

## **Travel and Training Expense Policy** *Effective April 26, 2010*

### **Purpose, Intent, and Application**

This policy has been established to provide guidance to the City Council, City Boards and Commissions, City administration and City staff regarding the activities and expenses related to travel and training that are eligible for payment or reimbursement using City funds. This policy applies to all individuals or entities requesting payment or reimbursement for travel and training related expenses from City funds.

The City of Hastings recognizes that travel and training are necessary activities, and are vital to ensuring that the work force remains well informed and capable of performing their assigned tasks. However, the expenses related to travel and training must be weighed against the benefits to be derived by the City from such activities, and the availability of resources that can be dedicated to such endeavors.

### **Travel and Training Expense Guidelines**

Expenditures for travel and training shall only be paid for with City funds where it can be clearly demonstrated that such travel and training will have a direct and near-term benefit to the City of Hastings.

All expenses for travel and training must be approved in writing in advance of the expenditure being incurred or an obligation to pay being created by the employee's immediate supervisor, and the funds for such travel and training must be included and available in the budget approved by the City Council. The Mayor shall retain the right to approve travel and training expenditures on behalf of the City Council and other elected officials. The City Manager shall retain the right to approve travel and training expenditures on behalf of City employees and appointed officials, and shall also be authorized to delegate that authority to department heads as appropriate.

The following rules shall apply:

1. The City will reimburse reasonable and necessary expenses associated with approved travel by its officials and employees when such expenses have been pre-approved by the appropriate authority.
2. No expenses will be reimbursed with City funds for anyone other than the bona fide official or employee. (The city official or employee is personally responsible for any expenses incurred by a spouse, children, or other person.)
3. Officials and employees are expected to exercise reasonable judgment and care to avoid incurring unnecessary or unreasonable expense. All expenses should be appropriately modest in cost reflecting proper concern for the taxpayers' interests.

4. The use of alternate, less-costly methods of training shall be explored and used to the fullest extent possible. Such methods may include web based training, in-house training, etc.
5. The City will not reimburse the cost of any beverage containing alcohol.
6. The City will not reimburse the cost of entertainment (e.g. recreational activities) for the official or employee nor the cost of entertaining others (buying dinner, etc.).
7. Reimbursement of travel expenses will be based on submission of an "Expense Report" using the approved form with proper approvals.
8. Whenever possible, original receipts must be provided with the expense report (mileage expense would be an exception). Photocopies are not acceptable. Credit card or other receipts that do not show the specific items covered (e.g. a total only) are insufficient.
9. Expenses commonly incurred for travel on City business may include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Meals. Only those meals away from home necessary to accommodate attendance at the City business function initiating the travel. Attention shall be paid to minimizing cost when purchasing meals.
  - b. Mileage. The use of City owned vehicles is preferred and officials and employees are encouraged to use such vehicles when available.
  - c. Train or airfare. The reimbursement of fares for travel by common carrier is for coach or regular accommodations only. The use of car, train, air, or other means of travel should be evaluated to choose the least costly alternative.
  - d. Hotel. Overnight stay costs at the single room rate for the official or employee only. If another person travels with the official or employee, the official or employee is responsible for any cost differential for a double or other room arrangement. Overnight stays, and the associated costs, for early arrival or late departure (as determined by the meeting schedule) are the personal responsibility of the traveling official or employee.
10. Expense reports and original receipts should be submitted within one calendar week of return from the trip. Expense reports filed more than thirty (30) days after incurring the expense will not be reimbursed.
11. To the fullest extent possible, overnight stays should be kept to a minimum. Such stays should be weighed against the cost of traveling to and from the training site. Exceptions will be made if such travel would require time spent well outside the limits of a reasonable work day. When training sessions are within **a two hour travel** radius of the City of Hastings, it is expected that individuals will travel to and from the training sessions rather than stay overnight.