



City of El Paso

Travel Policy
July 2020

Prepared by:
Office of the Comptroller
Fiscal Operations Division



The mission of the Office of the Comptroller is to provide fiscal management and financial reporting, administer treasury services and provide grant accounting information to City Management and elected officials so that they can make informed decisions regarding the provisions of City services.

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CITY OF EL PASO Travel Policy

Note: The administrative policies and procedures outlined in this policy supersede all previous administrative policies and procedures that may have been included in memorandums, e-mails, or other means of communication. All questions or conflicts with departmental procedures need to be directed to the Office of the Comptroller at (915) 212-1152.

1.0 Purpose of this policy

This policy outlines the procedures with respect to travel and related activities for the City of El Paso (the "City").

Travel shall be by the most economical option available.

The policies and regulations for travel set forth herein shall apply to all activities financed by any funds for which the City has fiduciary or oversight responsibility including state, federal or private grants unless the terms of the said grant require differently.

2.0 Scope

City Ordinances, originally established in 1986, governed City travel policies. Subsequent to this time, all related ordinances have been repealed and administrative regulations have been developed by the Office of the Comptroller and approved by the City Manager that will govern travel and related activities for the City of El Paso. Anyone who is traveling on behalf of the City and properly authorized by a department director is covered by this policy. The regulations of the City Travel Policy do not apply to the employees of the City of El Paso Employees Retirement Trust.

3.0 Definitions

- **Actual Expenses** – Expenses supported by actual receipts, detailing items purchased.
- **Advance** – Funds allotted to an employee prior to travel. This is a payment for anticipated travel
- **Departmental Travel Hub** – Individual departmental representative trained in Travel Policies and Procedures who assists with departmental travel arrangements.
- **Emergency Travel** – Travel authorized by the City Manager for the conducting of business in an emergency.
- **Expense Reconciliation** – A reconciliation, usually prepared by the employee traveling, of the expenses incurred during a particular trip that is prepared after the travel, or upon the completion of the travel, to determine if actual travel expenses exceeded or were less than the approved amounts including any advanced amounts.

- **GSA Schedules** – 41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) chapters 300-304, which implements statutory requirements and executive branch policies for travel by federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at government expense; these are the schedules that are adopted by the City and can be found at www.gsa.gov. Click on “Per Diem Rates”.
- **Mileage Rate** – The City will reimburse mileage rate using the standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The rates are subject to changes as per IRS announcements. You can refer to the IRS website at www.irs.gov.
- **Necessary and Reasonable Expenses** – Criteria used to evaluate expenses which are not supported by actual receipts such as miscellaneous expenses.
- **P-Card Purchases** – Any purchases paid on behalf of the employee on an employees’ procurement card for any necessary and reasonable expenses incurred as part of an authorized trip. See the City of El Paso’s Procurement Card policy for guidelines related to an employee’s use of the P-Card.
- **Per Diem Allowance** – Per Diem Rates are rates which are established through federal guidelines. This is a monetary allowance for lodging and/or meals. The per diem rate for each calendar day is determined by the lodging location for that night. These rates can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov>.
- **Reimbursement** – Funds paid to an employee upon returning from travel when actual expenses exceed the amount advanced.
- **Refund** – Any advance in excess of actual expenses, which must be returned to the City.
- **Travel Request** – Form prescribed by OMB and the Office of the Comptroller which is transmitted for approval to the authorizing department head and which is subsequently used for Expense Reconciliation.
- **“Open” Travel Request** – An authorized Travel Request is considered “closed” when an expense report has not been filed with the Department Head and any refund of travel advance due to the City or reimbursement due the employee has **not** been paid.
- **“Closed” Travel Request** – An authorized Travel Request is considered “closed” when an expense report has been filed, reconciled and any refund of travel advance due the City or reimbursement due the employee has been paid.
- **Local Travel** - Any same day travel to locations in El Paso County and in other locations such as Van Horn, Alamogordo, Las Cruces and Dell City, which do not require overnight accommodations.

4.0 Principles and General Travel Guidelines

Each department is responsible to plan, arrange and approve requested travel of employees to achieve maximum economy and efficiency. Travel is not required if the purpose of the trip could be handled by mail, telephone, available local training or other viable options. Each department should have a travel hub to assist with travel arrangements.

All travel requests shall be approved in advance of the travel. Departments should ensure all travel arrangements and authorizations must be made in advance of the employee traveling. **Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the City's refusal to reimburse employee(s) for any costs associated with any particular trip. A travel request checklist form is to be followed to have the required documentation of cost estimates. Please refer to the Travel Manual under Appendix A.**

Upon approval by the respective authority, the travel request should be submitted to Office of the City Manager– Travel Coordinator for final review. Planning of trips is essential to reduce travel costs. Travel should be requested far enough in advance for authorization to be granted in time to take advantage of reduced fees offered for early registration and discount airline fares. It is recommended that employees fill out a Travel Request at least ten business days prior to the travel date.

Funds must be budgeted for travel PRIOR to making any arrangements for travel. Departments should exercise control of travel expense by keeping costs within established appropriations. All Travel Request(s) should be completed prior to taking a particular trip and reconciled at the completion of trips to ensure completeness and appropriateness of actual expenses claimed.

In no event should an employee incur an expense while traveling over the \$3,000 small-purchase threshold. Expenses above this amount should be referred to the Departmental level for handling. Non-reimbursable expenses include; dry cleaning, hotel movies and alcoholic drinks.

The travel hub should coordinate all travel expenses pertaining to group travel and if possible pay airlines, hotels, transportation and registration fees in advance with the P-card. A travel request package can be submitted as a group with appropriate documentation to substantiate every expense incurred during the trip. A travel reconciliation is also required after the conclusion of the trip. If an actual expense is not substantiated by the original appropriate receipts, the cost will be allocated equally to all travel participants and it should be refunded to the City within the time lines as established in this policy. All guidelines applicable to individual travelers within this policy also apply to group travelers.

In general, the City assumes the following basic premises when Departments conduct travel:

- a. Departments have adequate budget to support the expenditures to be incurred by all individuals traveling.

- b. All travel requests will be signed off by the Department Director prior to the travel and after the travel (reconciliations)
- c. When **two** or more individuals are traveling to the same conference or for the same purpose or event, the top management positions listed above must approve the travel prior to travel arrangements. Justification of the travel should accompany request. An e-mail indicating approval from the top management positions will suffice if attached to the actual travel request.
- d. Indication of approvals can be documented by signature on the Travel Request or by e-mail. E-mail must include documentation of purpose, funding source, and detailed breakdown of costs (i.e., airfare, hotel, per diem). E-mail approval must be attached to the Travel Request Form.
- e. All travel, regardless of purpose, funding source or cost, is to be routed through the respective authority as follows:

Traveler	City Manager's Designee (Approver)
Staff	Department Director
Directors	Deputy City Managers
Deputy City Managers	City Manager or Chief Financial Officer
City Manager	Chief Financial Officer or Senior Deputy City Manager
Mayor and Council	City Attorney or City Manager

Travel shall only be approved for City official business, attend official and professional meetings and participate in conferences and training sessions necessary to promote the efficient conduct of the City's affairs. Approved travel also applies to "No cost" travel as off-duty hours are part of oversight.

Departments should examine travel destinations to ensure that travel is to destinations, which are in closest proximity to the City. If there are seminars, conferences, etc., scheduled throughout the year at various locations and the determination is made to have an employee attend, choose the location closest to El Paso. Video-conferencing should be utilized to the extent possible. For example, if a webinar is available versus a live group environment, the webinar should be utilized instead of the live group environment.

The mode of travel wherever feasible shall be air travel by commercial carrier, shall not exceed coach or equivalent fare. The City shall not pay expenses resulting from indirect routes of travel and arriving earlier and leaving later than necessary to conduct official business. Adjustments must be made for any of these types of expenses to ensure that the City is not incurring these types of costs.

Airfare and registration expenses incurred pursuant to an approved Travel Request shall be paid with the City P- Card on the basis of actual costs. Lodging accommodations will be paid at actual cost or similar accommodation as authorized by the Department Head. All other travel expenses will be paid using the per diem allowance.

Vacation may be taken in conjunction with travel on official business at no additional cost to the City provided this fact is specifically indicated on the face of the Travel Request and is approved by the Department Head. A copy of the approved leave request should be included in conjunction with the travel.

When a spouse or other members of an employee's family attend a conference or meeting, none of their expenses shall be borne by the City. The employee may not charge these expenses to the City either through a P-Card or an advance. These costs should be incurred by the employee and the Travel Request shall reflect only those expenses incurred by the employee.

In instances where use of personal automobile is allowed for the convenience of the employee, lodging, meals and other expenses will be allowed on the same basis as if the employee had traveled by air. **Travel time will also be allowed on the same basis as if the employee had traveled by air.** The employee will charge the City only the time that would have been required to make the trip using airline transportation. All time used in excess of air travel time shall be charged to the employee's personal leave. See Appendix D on Travel Manual.

Travel requests should indicate the number of hours the employee is away from the duty station. Do not include weekend hours unless employee normally works on the weekend. The amount of time lost from regular City duties shall be considered in determining the mode of travel.

Departments may also limit the amount of costs allowable on the trips due to budgetary and other constraints. Allowable costs are only those authorized as documented on the Travel Request executed for each trip. Departments should monitor their number of trips according to their budget.

Departments should retain all files and forms related to trips authorized by the Department in good order and easily accessible in the event of an audit by the City's Internal Audit or External Auditor as requested by the City Manager.

Travel agencies, online travel companies or other discounted websites should only be used if it represents the most economical price available. If booking the trip through a travel agency, online travel company or a discounted website, provide analysis substantiating why this is the most economical method. Include documentation to substantiate each expense listed in the Travel Request.

5.0 Methods of Payments for Travel

Generally, there are three different ways to pay for travel expenses. A combination of these three methods can be used; any or all methods can be used to accommodate the travel expenses for employees. Regardless, of the method(s) used, they must be reconciled in accordance with The Travel Manual. The reconciliation process is critical to ensure that all payment methods are reconciled at the completion of travel. Original

receipts should be maintained for all expenses incurred. Where receipts are missing, it is up to the individual to attach an explanation and to obtain duplicates, the employee will be liable to the City for amounts for which substantiation is not available to be provided.

Once a Travel Request has been approved, costs may be incurred using the following three methods:

- P-Card
- Departmental vouchering process
- Travel advance

5.1 P-Card

The City P-Card method is the preferred method of payment for travel expenses. A personal credit card should not be used for any bookings. All registration, hotel accommodations, conference fees, airline and car reservations should be made using the City P-Card. These expenses may be booked by the Departmental Travel Hub or by individual P-Card holders. If more than one individual is traveling, the travel hub will use the P-Card to book all travel for the group in order to expedite the travel process. This needs to be adequately documented in all of the corresponding related Travel Request(s). This should be approved by the Department Head on the Travel Request. **Original P-Card receipts should be filed with the P-Card statement, while copies are filed for the closing of travel.**

The City receives a rebate on the P-Card processing fees, which should be maximized by using the P-Card to pay for travel expenses when possible.

Per Diem and other costs may be reimbursed to the employee. These types of costs should only be reimbursed at the completion of a trip and in conjunction with the reconciliation of the Travel Request.

5.2 Departmental vouchering process

In the event that a P-Card is not acceptable method of payment, the next preferred method is the Departmental vouchering process. This requires the Department to process a voucher (i.e. check) for the registration and other costs. All supporting original documentation should be retained with the voucher with a COPY attached to the completed, approved Travel Request. A purchase order may also be issued and provided to the employee to hand-deliver to the organization as deemed appropriate.

Since all travel requests should be approved in advance of the travel, the voucher should be processed and approved with ample time to avoid asking for a last minute check from Office of the Comptroller. Last minute requests for payments will not be approved.

5.3 Travel Advance

A travel advance should be prepared and processed through the departmental vouchering process as indicated in 5.2 above. Travel advances are authorized on the basis of an approved Travel Request. Generally, travel advances will be made for hotel, meal, per diem, allowances, shuttle/taxi, parking or other travel expenses not paid by P-Card. It is rare that a travel advance is made for the registration or seminar costs. A travel advance should be requested at least 10 business days prior to travel.

Any unused portions must be returned to the City of El Paso via the City Cashier along with the Travel Reconciliation form. Any funds owed the City should be paid within ten business days after the travel reconciliation is completed, if not paid, the funds will be deducted through payroll deductions.

If the travel hub reserves the hotel for an employee who does not have a P-Card, the cost of the hotel shall be included in the travel advance for the employee. The travel hub should not charge the hotel to his/her P-Card unless he/she can verify hotel costs.

6.0 Local Travel/Training

- 6.1 Local Travel/Training – Approval is not required for same day travel to locations in El Paso County and in other locations such as Van Horn, Alamogordo, Las Cruces, and Dell City.

Actual cost for registration fees (and meals if included in fee) at conference or meetings when attendance is approved in advance and is a requirement of the job or in the interest of the City becomes essential information. Lunches for local travel/training outside of those included in the registration fee are not allowed unless strictly authorized by the department.

- 6.2 If a city vehicle is available for use, employees shall use this method of transportation rather than a personal vehicle unless employee receives a monthly allowance for gasoline or a car allowance as described in Section 6.3 of this policy. In instances where use of a personal vehicle is required, the employee will be reimbursed at the latest amount set by the Internal Revenues Service. When a personal vehicle is used for the convenience of the employee and approved by the Department Head, reimbursement will be at the latest amount established by the Internal Revenue Service. A reimbursed form for mileage shall be submitted and approved by the Department Head before reimbursement is paid. A copy of the form is available in Appendix E on the Travel Manual.
- 6.3 City employees who receive a monthly allowance for gasoline or a car allowance shall not be entitled to receive any reimbursement for local travel expenses in addition to the said gasoline or car allowance, and is prohibited from driving city-owned vehicles for other than emergency purposes.
- 6.4 Generally, a Travel Request Form is not necessary when traveling within the boundaries of the City of El Paso.

6.5 In any event, there is no payment or travel expenses between a City employee residence and the assigned place of work. For example, if an employee drives from his place of residence directly to the conference location and back to his residency, no payment is due.

7.0 Travel Other than Local

The Travel Request Form is required for all travel other than local. The City utilizes the Travel Request Form to document such approval. A Travel Request must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this policy. See travel manual for specific instructions on filling out the Travel Request. No reimbursements for any travel will be made unless this form is filled out in its entirety and approval signatures have been obtained.

A Department Head or budget authority shall approve all Travel Requests. In the case of the City Manager, the Sr. Deputy City Manager or CFO will approve the travel.

In the case of the Mayor and the City Council, the City Manager or his/her designee will review the travel. This review will be to ascertain the municipal purpose of travel; however, it is generally the responsibility of each member of Council and the Mayor to ensure that the travel is for City business.

7.1 Prior to Travel

- A Travel Request must be submitted in advance of the travel.
- All Travel should be booked at least **ten business days** in advance of the travel date in order to minimize the cost of the airfare.

7.2 After Travel

After each travel, the Travel Request reconciliation shall be completed **within five business days** after the conclusion of the travel.

8.0 Travel to Juarez, Mexico

8.1 Travel shall be approved only to transact official business, attend official and professional meetings, and participate in conferences and training sessions necessary to conduct the City's affairs. Each department's DCM shall approve travel PRIOR to travel. If the respective department's DCM is not available for any reason, an alternate DCM shall approve the travel.

8.2 When events or meetings requiring travel to Juarez are scheduled in advance, regular Travel guidelines will apply. In the case of multiple scheduled trips that occur in the same month, one travel request can be submitted to cover all scheduled trips for the month. The schedule of events/meetings must be attached along with any other information that documents the purpose for the travel.

If travel is unscheduled or arises from recent events, the approval shall be by e-mail prior to travel.

8.3 Employee must turn in all travel receipts. If an employee incurs actual expenses in pesos, each expense should be converted to U.S dollars (USD). The following methods are acceptable:

- P-Card statement: If the expenses are charged, the credit card company will convert them to USD
- An acceptable site for conversion of charges via the internet is: <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter>

Employee is responsible for all fines related to parking or moving violations while traveling on City business in Ciudad Juarez.

9.0 Registration Fees

Requests for attendance at conferences, training sessions, or other meetings must be supported by a program or document that lists the event, opening and closing dates and times, the fee rate, location and meals. The Department shall not pay for expenses for registration or tuition which considered unreasonable. Registration costs are authorized to the extent necessary to transact City official business; expenses of “tour packages,” “golf excursions” or any other similar activities offered in connection with conference registration are not allowed.

It is preferred that registration fees be paid directly by the Departmental Travel Hub using an issued P- Card to the sponsoring organization when possible. The next preferred method is through the departmental vouchering process. A purchase order may also be issued to the conference organization and payment made from an invoice. Regardless of payment method, a receipt should document the amount paid for the registration fee.

If none of these options exists, the registration fee will be advanced to the employee and it will be his/her responsibility to pay the vendor. A receipt or proof of the fee payment shall be submitted with the Travel Request reconciliation when the fee is paid by the employee out of advanced funds.

10.0 Transportation

10.1 Commercial Air Transportation

All commercial air transportation reservations shall be processed according to the following procedure:

- a. Travel should be planned sufficiently in advance to take advantage of reduced fares. Pricing may be obtained from the Internet, telephone or other means as the most expedient and most cost effective way to purchase the airfare.
- b. Coach or equivalent fare shall be considered standard. Business class generally allows the opportunity to modify flight arrangements when needed.

- c. If tickets purchased from the Internet are delivered, they should be sent to the Department requesting the airline tickets.
- d. If additional fees or fares are incurred, they must be substantiated by a receipt and written justification, and will be subject to approval.
- e. Excess baggage fees should be considered and requested in advance in the “other” category of the travel request form.
- f. Extra fees such as early check-ins, upgrades, reserved seating, etc. are not allowed.

10.2 Vehicular Transportation

All vehicular transportation shall comply with the following:

- a. Travel in a City vehicle may be authorized if it is in the best interest of the City considering such factors as time required, destination, travel distance and number of persons traveling.
- b. Travel by personal vehicle for City business, at the reimbursement rate of the latest amount established by the Internal Revenue Service per mile, may be authorized if commercial transportation is not practical and a City vehicle is not available. Travel by personal vehicle for the convenience of the employee is reimbursable at the latest amount established by the Internal Revenue Service. Odometer readings from employee’s residence or official work site (whichever is shorter distance) to final destination and return should be used to calculate mileage. Internet sites, such as MapQuest.com may be used to calculate mileage. However, the reimbursement shall not exceed the business class fare at the time of travel.
- c. When authorized, car rental reservations shall be made by the Department or individual traveling in advance. A car rental may be authorized when determined to be necessary. “Necessary” is defined as a car rental required to conduct official business and other alternatives, such as public transportation, are either more costly or impractical due to the urgency of travel. Generally, a car rental should not exceed the full-size option and should be the most economical option available. Luxury vehicles is not considered an appropriate option unless there is specific justification for the rental. Add-ons for GPS and similar items are not allowed. Insurance should not be purchased from the rental car agency as the City provides this coverage through our automobile insurance policy. Taxes associated with the car rental are allowable expenses. Refer to the Travel Manual because the City is exempt from Texas Sales Tax, see Appendix B Texas Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certification and Appendix C Motor Vehicle Rental Tax Exemption Certificate. Gasoline is considered an allowed expense. Travelers should not prepay for fuel. Fuel cost shall be actual costs substantiated with receipts. Travelers should fill up rental car gas tanks prior to returning to the agency in order to avoid high fuel charges. Gas receipts are to be submitted with the Travel

Request Form when reconciling the form after the travel. Rental cars are generally not an authorized expense if employee's lodging is at the conference hotel.

- d. Parking fees are considered an allowed expense for travel. Traveler should not use valet parking, unless self-parking is not available.
- e. Toll lanes should be considered and requested in advance when possible.
- f. Vehicle Insurance Information. A copy of proof of insurance is available on pg. 2 of the Travel Request form in the Travel Manual.
 - Liability Insurance
 - Physical Insurance

10.3 Ground Transportation

Ground transportation shall be only for what is considered reasonable and necessary and must be supported by actual receipts. This includes actual expenses for use of taxis/Uber or airport shuttle in connection with travel. It should be noted that some hotels provide a shuttle service to and from the airport free of charge.

11.0 Lodging/Hotel Accommodations

The allowance for lodging must be determined from information provided by the hotel when reservations are made, unless otherwise approved by the City Manager, the Chief Financial Officer or the Chief Performance Officer in emergency travel situation. Such approval must be obtained in advance except for circumstances beyond the control of the employee and must be supported by actual receipts. The actual cost of the hotel room may include various taxes. The City is not exempt from hotel taxes.

The City shall pay the actual cost of the hotel room. The actual cost must be substantiated by an original hotel-issued detailed receipt that indicates all charges and payments credited. The hotel receipt should document charges on the travel request.

When traveling abroad or outside of the continental United States, per diem rates as outlined per GSA schedule for foreign travel will apply.

12.0 Meals

The City will only reimburse meals using the most current GSA Schedule, which is the maximum amount that will be reimbursed. To determine the maximum per diem allowance, use the most current applicable Federal Register for that specific geographical destination. When traveling abroad or outside of the continental United States, per diem rates for foreign travel will apply, otherwise use the domestic rates listed. These schedules can be found at www.gsa.gov. Click on "Per Diem rates".

Per diem allowance for meals shall be pro-rated for the day of departure and the day of return according to GSA guideline, currently 75% for each day. Adjustments for meals provided by other entities on the day of departure or return will not be deducted from per diem allowance.

Meals included in registration fees or provided by another agency should be deducted from the per diem reimbursement allowance (except for medical, dietary or religious reasons as outlined in the GSA regulations). Continental breakfast is not considered a meal for calculating paid per diem allowance. Receipts for meals by per diem allowance are not required. A travel advance is the preferred method of payment for per diem.

Include a schedule of per diem calculation per day along with a print out of per diem rate from www.gsa.gov.

13.0 Business Meals (hosted by the City) while Traveling

With the City Manager or Deputy City Manager's approval, the employee may arrange business meals that are hosted by the City. For any employee receiving per diem who attends the business meal, the meal amount (breakfast, lunch or dinner) will be deducted from the corresponding per diem rate. The employee responsible for arranging the meal will provide a detailed receipt and complete the Food & Beverage form to document the business purpose for the meal.

14.0 Other Expenses

14.1 Long Distance Telephone Calls While Traveling

Telephone calls shall be for what is reasonable and necessary, only for official City business and must be supported by appropriate documentations relative to cost and purchase and with the approval of the Department Head. Long distance telephone charges will be allowed for official business calls and will be governed by the following:

- a. Calls to City offices can be charged to the hotel; all other business related calls to locations other than City offices shall be paid by the employee, who will be reimbursed upon submission of appropriate documentation relative to cost and purpose and with the approval of the Department Head.
- b. Calls for other than City business shall not be made a City expense. One telephone call to the employee's family indicating a safe arrival is permissible for reimbursement.

14.2 Miscellaneous Expenses

Other miscellaneous expenses shall be submitted along with the original receipts and are subject to approval if they were not documented on the original, approved Travel Request Form. No unauthorized expenses or payments shall be made for such expenditures as entertainment or for items that fall under City procurement guidelines. Items such as alcoholic beverages, dry cleaning service or any other

personal service are not considered allowable and are not reimbursable. Wi-Fi fees and parking fees are allowed; original receipts are required for reimbursement.

The per diem rates established in the GSA regulations provide for \$5 per day for tips and incidental; receipts are not required for this \$5 rate tips and incidental costs provided in the per diem rate.

If miscellaneous expenses are charged to an individual's City P-Card, these actual expenses will be reconciled at the time of the monthly P-Card reconciliation and copies attached and noted on the approved Travel Request Form.

If a cardholder needs to purchase an item with personal cash, include the receipts for reimbursement by the City and include this in the Travel Request reconciliation process and request the amount through the departmental vouchering process.

15.0 Travel Request Preparation and Reconciliation

The most important procedure related to travel is the Travel Request, its preparation and the expense reconciliation. Refer to the Travel Manual for these procedures. The Travel Request form, Appendix A, on the manual will be used before and after travel. After the trip the employee should determine the amount due to the City or from the City to the employee. If funds are due to the City, which is a refund, monies shall be paid within ten business days to the City Cashier, otherwise the amount will be deducted from the employee's paycheck. The employee should submit a check or cash for the full amount due. A receipt for the full amount paid must be included when closing travel. If reimbursement is due to the employee, a check will be issued directly to the traveler. Please refer to the Accounts Payable manual for direct deposit information, as this is separate from payroll direct deposit. Reimbursements under \$1.00 will **not** be necessary. If an employee does not wish to receive a reimbursement, then that must be indicated on the reconciliation. The Department shall retain the applicable Travel Request along with all related documentation for audit purposes.

16.0 Responsibilities of the Department

Department Heads should establish and maintain internal operating travel procedures in order to manage travel more efficiently within their department. Any additional guidelines may not be less stringent than those outlined in this policy.

It is the Department Head's responsibility to ensure that funding is available for all department travel incurred by their employees as well as for travel of others traveling on departmental business. It is the Department's responsibility to ensure that both the Department Head and the Assistant Department Head are not absent from the Department at the same time or arrangements have been made to ensure coverage at the department level. **It is the Department's responsibility to ensure that any monies owed to either party after reconciliation is completed, to consider the travel request closed.**

17.0 Departmental Travel Hub

Departments will designate an employee as a Departmental Travel Hub in order to centralize all travel for employees within the department. The Departmental Travel Hub will handle all travel and may be issued a P-Card through the Office of the Comptroller to conduct travel transactions such as airline reservations, hotel accommodations, etc. The Office of the Comptroller should ensure that sufficient purchasing authorization and travel authorization are set up for use on the assigned Departmental Travel Hub P-Card. Refer to the P-Card Manual for specific procedures on the use of the P-Card. All authorized P-Card holders agree to abide by the guidelines set out by the P-Card policy, and all other City procurement policies and procedures.

The Departmental Travel Hub must also have access to PeopleSoft Financials in order to determine if adequate funding is available PRIOR to the approval and authorization of the travel. The necessary budget transfers should be processed prior to the travel to ensure funding availability. All Travel Request Forms should be maintained in a central location for audit purposes.

17.1 Individually-Managed Travel

Employees may also be allowed to handle travel arrangements on an individual basis. Employees that travel MUST fill out and submit a Travel Request Form prior to making reservations. Generally, an estimate of the costs of the trip should be submitted to the department head or budget authority for advance approval. It is the Department's responsibility to determine whether there are sufficient funds in the accounts prior to approving the travel. Only after approval has been obtained, should an employee proceed with incurring actual costs for the trip.

18.0 Travel Reimbursement from Outside Agencies

In the event that an employee received a reimbursement for any part of the travel in which the payment was made payable to the employee and the employee has already been compensated for those travel expenses by the City, those funds received should be returned to the City immediately. Notify the Departmental Travel Hub and provide a copy of the travel reconciliation to reference the travel information along with the payment. Funds should be deposited immediately. Under no circumstances should the employee keep the monies paid to them by the outside agency. While the City pays for the employee's cost of traveling on official City business, the City is given the right to all reimbursements from the outside agencies for travel related costs. If an individual fails to return the funds and fails to adhere to this policy the following may apply:

- Garnishment from paycheck
- Subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

In the event that an outside agency will be paying for the full cost of the travel, a justification memo Travel Request should still be submitted to Department head/Budget Authority for approval at least ten business days prior to travel.