



## COUNTY OF GENESEE TRAVEL POLICY

### I. **PURPOSE**

The Genesee County Board of Commissioners recognizes that in order to fulfill the mission of the County, travel may be required and expenses may be incurred that will require reimbursement from the County. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that (1) adequate cost controls are in place, (2) travel and other expenditures are appropriate, and (3) to provide a uniform and consistent approach for the timely reimbursement of authorized expenses incurred by Personnel. It is the policy of Genesee County to reimburse only reasonable and necessary expenses incurred for this purpose.

- a. **Application:** These regulations shall govern all County Officials, County Personnel, and any other person who submits a request to the County for reimbursement of travel expenses.

The responsibility for ensuring compliance with these regulations ultimately rests with the Genesee County Board of Commissioners. The Board shall designate a compliance review representative within the Controller's Office. The representative will be responsible for ensuring that all travel requests are in compliance with this adopted policy. The Board of Commissioners reserves the right to question, disallow or approve any travel expenditures.

- b. **Degree of Care:** All representatives of the County traveling on official business are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business.
- c. **Overnight Travel:** Staying 60 miles or more away from the Genesee County Administration Building located at 1101 Beach St Flint MI 48502, as defined by Google maps for one or more nights on County business, for the benefit of the County, whether in or out of the State.
- d. **Local Travel:** Lodging for an event that occurs within a 60 mile radius, as defined by Google maps, of the Genesee County Administration Building located at 1101 Beach St., Flint MI 48502 will not be reimbursed unless specific permission is requested and granted by the Genesee County Board of Commissioners.

- e. **Travel Time:** Travel during regular work hours is compensated. Travel time outside of regular working hours is not compensated.

**Term Expiration/Retirement:** Individuals shall not attend an educational program and have the cost paid by the County if the individual's term is ending or if the individual is retiring from qualifying employment within two (2) months after the last day of the educational program. If airfare and/or conference fees have been paid before it became known that the employee was prohibited from traveling by this restriction, the department head shall transfer the reservation to another employee or cancel the reservation, if possible.

## **II. REQUIREMENTS**

**Authority for Travel:** All travel is considered authorized by the Genesee County Board of Commissioners if:

- (a) it is included in the current fiscal year's adopted budget;
- (b) it does not exceed \$2000.00 per event (not per person); and
- (c) it has been reviewed and approved by the Controller's Office as being in compliance with this Travel Policy.

Any travel or expense that exceeds the \$2000.00 threshold requires prior approval by the Genesee County Board of Commissioners through the normal approval process. In addition, before any request will be considered by the Board of Commissioners, the designated representative of the Controller's Office must first review the request to ensure compliance with all regulations contained herein and certify such to the appropriate Board Committee.

To keep Commissioners apprised, the Controller's Office shall provide a list of all travel conducted during the previous month to the Finance Committee. The list shall include the name of the person who traveled, the department they work in, the name of the conference attended or reason for reimbursement, and the total cost reimbursed or paid for by the County.

Actual travel expenses paid by the County for persons other than County personnel who are called upon to contribute time and services as consultants or advisers must be authorized by the Board of Commissioners in advance. Receipts must be furnished as required by these regulations. Complete explanations and justifications must be shown on the vouchers. This type of expense must be submitted on the County Travel Expense Voucher.

Travel expenses for non-county personnel such as parents participating in Human Services programs operated by GCCARD, the Health Department, or any other program will be subject to both the County travel regulations and those imposed by the specific grant contract. The related expenses must be submitted

on the County Travel Expense Voucher with full explanation and receipts attached.

**Travel Advance Request:** Representatives of the County conducting official business may be provided with a cash advance to cover their expenses when the following procedures are adhered to by the attendee.

The department head will authorize and approve all travel advances and expenses related to travel in accordance with the Genesee County Travel Policy included herein prior to submitting to the Controller's Office for payment. Requests for any advance must be submitted in sufficient time for appropriate approvals to be obtained, including Board of Commissioners approval if necessary. Each department head is responsible for managing this process in a timely manner so as not to cause undue burden on any authorizing entity. Improper time management is not the fault of the authorizing department and may be cause for rejecting the request. Each authorizing entity will work diligently to ensure the review is done in a timely and efficient manner.

Advances will not be issued if prior travel advances remain outstanding.

The County Controller is authorized to approve only one advance at a time per person. Additional advances to the same person will not be made unless the report of the first advance is filed with the Controller's Office. Any amounts owed to the County must be paid in full prior to an advance being issued.

The travel advance request form is available on the Controller's website and should be completed electronically.

Within ten (10) days of return, proper documentation must be submitted to the County Controller's Office: (1) a County Travel Expense Voucher; (2) a copy of the travel advance request; and (3) a final accounting of the actual expenses incurred, including proper documentation in support.

Within ten (10) days of return, the attendee must provide a copy of the "Report Regarding Workshop, Conference, Convention or Seminar Attended" (Form GC 2106) to the department's parent committee's chairperson and vice-chairperson.

### **Vouchers**

All reimbursable expenses for local travel will be reported on the Genesee County Local Travel Expense Voucher (Local) or Genesee County Travel Expense Voucher (Overnight) and will include the reason for the expenses, the required explanations, name(s) of guest(s), and attached receipts.

These forms are to be used for reimbursement of expenses including use of privately owned vehicles while on official County business, attending workshops, conferences, conventions, seminars and training programs.

Each attendee must keep a memorandum of expenditures chargeable to the County for preparation of the travel voucher at the end of the travel period.

Failure to adhere to the ten (10) day travel return policy will waive the requestor's entitlement to reimbursement.

The expense of only one attendee shall be included on a single expense voucher, except an employee in a custodial capacity who is responsible for and pays expenses of others who accompany him/her or when reimbursement would be proper. Names of others must be shown.

It is expected that miscellaneous expenses incidental to official County travel will be held to the minimum amount required for essential and efficient conduct of County business. The designee approving the travel voucher will be held responsible by his/her certification for all items of expense as being necessary and correct.

The propriety of expense vouchers will be certified by the attendee and his/her department head. Supporting receipts must be attached for all items of expense where required by these regulations.

When conferences, conventions, workshops or seminars are offered at more than one location but on different dates, the location that will cause the least expense to Genesee County shall be chosen. If the required training must be completed by a specified date due to legal regulations, or the training is needed to perform certain functions of a project, and not meeting the project deadline would cause the County added financial liability, then the department head of the attendee may waive the location requirements. All travel should be in the best interest of the County and the best dollar value.

**Justification of Miscellaneous Expenses:** Miscellaneous expenses allowable on travel vouchers as defined in this regulation must be reasonably explained, detailed, and justified.

**Explanation for Expense:** The explanation for expense of official business requiring travel must also be shown in the space provided. Blanket statements, such as "on official business" or "as directed," are not acceptable.

Any receipts not submitted when required by these regulations may cause the expense for same to be denied or reimbursed at rates determined by the Board of Commissioners.

All vouchers must be signed by the attendee and countersigned by their department head.

The accurate accounting of all travel expenses accompanied by supporting receipts made to the County on the County Overnight Travel Expense Voucher is considered by the IRS as adequate substantiation and, therefore, will not require an employee to report such expenses or reimbursements on their tax returns when such reimbursements are equal to the expenses

### **III. AIR TRANSPORTATION**

Air travel reservations should be made as far in advance as possible in order to take advantage of reduced fares. The County will reimburse/pay only the cost of the lowest fare available for flights from the airport nearest the individual's home or office to the airport nearest the destination. Care should be taken to ensure that flights are as direct as possible.

Personnel traveling on behalf of Genesee County may accept and retain frequent flyer miles and compensation for denied boarding for their personal use. Individuals may not deliberately patronize a single airline to accumulate frequent flyer miles if a less expensive airfare is available from another airline.

**At Departure and Return:** If a personal vehicle is used, the attendee will be allowed mileage from their normal work station to and from the commercial terminal. In either case, parking, whether short or long-term, will be reimbursed.

### **IV. LODGING**

Personnel traveling on behalf of Genesee County will be reimbursed at the single room rate for the reasonable cost of hotel accommodations. Convenience, the cost of staying in the city in which the event is located and proximity to other venues on the individual's itinerary, shall be considered in determining reasonableness. Personnel shall make use of available corporate and discount rates for hotels. "Deluxe" or "luxury" hotel rates will not be reimbursed.

Days allowable will be the reasonable (as determined by the Board of Commissioner's Designee in the Controller's Office) travel time needed to reach destination, time at destination and reasonable (as determined by the Board of Commissioner's designee in the Controller's Office) travel time to return to point of departure. Days for extended travel, before or after County business for personal pleasure are not considered allowable days and related expenses for lodging, meals and miscellaneous will not be reimbursed by the County. Meal and lodging expenses related to a "Stay and Park" package are not reimbursable since it is considered to be for the convenience of the Attendee.

When possible, the available lowest room rate will be certified by the most economic method with written evidence attached to the travel report. When the conference officials make the selection of the hotel for the attendee, the application with the attendee selections, as provided to the conference, will be attached to the travel report.

## **V. MEALS**

Personnel traveling on behalf of Genesee County are reimbursed for the reasonable and actual cost of meals (including tips) subject to a maximum per diem meal allowance of \$30.00 per day and the terms and conditions established by Genesee County relating to the per diem meal allowance.

- a. When an attendee is entitled to a full day's allowance for meals, the amount expended for any particular meal is left to the discretion of the attendee, but the total for all meals in one day shall not exceed the maximum allowable.
- b. Whenever meals are served on flights that are two or more hours, or when meals are included in registration fees, the attendee shall not be entitled to any meal allowance for those particular meals. This deduction will be computed at the rate of \$10.00 for breakfast, \$10.00 for lunch, and \$10.00 for dinner (\$30.00 total).
- c. The attendee will not be reimbursed for non-County travelers (spouse, members of a family, friends, etc.).

**Day Defined:** In computing the meal allowance for continuous travel of more than 24 hours, the hour of departure shall be considered as the beginning of the day, and for each full 24 hour period thereafter, the traveler shall be entitled to the authorized meal allowance:

### *EXAMPLES - MEAL:*

- a. Departure June 1, 9:00 a.m.  
Return June 5, 4:30 p.m.  
Allowable June 1, lunch and dinner;  
June 2 through June 4, three (3) full days meals;  
June 5, breakfast and lunch; plus, four (4) days lodging
- b. Departure June 1, 3:00 p.m.  
Return June 2, 10:30 a.m.  
Allowable Dinner, lodging, breakfast

## **VI. GROUND TRANSPORTATION**

When more than one person is attending an overnight or a one day authorized conference, seminar or out-of-town meeting, shared travel must be arranged. If for an unforeseen reason travel cannot be shared, the reason must be disclosed on their travel voucher and must be approved in advance by the department head or their designee.

Personnel is expected to use the most economical ground transportation available. In case a person travels by an indirect route for his/her own convenience, reimbursement for expenses will be based only on such charges as would have been incurred by a usually traveled route.

Transportation to and from the destination terminal can be by shuttle service or taxicab, whichever is the lesser cost. If a group of employees are involved and one person pays the fare, then that person should note on his/her County Travel Expense Voucher those persons included in the fare. If shuttle service is provided for in the lodging accommodations, this also should be noted on the County Travel Expense Voucher.

**Courtesy Cars:** Many hotels have courtesy cars, which will transport to and from the airport at no cost. Personnel should take advantage of this free service whenever possible.

**Airport Shuttle or Bus:** Airport shuttles or buses generally travel to and from all major hotels for a small fee. At major airports such services are as quick as a taxi and considerably less expensive. Airport shuttle or bus services are generally located near the airport's baggage claim area.

**Taxis & Ride Share Services:** Taxis and ride share services are economical and convenient forms of transportation when the trip is for a limited time and minimal mileage is involved. The County encourages the use of public transportation where available. You must include receipts of any transportation when asking for reimbursement.

**Rental Vehicles:** Personnel will be allowed to rent a vehicle while out of town provided that advance approval has been given by the individual's supervisor and the cost is less than alternative methods of transportation.

Vehicle rental will be allowed if lodging and meeting facilities are 25 miles or more apart and other modes of transportation are more expensive or not available. Vehicle rental charges will be limited to business only miles which must be explained completely on the County Travel Expense Voucher. Again, if the vehicle rental provides transportation for two or more personnel, this should also be noted. Miles for employee pleasure (not business related) such as, sightseeing, are not chargeable to the County and all vehicle rental charges will be prorated according to business and pleasure miles traveled. Vehicle rental

for the sole pleasure and convenience of the attendee will not be reimbursed by the County.

**Personal Vehicles:** Personnel are compensated for use of their personal vehicles at the current approved IRS rate. Reimbursement of mileage will be based on actual miles shown on Google maps using the shortest route available. Traveling to an event that is not by air (i.e. in state events) should be by County vehicle unless other arrangements are approved by the department head.

## **VII. OTHER MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES**

Reasonable Genesee County related telephone and facsimile charges due to absence of Personnel from the individual's place of business are reimbursable. In addition, reasonable and necessary gratuities that are not covered under meals may be reimbursed. Lastly, emergency secretarial work and/or postal charges incurred are reimbursable for the purpose of work on behalf of Genesee County.

The following travel-related expenses are acceptable and will be reimbursed: (a) baggage (no more than 2 bags), (b) foreign currency charges (c) visas, (d) parking and toll expenses incurred by personnel traveling on County business. The costs of parking tickets, fines, car washes, valet service, etc., are the responsibility of the employee and will not be reimbursed.

On premise parking at airports is permitted for short business trips. For extended trips, personnel should use off premise facilities.

Reasonable expenses incurred for business meetings or other types of business-related entertainment will be reimbursed only if the expenditures are approved in advance. Detailed documentation for any such expense must be provided, including:

- Date and place of entertainment
- Nature of expense
- Names, titles and corporate affiliation of those entertained
- A complete description of the business purpose for the activity including the specific business matter discussed
- Vendor receipt (not credit card receipts or statements) showing the vendor's name, a description of the services provided, the date, and the total expenses, including tips (if applicable).



At no time will an attendee have authority to establish special rates or authorize payment of any expenses which do not conform to these regulations. In no case will the amount allowed be in excess of the maximums established in these regulations. However, any department having special travel conditions which cannot be adequately covered under these regulations may submit its requests to the County Board of Commissioners for special review and approval.

#### **VIII. NON-REIMBURSABLE**

Genesee County maintains a strict policy that expenses in any category that could be perceived as lavish or excessive will not be reimbursed, as such expenses are inappropriate for reimbursement by County government. Expenses that are not reimbursable include, but are not limited to:

- Travel insurance.
- First class tickets or upgrades.
- When lodging accommodations have been arranged by Genesee County and the individual elects to stay elsewhere, reimbursement is made at the amount no higher than the rate negotiated by Genesee County. Reimbursement shall not be made for transportation between the alternate lodging and the meeting site.
- Tipping for maid, Valet service.
- Limousine travel.
- Movies, liquor, or bar costs.
- Membership dues at any county club, private club, athletic club, golf club, tennis club or similar recreational organization.
- Participation in or attendance at golf, tennis or sporting events, without the advance approval of the Board of Commissioners
- Purchase of any sporting equipment.
- Spa, exercise charges, tourist attractions.
- Clothing purchases.
- Business conferences and entertainment which are not approved by a designated officer or director of Genesee County.
- Damage to personal vehicles, the loss/theft of goods.
- Toiletry articles.

- Expenses for spouses, friends or relatives. If a spouse, friend, or relative accompanies Personnel on a trip, it is the responsibility of the Personnel to determine any added cost for double occupancy and related expenses and to make the appropriate adjustment in the reimbursement request.

All fees and tips to valets, charges for cleaning and pressing clothing, and similar personal expenses are not allowable as reimbursable expenses unless the stay exceeds seven (7) days.

In addition the following charges will not be reimbursed: gasoline, vehicle repairs, towing, or other similar expenditures. It is required that County attendees on official business, driving personally - owned vehicles, be properly licensed by the State of Michigan and be adequately protected by personal liability and property damage insurance at their own expense. At no time shall personal driving be charged to the County. No mileage will be allowed for travel between an employee's residence and his/her official work station.

Meals acquired during normal work related travel will not be reimbursed by the County. This includes County meetings, transportation of prisoners, training and certification classes, presentations to the public for informational purposes, and inspections whether in the County or out of the County.

Travel to other municipalities will not be justification for the County to reimburse for meals.