
 Department _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Purpose of Travel _____
 Travel Date(s) _____

Estimated Funding Required:

Registration _____
 Lodging _____
 Lodging taxes _____
 Meals _____
 Transportation _____
 Incidentals _____
 Mileage (per ?.) _____
 Parking, tolls _____
 Taxi, shuttle _____

Advance payment requested? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(Except for registration, per diem and advance conference fees, all travel payments shall be in the form of employee reimbursements after completion of travel unless prior approval is obtained from the County Manager)

Reason for advance payment:

Employee Signature _____ Date _____

Department Head/Authorized Officials Signature _____ Date _____

If advanced payment is requested, County Manager approval is required

County Manager _____ Date _____

If estimated expenditures exceed \$1,500, Board of Commissioners approval is required

Chairman Board of Commissioners _____

Date of BOC Meeting _____

Expense Accounting/Reimbursement Request

Within ten (10) working days after travel, complete the following expense/reimbursement detail, attach required receipts and submit to the Controllers Office

Actual Expenditures

	Acct. Code	Date(s)	Amount
Registration			
Lodging			
Meals		Detail Below	
Transportation			
Mileage (daily)		Provide detail on TP-MR02	
Mileage (conf.)			
Parking, Tolls			
Taxi, Shuttle			
Incidentals			
Gas			
Other (Specify)			
Transportation			

Total Expenses	\$
Less Advances	\$

Meals Detail

Per Diem Rate or GSA Rate Used	\$	\$	\$
Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Totals			

Total Meals \$

Employee Signature/Date _____

Reimbursement Approval

Amount Due Employee	\$
Amount Due County (Attach Personal check)	\$

Authorized Signature _____

Print Name _____

Date _____

Notes:

Travel must be budgeted and approved in advance in accordance with the Luzerne County Travel Policy, in order to receive reimbursement.

Complete the first column and meals detail above, and submit for approval prior to travel.

Complete the expense accounting information after travel, as indicated above. Receipts are required for meals, lodging, airfare, gasoline, parking and other travel related expenditures, except meals purchased under the per diem.

Attach the receipts to this form when submitting for reimbursement.

Meals included in conference/seminar fees, or provided by a vendor at no expense to the employee, are not reimbursable.

To document registration fees attach a copy of the flyer or brochure, which specifies the charges being reimbursed.

Travel outside the contiguous 48 states must be approved in advance by the County Manager and or the Chairman Commissioner.

County Manager approval is required when more than one employee in one department plan to attend an event requiring extended travel.

Business justification for telephone/fax/internet charges must accompany request for reimbursement.

LUZERNE COUNTY MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT FORM

Name _____
Department _____

Date _____

Date	Mileage for Daily Travel or Meeting Include point of origin and destination	Miles
	Total Miles	
	Reimbursement per mile (insert rate issued by Controllers)	\$
	Total Reimbursement	\$

I hereby affirm that the information submitted is true and accurate and within the Travel Policy of Luzerne County.

Employee Signature _____

Supervisor Signature _____

Form TP-MR02