

GRANT COUNTY, NM



TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

ADOPTED: MAY 11, 2023

EFFECTIVE: JULY 01, 2023

TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
SECTION 1 – PURPOSE	3
SECTION 2 – DEFINITIONS	3
SECTION 3 – REQUESTS FOR TRAVEL	4
SECTION 4 – ALLOWABLE MILEAGE COMPENSATION	4
SECTION 5 – PER DIEM RATES PRORATION	6
SECTION 6 – REIMBURSEMENT OF ACTUAL EXPENSES IN LIEU OF PER DIEM RATES	8
SECTION 7 – TRAVEL ADVANCES	9
SECTION 8 – REIMBURSEMENT FOR OTHER EXPENSES	10
SECTION 9 – NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES	10
SECTION 10 – CONDUCT WHILE TRAVELING ON OFFICIAL COUNTY BUSINESS	11
SECTION 11 – SAME DAY TRAVEL	11
SECTION 12 – ELECTED OFFICIAL PROHIBITION ON TRAVEL	11
SECTION 13 – PENALTY	11
SECTION 14 – AMENDMENTS TO POLICY, CONFLICTS WITH OTHER POLICIES	11

Section 1. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and set allowable rates for compensation of travel expenses and to provide guidance when traveling for the purpose of conducting official business.

Section 2. DEFINITIONS.

- A. **Board** means the Grant County Board of Commissioners.
- B. **Designated Post of Duty** means the address of a public officer or employee's assignment as determined by the County.
- C. **Employee** means any person who is in the employment of the County whose salary is paid either completely or partially from public money.
- D. **Home** means 1) for per diem purposes, the area within a 35-mile radius of the place of legal residence as defined in § 1-1-7 NMSA 1978, and 2) for mileage purposes, the place of legal residence as defined in § 1-1-7 NMSA 1978.
- E. **Mileage and Per Diem Rates** means the rate that is paid to a public officer or employee as compensation for travel expenses incurred while conducting official county business away from home or away from their designated post of duty within state or out of state.
- F. **Non-salaried Public Officer** means a public officer who is not entitled to compensation, but is entitled to payment of per diem rates and mileage if designated so by Board resolution.
- G. **Out of State** means beyond the exterior boundaries of the State of New Mexico.
- H. **Official County Business** means business directly associated with County government and duties directly related to primary functions of county government and responsibilities.
- I. **Public Officer** means every elected or appointed officer of the County, including but not limited to all board, advisory board, committee and commission members elected or appointed to a special or advisory board, committee or commission specifically authorized by law or County ordinance, resolution or approved action of the Board of County Commissioners (hereinafter "Board"). "Special" boards, committees or commissions are those adopted by County Ordinance, while "advisory" boards, committees or commissions are those adopted by resolution or motion of the Board and typically are temporary or ad hoc in nature.
- J. **Travel** means, for per diem purposes, being on official business away from home as defined in "Home" above and at least 35 miles from the designated post of duty of the public officer or employee.

K. **VFD** means being a volunteer member of a Grant County Volunteer Fire Department (VFD.) Approval for travel reimbursement of any kind for VFDs must be approved **in advance** by the Department Chief and the County Manager, and approval shall be determined on a case-by-case basis. If such travel reimbursement is approved, VFDs will be reimbursed in accordance with this policy.

Section 3. REQUESTS FOR TRAVEL.

- A. A request for in-state travel, except or otherwise noted, by an officer or employee may be granted upon authorization by the department head and approval by the County Manager, as long as there is an approved budget for travel. The officer or employee shall make the request for travel prior to the dates of travel for all travel, except in a case deemed to be an emergency as determined by the County Manager. In such case, the County Manager shall determine if the travel is to be approved or await approval of the Board, if applicable. All travel requests that require Board approval must be submitted with an “Agenda Request Form” in sufficient time for the Board to consider the request at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Submitting a travel request late for timely Board action does not constitute an emergency.
- B. Request for out-of-state travel, must be approved by the County Manager or his/her designee for all County employees.
- C. Out-of-state travel for Sheriff’s department for investigations and/or extradition of prisoners by law enforcement officers shall be approved at the discretion of the Sheriff and within court order mandates (under § 4-44-18 NMSA 1978). If travel is for transportation and extradition of prisoners, all travel costs should comply with § 4-44-18 NMSA 1978 regulations governing the Per Diem and Mileage Act under DFA Rule 95, and any local adopted County policy. All other travel, including seminars, conferences, training, etc., shall be governed by this section for procedures.
- D. The request for travel (see attached Travel Expense Reports) shall include all necessary information, such as the traveler’s name, the purpose of the requested travel, the dates and destination of travel and appropriate brochures or other information detailing the travel. The form shall be filled out to show the anticipated cost for travel, registration fees, cost of mode of transportation and any other relevant information. Individuals requesting travel funds prior to departure will only be eligible to receive funds for mileage, lodging and/or meals; this excludes any partial hours. Partial hours will be eligible on the Travel Expense Report – Balance Form based on actual time upon the individuals return.

Section 4. ALLOWABLE MILEAGE COMPENSATION.

- A. County officials and employees shall utilize a County vehicle whenever possible to conduct official business. If a County vehicle is not available when necessary for the discharge of official duties, the use of a personal vehicle is acceptable. Travel by

County or personal vehicle shall be made via the shortest and safest route possible. Mileage accrued in the use of a private vehicle shall be paid only in accordance with the provisions of this Section.

- B. Mileage may be reimbursed upon map mileage or actual mileage.
- C. Map mileage is reimbursed based strictly on distances shown on the official state map published by the State Highway and Transportation Department, or the most recent edition of the Rand McNally road atlas.
- D. Actual mileage traveled will be reimbursed pursuant to the Traveler certifying the beginning and ending odometer reading as true and correct. Gasoline receipts are not a reimbursable item and under no circumstances shall an officer or employee fuel a personal vehicle with county fuel in lieu of mileage compensation.
- E. Rate: Reimbursement for mileage accrued in the use of a private automobile or aircraft in the discharge of official duties as follows:
 - 1. Privately owned automobile, 80% of the Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate set January 1 of the previous year, for each mile traveled in a privately owned vehicle. This rate will be automatically adjusted on January 1 of each calendar year.
 - 2. Privately owned airplane, eighty-eight (\$0.88) per nautical mile.
- F. Privately owned airplane: Mileage accrued in the use of a privately owned airplane shall be reimbursed at the rate set forth in this Section as follows:
 - 1. Pursuant to the New Mexico aeronautical chart published by the State Department of Transportation, Aviation Division, for the distances in New Mexico and other states' air maps for distances outside of New Mexico; or
 - 2. Pursuant to actual air mileage if certification is provided by the pilot, or a beginning and ending reading of actual mileage if the reading is certified as true and correct by the traveler, and the destination is not included on the air map.
- G. Reimbursement limit for out of state travel: Total mileage reimbursement for out of state travel by privately owned automobile or privately owned airplane shall not exceed the total coach class commercial airfare that would have been reimbursed those traveling had they traveled by common carrier.
- H. Additional mileage provision: Mileage accrued while on official business shall be reimbursed for travel on official business. An elected official or department head may authorize by memorandum reimbursement for mileage from a point of origin farther from the destination than the designated post of duty in appropriate circumstances. The memorandum must accompany the Travel Expense Report. If official business is transacted while commuting from home to post of duty or from post of duty to home, mileage shall not be paid for the number of miles between post of duty and home. Odometer readings showing additional miles accrued for official business must be provided to the department for payment.

Section 5. PER DIEM RATES PRORATION.

- A. **Applicability.** Per diem rates shall be paid only in accordance with the provisions of this section. Per diem rates shall be paid without regard to whether expenses were actually incurred. Where lodging and/or meals are provided or paid for by the County or another entity, the public officer or employee is entitled to reimbursement only for actual expenses under Section 6 of this policy (2.42.2.9 NMAC).
- B. **Per diem rate computation:** Except as provided in Subsection C through G of this Section, per diem rates for travel by public officers and employees shall be computed as follows:
 1. **Partial day per diem rate:** Public officers or employees who occasionally and irregularly travel shall be reimbursed for travel which does not require overnight lodging, but extends beyond a normal work day as follows:
 - a. For less than 2 hours of travel beyond normal work day, **none**;
 - b. For 2 hours, but less than 6 hours beyond the normal work day, **\$20.00**;
 - c. for 6 hours, but less than 12 hours beyond the normal work day, **\$42.00**;
 - d. for 12 hours or more beyond the normal work day, **\$59.00**;
 - e. “Occasionally and irregularly” means not on a regular basis and infrequently as determined by the County Manager.
 - f. “Normal work day” means eight (8) hours within a nine (9) hour period for all public officers and employees both salaried and non-salaried, regardless of the officers’ or employees’ regular work schedule.
 - g. Individuals will not be eligible to receive partial day rates as part of the Travel Advance form; however, individuals may receive these rates on the Travel Balance form.
 2. **Overnight Travel (lodging):** Regardless of the number of hours traveled, travel for public officers and employees where overnight lodging is required shall be reimbursed as follows:
 - a. In state areas, **\$157.00**;
 - b. *In-state special areas, **\$210.00**;
 - c. Out-of-state areas, **\$157.00**; and
 - d. **Out-of-state special high cost areas, **\$215.00**.

*The in-state special area is Santa Fe.

**The out-of-state special high cost areas are New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Palm Springs, San Diego, Atlanta, Boston, Atlantic City, Philadelphia, Dallas/Ft. Worth and areas outside the continental United States.
 3. **Return from overnight travel:** On the last day of travel when overnight lodging is no longer required, partial day reimbursement shall be made. To calculate the number of hours in the partial day, divide the total number of hours traveled by 24, beginning with the time the traveler initially departed. The hours remaining constitute the partial day, which shall be reimbursed as follows:
 - a. For less than 2 hours, **none**;

- b. For 2 hours, but less than 6 hours, **\$20.00**;
- c. For 6 hours or more, but less than 12 hours, **\$42.00**;
- d. For 12 hours or more, **\$59.00**.

C. Board, commission and committee members: Non-salaried public officers may receive per diem as follows:

- 1. **Board, commission and committee meetings:** The only non-salaried public officers' eligible for per diem for attending meetings are those designated by Board resolution.
- 2. **Other official meetings:** Non-salaried public officers may receive per diem rates for travel on official business that does not constitute a board, advisory board, committee or commission meeting only in accordance with Subsection B of this section, when approved in advance as set forth in Section 3A.
- 3. **Members serving in dual capacities:** Non-salaried public officers who also serve as public officers or employees of state agencies or local public bodies may receive mileage or per diem rates from only one public entity for any travel or meeting attended. Furthermore, non-salaried public officers who are also public officers or employees may not receive per diem rates for attending meetings held in the place of their home or at their designated posts of duty unless they are on leave from their positions as public officers or employees.

D. Temporary routine reassignment: Public officers and employees subject to periodic reassignment of duty stations or districts as a normal requirement of their employment will not be eligible for per diem rates after the time of travel at the new duty station or district.

E. Per diem in conjunction with other leave: While traveling, if a public officer or employee takes sick, annual or authorized leave without pay for more than four hours of the normal work day, per diem shall not be allowed for that day unless authorized in writing by the Elected Official/Department Head and the County Manager.

F. Illness or emergency: Elected officials with approval of the County Manager may grant permission, in writing, to pay per diem rates and travel reimbursement to an employee or public officer who becomes ill or is notified of a family emergency while traveling on official business and must remain away from home or discontinue the official business to return home.

Section 6. REIMBURSEMENT OF ACTUAL EXPENSES IN LIEU OF PER DIEM RATES

A. Applicability: Upon written request of a public officer or an employee, the Board or the County Manager as applicable pursuant to the requirements of Section 3A may grant written approval for a public officer or employee of the County to be reimbursed actual expenses in lieu of the per diem rate where overnight travel is required.

1. When actual expenses have been requested and approved, under no circumstance can the actual expenses be changed back to standard per diem.
2. Reimbursements for mileage, expenses, training, conferences, seminars and all other travel will be to the destination most economical to the taxpayers of Grant County.

B. Overnight travel (lodging): For overnight travel for public officers and employees where overnight lodging is required, the public officer or employee will be reimbursed as follows:

1. **Actual reimbursement for lodging:** A public officer or an employee may elect to be reimbursed actual expenses for lodging not exceeding the single occupancy room charge (including tax) in lieu of the per diem rate set forth in this section. Whenever possible, public officers and employees should stay in hotels, which offer government rates. Public officers or employees who incur lodging expenses in excess of \$215.00 per night must obtain the signature of the County Manager on the Travel Expense Report prior to requesting reimbursement and on the encumbering document at the time of encumbering the expenditure.
 - a. Lodging will be paid at the single occupancy rate, with the exception of when two persons on County business share one room. The person receiving the per diem/reimbursement for the lodging will be paid the double occupancy rate. The County will not pay the double occupancy rate for family or friends whom room with the person receiving per diem/reimbursement.
 - b. The County will not pay for any extra days that do not pertain to County business.
2. **Actual reimbursement for meals:** Actual expenses for meals are limited by this policy and § 10-8-4(K)(2) NMSA 1978 to a maximum of \$59.00 for in-state travel and \$59.00 for out-of-state travel for a 24-hour period regardless of amounts spent or receipts submitted. Alcoholic beverages shall not be included in this amount.
3. **Receipts required:** The public officer or employee must submit receipts for the actual meal and lodging expenses incurred. Under circumstances where the loss of receipts would create a hardship, an affidavit from the officer or employee attesting to the expenses may be substituted for actual receipts. The affidavit must accompany the Travel Expense Report and include the signature of the Elected Official/Department Head.

C. Return from overnight travel: On the last day of travel when overnight lodging is no longer required, partial day reimbursement shall be made. To calculate the number of hours in the partial day, divide the total number of hours traveled by 24, beginning with the time the traveler initially departed. The hours remaining constitute the partial day, which shall be reimbursed as follows:

1. For less than 2 hours, **none**;

2. For 2 hours but less than 6 hours, **\$20.00**;
3. For 6 hours or more, but less than 12 hours, **\$42.00**;
4. For 12 hours or more, **\$59.00**;
5. No reimbursement for actual expenses will be granted in lieu of partial day per diem rates.

Section 7. TRAVEL ADVANCES.

- A. Authorizations:** Upon written request accompanied by a Travel Expense Report – Advance, the Board or County Manager, as appropriate may approve a public officer or employee's request to be advanced up to 80 percent of per diem mileage, lodging and/or meals pursuant to Section 5. Request for travel advances shall not be submitted to the Accounting Department more than two (2) weeks prior to travel unless, by processing the request earlier, significant savings can be realized for travel by common carrier or for registration fees for seminars and conferences. Requests for travel advances may not be processed if the forms are submitted less than one (1) week prior to date of travel.
- B. Travel Period:** A travel advance may be authorized for public officers and employees who travel continually throughout the month. Payment shall be made only upon Travel Expense Reports submitted with attached authorization for each travel period. Where a travel advance is made for the public officer or employee shall remit, within 5 working days of the return from the trip, a refund of any excess advance payment to the County. The County shall deposit the refund and reduce the disbursement recorded when the money was advanced. Monthly advances will not be authorized under this policy.
- C. County Records:** The Accounting Specialist or his/her designee is responsible for maintaining records of travel advances authorized by the County.
 - 1. Employee ledgers:** The County shall keep individual employee ledgers for travel advances. The ledger shall include the following information to provide an adequate audit trail: employee name, Travel Expense Report number, fiscal year, date of travel advance, date of destination, per diem advance, per diem earned, and additional per diem or refund due.
 - 2. Year-end closing:** The County shall review all travel advances prior to the end of the fiscal year and collect or pay all outstanding amounts, if possible. Any receivables or payables outstanding at year-end must be recorded on the books and records of the County.

Section 8. REIMBURSEMENT FOR OTHER EXPENSES.

Public officers and employees may be reimbursed for certain actual expenses in addition to per diem rates.

A. Receipts not required: Public officers and employees may be reimbursed without receipts for the following expenses in an amount of \$6.00 per day not to exceed a total of \$30.00 per trip:

1. Taxi or other transportation fares at the destination of the traveler;
2. Gratuities as allowed by the agency head or designee;
 - a. Restaurant and cab fare gratuities shall be limited to no more than 20% of the allowable food receipts and cab fares
3. Parking fees, preferred, valet or other special parking, other than handicapped, will not be considered for reimbursement; and
4. If more than \$6.00 per day or \$30.00 per trip is claimed, the entire amount of the reimbursement claim must be accompanied by receipts.

B. Receipts Required: Public officers and employees may be reimbursed for the following expenses provided that receipts for all such expenses are attached to the reimbursement Travel Expense Report:

1. Actual costs for travel by common carrier, provided such travel is accomplished in the most economical manner practical;
2. Rental cars or charter aircraft, provided less expensive public transportation is not available or appropriate;
3. Registration fees for educational programs or conferences, provided, if the fee includes lodging or meals, then no per diem rates shall be paid and only actual expenses paid by the officer or employee and not included in the fee shall be reimbursed within the limits of Section 6 of this policy (2.42.2.9 NMAC); and
4. Professional fees or dues that are beneficial to the agency's operations or mission.
5. Under no circumstances where the loss of receipts would deny reimbursement and create a hardship, an affidavit from the officer or employee attesting to the expenses may be substituted for actual receipts. The affidavit must accompany the Travel Expense Report and include the signature of the elected official or the County Manager.

Section 9. NON-REIMBURSEABLE EXPENSES.

The following items are not eligible for reimbursement under this policy:

1. Alcoholic beverages or tobacco;
2. Personal items/expenses not associated with conducting official county business, and includes, but is not limited to: prescription or non-prescription items, souvenirs, room service;
3. Entertainment Expenses;
4. Valet or preferred parking;
5. Travel expenses incurred prior or beyond the dates of approved travel or conference dates; and
6. Any expenses incurred by family members or guests traveling with the public officer or employee.

Section 10. CONDUCT WHILE TRAVELING ON OFFICIAL COUNTY BUSINESS

Any public officer or employee shall conduct themselves in the highest professional manner while conducting official county business at all times both on and off duty.

Section 11. SAME DAY TRAVEL (within 120 miles from actual post of duty)

Same day travel will be required of all public officers and employees to and from destinations within 120 miles of the public officers or employees actual post of duty. Overnight travel will not be considered to areas within 120 miles if the actual required time to conduct official county business does not extend beyond one workday.

Section 12. ELECTED OFFICAL PROHIBITION ON TRAVEL.

Pursuant to §10-8-5.F NMSA 1978, no reimbursement for out of state travel shall be made to any elected public officer, if after the last day to do so that officer has not filed a declaration of candidacy for reelection to his currently held office or has been defeated for reelection to his currently held office in a primary election or any general election. Further §10-8-5.G NMSA 1978 states, subsection F does not apply to any elected public officer who is ineligible to succeed himself after serving his term of office.

Section 13. PENALTY

Any public officer or employee who knowingly authorizes or who knowingly accepts payment in excess of the amount allowed by the Per Diem and Mileage Act or in excess of the amount authorized by this policy and the governing board pursuant to NMSA §10-8-5 is liable to the County in an amount that is twice the excess payment in addition to possible personnel action, up to and including termination from County employment, and legal action authorized by law.

Section 14. AMENDMENTS TO POLICY, CONFLICTS WITH OTHER POLICIES

- A. This resolution hereby repeals all other Grant County Resolutions and/or Policies relating to Travel which are in conflict with the above provisions, by adoption of this Resolution.
- B. Any changes to this policy shall be made by a duly adopted resolution of the Board.
- C. If or when there are two or more policies conflict regarding travel procedures or dealing with the subject matter contained in this policy, the more stringent policy shall govern.
- D. This policy will be effective on July 01,2023.