

TOWN OF BUTNER

Travel Reimbursement Policy

ADOPTED MAY 4, 2023 – EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2023

PURPOSE:

This policy is established to provide Town employees, elected officials and appointed officials detailed information regarding what is eligible for reimbursement when traveling on Town business.

AUTHORIZATION:

Travel reimbursement for official Town business must be approved by the Department Head and the Town Manager. The Finance Director will provide the Preaudit Certification required by GS 159-28(a) to ensure that budgeted funds are available to meet all anticipated expenses. A Training/Travel Reimbursement Request form must be submitted describing the travel request, purpose of proposed trip, amount of funds needed, and the travel dates. The Training/Travel Reimbursement Request should also be accompanied by a copy of the schedule or agenda for the meeting or training the employee will be attending. Registration and reservations should not be made prior to approval by the Department Head and Town Manager.

If an employee traveling on official Town business combines personal travel, the Training/Travel Reimbursement Request form should clearly define the dates and times of the personal travel.

TRAVEL ADVANCES:

To not create a financial hardship for employees who are required to travel on official Town business, up to 75% of *the* applicable Federal GSA rate for meals and incidental expenses may be advanced if the employee so requests and it is approved by the Department Head and the Town Manager.

Whenever possible, town Credit Cards, Purchase Orders and or accounts payable checks should be utilized to pay/pre-pay for transportation, registration and lodging to keep the actual out of pocket expenses as low as possible for the employee.

PER DIEM MEAL AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSE LIMITS:

Employees will be paid for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) associated with overnight travel at the prevailing Federal per diem rate published by the General Services Administration <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> .

Employees will be paid 75% of the prevailing M&IE rate on days of travel. Tips are included in the M&IE rate and employees will not be reimbursed for meal purchases that exceed the prevailing M&IE rate. If meals are included as part of the registration or program fee, the appropriate amount of per diem reimbursement for the provided meal will be subtracted from the total allowable per diem.

In accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines, no per diem will be paid for travel that does not involve an overnight stay. Employees may be reimbursed for meals when the employee's job requires his/her attendance at the meeting of a board, commission, or council in his/her official capacity and the

meal is preplanned as part of the meeting for everyone in attendance. Such boards, commissions, committees, or councils must include other persons in addition to Town employees.

OVERNIGHT TRAVEL:

To qualify for overnight stay, the travel must involve a travel destination that is more than 30 miles from the employee's home or regularly assigned duty station which ever is less. Exceptions may be approved by the Town Manager if requested.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Employees attending training and conferences should try to reserve hotel rooms that are available at block rates (these are normally determined by the host of the event).

If block rates are not available or are above the typical rate for the area, the employee should make reservations with a hotel convenient to the event with a typical rate for the area.

If the employee chooses to stay in accommodations other than a hotel, the employee will be reimbursed up to the cost of the block room rate plus taxes. If no block rate was available, the employee will be reimbursed up to the GSA lodging rate for that area plus applicable taxes. Exceptions may be requested and approved by the Town Manager.

Amenities not included in the hotel rate are the responsibility of the employee. These include but are not limited to, personal phone calls, extracurricular activities, movie rentals, laundry, and room-service.

If the trip qualifies for an overnight stay and requires the employee to begin travel before 7:00 AM to arrive at the destination on the opening day of the event, the employee is eligible to make reservations for the evening prior to the start of the event.

PURCHASES:

Whenever possible, registration, course materials, and hotel reservations should be paid for with a Town credit card. Food should not be charged to a Town credit card. Purchases made on a Town credit card must be documented and receipts maintained.

Items which are not reimbursable consist of, but are not limited to the following:

1. Any miscellaneous expense not supported by a receipt.
2. Travel to and from duty station.
3. Non-employee expenses.
4. Alcoholic beverages.
5. Movie rental.
6. Extra-curricular activities at conferences are not covered. Examples include golf tournaments and side trips not covered by conferences fees.
7. Any traffic fines, parking violation fines, etc.

TRANSPORTATION:

Town employees traveling on official business are encouraged to carpool and use a Town vehicle whenever practical. When an employee drives their personal vehicle, they will be reimbursed mileage

from their residence or assigned duty station to their destination, whichever is less. Mileage reimbursement will be based on the current IRS standard mileage rate found at <https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates> and the distance shall be supported by a printout from Google Maps, or similar mapping website. The employee will be reimbursed up to the mileage of the fastest route plus 5% or actual mileage, whichever is less plus mileage for official business activity. Personal use miles should not be included in mileage claimed for reimbursement.

Reasonable parking fees and tolls are reimbursable if receipts are provided. Town-owned vehicles *must* be driven only by Town staff or an elected Town official.

If airline travel is required, it is expected that airline tickets will be purchased in advance (14 days) to take advantage of better rates. Reimbursement will be for actual costs incurred, subject to the limitations of this policy. Any costs above "coach rates" must be borne by the employee.

When two or more employees are traveling to the same destination, maximum use shall be made of joint transportation including taxicabs, Town-owned, leased, or privately owned vehicles. Travel with representatives of other government units is encouraged whenever possible.

REIMBURSEMENT:

Within 5 business days of returning to work, the employee shall complete and submit to the Finance Department a Reimbursement Request for Travel Expenses along with all supporting receipts.

WORKERS COMPENSATION:

Employees and officials on official business will be covered by workers compensation insurance in accordance with the North Carolina Workers Compensation Act.

DETERMINATION OF HOURS WORKED:

The determination of hours worked for time spent in travel and training shall be computed in accordance with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

ATTACHMENTS:

Travel/Training Request form (Attachment A)

Reimbursement Request for Travel Expenses (Attachment B)