

City of Beaumont
Travel Expense and Reimbursement
Policy



Adopted:

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear, consistent, and transparent guidelines for the authorization, participation, and reimbursement of travel and related expenses incurred by Elected Officials, Appointed Officials, commissioners, City employees, and volunteers while representing the City of Beaumont in an official capacity.

This policy further provides specific guidance for City Council participation in professional conferences, legislative advocacy meetings, and external business development events such as the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) conferences, the Innovating Commerce Serving Communities (ICSC)(formerly known as the International Council of Shopping Centers), and other similar gatherings that advance the City's adopted goals and strategic priorities.

Attendance at such events shall be for the purpose of promoting the City's interests, building relationships with policymakers, stakeholders, and potential economic partners, and enhancing the collective knowledge and effectiveness of City leadership. This includes meetings with State and Federal elected representatives, legislative staff, or agency officials to advocate for policies, programs, or funding opportunities that support the City's strategic objectives and community priorities.

The City Council and City staff are expected to exercise prudent judgment in authorizing and incurring travel expenses, ensuring that all expenditures of public funds serve a legitimate public purpose, provide a demonstrable benefit to the City and its residents, and uphold fiscal accountability, transparency, and compliance with applicable laws, including, but not limited to, Government Code Sections 53232 through 53232.4.

Participation by members of the City Council in conferences or external events shall be coordinated to maximize City representation, avoid duplication of effort, and ensure alignment with City Council-adopted legislative platforms or business development strategies. Council Members attending such events shall provide brief reports to the City Council summarizing key takeaways and potential opportunities resulting from the event.

Council Members participating in conferences, meetings, or events shall at all times adhere to the requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act and avoid potential violations by ensuring that no more than two Council Members meet, discuss, or deliberate City business together at any given time while representing the City at such events.

This policy supersedes all other previous versions of the City's travel and reimbursement policies.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Elected Officials, Appointed Officials, Commissioners, City employees, and volunteers representing the City of Beaumont in an official capacity while

traveling on City business.

It governs all City-authorized travel related to professional development, legislative advocacy, and economic or business development activities, including, but not limited to:

- Participation in professional and legislative events such as the League of California Cities, and meetings with State and Federal elected representatives or agency officials.
- Attendance at economic development conferences such as ICSC or similar events that support the City's adopted goals.
- Participation in training, workshops, or interagency collaboration meetings relevant to City operations or governance.

All travel shall be pre-approved by the appropriate authority (the City Manager for employees and appointed officials; Mayor or City Council for Councilmembers) and must clearly serve an authorized public purpose.

When multiple Councilmembers attend the same event, coordination shall occur to ensure balanced representation, avoid duplication of attendance, and maintain compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, including the limitation that no more than two Council Members may meet or deliberate on City business outside a properly noticed public meeting. This is especially important for "lobbying" events such as trips to the State or National capital or ICSC where developers are present. This is distinguished from "educational" events such as League of California Cities and National League of Cities conferences.

The policy conforms to the requirements of California Government Code Sections 53232 through 53232.4 and reflects the City's commitment to fiscal responsibility, transparency, and accountability in the use of public funds.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. "Appointed Official" means any individual appointed by the City Council of the City of Beaumont to serve on any board, committee, or other body duly created or authorized by the City Council.
- B. "City" means the City of Beaumont.
- C. "Elected Official" means each member of the City Council, including the Mayor, the City Clerk, and City Treasurer.
- D. "Traveler" means any Elected or Appointed Official, commissioner, City employee, or volunteer who is attending a meeting, conference, seminar, event, or other activity as an approved representative of the City of Beaumont.

- E. "Commuter Travel" means within a 40-mile radius of the City of Beaumont and does not include an overnight stay.
- F. "Resident Travel" means travel beyond a 40-mile radius of the City of Beaumont that includes at least one overnight stay away from the Traveler's primary residence.
- G. "Coach" means lowest available airfare class offered by an airline (commonly referred to as economy class) at the time of booking.
- H. "GSA" refers to the U.S. Government Services Administration, which establishes federal per diem rates used by the City to determine reasonable travel reimbursement amounts for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses.
- I. "Official City Business" means participation in an activity, event, or meeting that serves a legitimate public purpose, directly benefits the City of Beaumont, or aligns with City Council-adopted goals or programs, including legislative or business development efforts.

PROCEDURES FOR REIMBURSEMENTS FOR TRAVEL

The following procedures establish the required steps for requesting, authorizing, documenting, and reimbursing travel expenses incurred while on official City business.

A. Required Forms

1. Travel Authorization and Expense Report Form

All Travelers shall complete and submit a Travel Authorization and Expense Report Form (COB Form #15-02) prior to making any travel arrangements. Beaumont Police Department employees shall use BPD Form 07-04. Forms shall be submitted at least two weeks before scheduled travel for destinations within California and at least one month before scheduled travel for out-of-state destinations.

2. Purpose of the Form

The form shall be used to:

- Estimate and request approval for anticipated travel costs;
- Obtain appropriate pre-authorization from the approved authority;
- Identify the proper budget account to be charged; and
- Report actual, allowable, and documented travel expenses following completion of travel.

3. Approvals

- Employees and Appointed Officials: approval by the Department Director and City Manager
- Council Members: approval by the Mayor or City Council as appropriate
- Out-of-state travel for employees requires City Manager approval in advance.

Please contact Human Resources if assistance is needed to complete the Travel Authorization and Expense Report Form.

B. Authorized Expenses

Authorized expenses include reasonable costs directly related to approved travel that clearly benefits the City.

Examples include:

- Conference registration fees;
- Airfare (coach/economy), one checked bag, and associated taxes or fees;
- Lodging at the government, conference, or GSA rate;
- Ground transportation (rental car, taxi, shuttle, rideshare, parking, tolls);
- Meals and incidental expenses at the current GSA per diem rate;
- Mileage at the current IRS reimbursement rate when using a personal vehicle; and
- Other minor, incidental costs incurred in the normal course of travel as defined by the IRS and incurred in connection with activities authorized by this policy.

Council and Committee Representation

Travel associated with participation in meetings or events of regional or intergovernmental agencies (e.g., RCTC, WRCOG, or similar organizations) does not require separate City Council reaffirmation when an Elected Official has been formally appointed by the City Council to serve on that body. Such travel is presumed to be in the best interest of the City and constitutes official City business.

In accordance with Government Code Section 53232.2(f) all expenses that do not fall within this reimbursement policy must be approved by the City Council in a public meeting before the expense is incurred, except as provided in Government Code Section 53232.2(d).

All expenditures under this policy must clearly demonstrate a direct benefit to the City of Beaumont and its residents. Public funds shall not be used for any expense that does not serve a legitimate public purpose.

Use of City issued CalCards is permitted for prepayment of authorized travel expenses such as airfare, lodging, and conference registration. CalCards shall not be used for personal purchases under any circumstances. Misuse of a City CalCard is considered a violation of the City's Ethics Policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and

including termination. Please reference the City's Procurement Card Program Policy located in the Finance Department Policies and Procedures Manual.

C. Unauthorized Expenses

The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement:

- Personal travel costs, including family member or guest expenses;
- Entertainment, recreation, or optional event activities not related to City business (e.g., movies, theater, golf, gym use, optional tours);
- Alcoholic beverages;
- Room service, in-room entertainment, or mini-bar expenses;
- Traffic fines, personal vehicle repairs, or insurance costs;
- Travel or expenses for personal convenience not related to official City business;
- Political or charitable contributions.
- Travel expenses of family members or guests of the employee. If family members or guests accompany the Traveler on City-paid travel, arrangements must be made by the Traveler for separate billing of the family member or guest.
- Personal losses incurred while on City business.

D. Lodging and Meals

1. Lodging Eligibility

- Only conferences outside of 40 miles qualifies for overnight stay/lodging. Additionally, if a conference has an evening event past 5:00pm lodging shall be considered.
- Exemption: In certain circumstances with City Manager approval, if the Traveler(s) is/are a board/voting member or part of a planning committee wherein staying overnight is advantageous to the wellbeing of the Traveler(s) because their responsibilities extend before and after the meetings.
- The maximum reimbursable rate shall not exceed the published conference rate, government rate, or GSA per diem rate, whichever is lowest and available at the time of booking.
- Travelers should make reservations early to secure discounted rates.

2. Meal Reimbursement

- Meals are reimbursed at the current GSA per diem rate, inclusive of tax and gratuity.
- Per diem allowances cover all food and incidental costs.
- No reimbursement is provided for meals already included in conference registration or hotel rates.
- Alcoholic beverages and room service are not reimbursable.

E. Transportation

1. General Rules

- Travelers must use the most economical mode of transportation

available, taking the most direct and time-efficient route.

- Carpooling is encouraged when multiple City representatives attend the same event.
- All travel arrangements should be made as far in advance as practical to minimize costs.
- Travel days are not to exceed one day before and one day after the event. In certain situations, paid time off (PTO) may be used to extend a trip with prior approval from the appropriate authority, subject to PTO availability and all other employment conditions and MOUs

2. Air Travel

- Airfare must be purchased at the lowest available economy rate.
- The City will reimburse one checked bag for trips involving overnight stays.
- Any itinerary changes resulting in added cost require prior approval from the City Manager.
- Priority boarding shall be allowed so that Travelers can sit together.

3. City and Personal Vehicles

- City vehicles should be used whenever available.
- City vehicles may only be driven by an authorized City Traveler and shall not be used to transport non-City Travelers.
- Use of personal vehicles must be pre-approved and requires proof of current insurance.
- Reimbursement shall be based on the IRS mileage rate for business miles actually driven and shall begin from the moment the Traveler leaves their home to begin business-related travel.
- If two or more employees attend the same event, mileage reimbursement will be provided for one vehicle only.
- In accordance with the automobile policy found in the Adopted Personnel Handbook, a personal vehicle can be used when the Traveler receives a vehicle allowance.

4. Rental Vehicles

- Rental vehicles are allowed only when other transportation options are unavailable or impractical.
- The least expensive, reasonable vehicle shall be selected.
- Travelers must decline optional insurance coverage when City or personal insurance already provides coverage.

F. Reporting and Reimbursement

1. Submission Requirements

- A completed Travel Expense Report must be submitted within 30 business days after returning from travel.
- Receipts must be attached for all expenses not covered by per

- diem allowances.
- The report must include:
 - Date and purpose of travel.
 - Description and business justification for each expense.
 - Copies of receipts, itineraries, and registration confirmations.
- 2. Refunds and Adjustments
 - If prepaid travel (e.g., conference, hotel, airfare) is canceled, the Traveler shall make all reasonable efforts to obtain refunds for the City.
 - Any personal reimbursements owed to the City must be repaid within 30 days of notice.
- 3. Council Reporting
 - When requested, Travelers shall provide a brief report to the City Council summarizing the conference, meeting, or event attended at City expense.
 - If multiple Council Members attend the same event, a joint report is encouraged to avoid duplication.

G. Compliance and Audit

All reimbursements are subject to audit and verification for compliance with this policy. Violations, including falsifying expense reports or misuse of City funds, may result in:

- Denial of reimbursement;
- Demand for repayment;
- Reporting to the IRS or other authorities; or
- Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, consistent with Government Code Section 53232.4.
- All City expenditures related to travel are public records and subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act.

H. Discretionary Exceptions

The Mayor (for Council travel) and City Manager (for all other travels) may authorize reasonable exceptions to these procedures when doing so provides a clear, documented benefit to the City. Such exceptions must be justified in writing and filed with the approved travel documentation.