

## **City of Bristol, Virginia TRAVEL POLICY**

Predicated upon adequate funding, the City of Bristol, Virginia may reimburse employees traveling on pre-approved, official City business for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred. Travel expenses may be paid by the employee and then reimbursed upon submission of completed required paperwork and proper documentation. Completed paperwork is due to the Finance Department within three business days of return from travel. The department head should review allowable travel charges with the employee prior to travel, unless it is an unforeseen circumstance.

### **Transportation**

A system-owned vehicle should be used for approved City business when available. Preference in the use of system-owned vehicles will be given to employees traveling the greatest distances. If a system-owned vehicle is not available, the private vehicle of an employee may be used and the employee will be reimbursed at the current IRS mileage rate. An employee would not be reimbursed the actual cost of gasoline or other incidental expenses of personal vehicle usage.

If an employee elects to use their personal vehicle rather than a system-owned vehicle, the employee will not receive mileage reimbursement, unless the use is pre-approved by the City Manager.

Guest and/or family members may occasionally travel in a system-owned vehicle if prior approval has been received by the City Manager. System-owned vehicles must be picked up at the beginning of travel and returned immediately upon return. System-owned vehicles should never be taken home or used to commute to and from your work location unless pre-approved. IRS rules require personal use of vehicles to be added to your taxable income and must be properly monitored.

Actual parking fees, toll charges, metro fees and required taxi or other transportation costs are allowable for reimbursement. Tickets or receipts should accompany reimbursement requests, when possible. Otherwise, the traveler should document the date, amount and purpose of a charge.

Transportation by airplane, train, or a method other than vehicle transportation must be approved by the City Manager prior to any expenditure related to that travel.

### **Meals**

Meals will be reimbursed at cost when overnight travel is required. The maximum meals and incidentals to be reimbursed will be determined by the Federal GSA Per Diem Rates. The federal rates are available at <http://perdiemcalc.net/gsa-np> and must be attached to each travel voucher for meals and lodging. On travel departure and return days the meal allowance is calculated at 75% of the federal rates and is calculated by the Federal GSA Per Diem Calculator. If a meal is provided by a third party or the conference during travel, it will not be reimbursed or charged to City credit card, even if the employee chooses an alternative. That meal should be deducted from the daily total provided by the federal per diem rates. The conference registration or agenda must be attached to each travel voucher

Approved January 12, 2021

## **City of Bristol, Virginia TRAVEL POLICY**

for meals. The meal maximum will be on a daily basis of travel and will not be subject to prorating or carry over from one day to the next. Meal allowance rates include all taxes and tips. **Tips are limited to 15%.** Detailed meal receipts must be submitted with the travel reimbursement claim form. Meals will not be reimbursed for day trips.

### **Lodging**

On approved trips which require overnight lodging, motel/hotel receipts must be submitted with the travel reimbursement claim form. Most telephone expenses are not allowable for reimbursement and should not be submitted for reimbursement. Government rates shall be requested when appropriate and used when available.

Travelers must keep receipts and accurate detailed records of all expenses to ensure correct reporting and submission of travel reimbursements. Claims for travel and meal expenses shall be submitted to the finance department on forms approved by the City Manager for this purpose. By signing the travel reimbursement request, the traveler is certifying the accuracy of all information and the legitimacy of the travel. The signature of the traveler's supervisor certifies that he or she agrees that the travel was necessary and the requested reimbursements are proper.

The maximum reimbursement rate for lodging shall be based on the same lodging rate paid by the Commonwealth of Virginia to its employees at any given time. Utilize the calculator at the following website to determine maximum allowance for your destination: <http://perdiemcalc.net/gsa-np/> . Up to 150% of the rate may be approved by department head, above 150% must be approved by the City Manager in advance of travel. Expenses in excess of the base guidelines will not be reimbursed, unless approved in advance. Employees who do not plan with careful consideration to these guidelines will bear the additional expense personally. The Federal GSA Per Diem Calculator must be attached to each travel voucher for lodging.

### **Miscellaneous**

Disallowed Expenditures. The following expenses will not be reimbursed: lost or stolen articles, alcoholic beverages, damage to personal vehicles, clothing, or other items, movies charged to hotel bills, entertainment expense, internet access (unless pre-approved for a business purpose) or expenses for children, spouses, and companions while traveling. This list is not all-inclusive. Employees should use prudent judgement and remember that all travel expense accounts are open to the public and must be able to sustain the test of public review.

### **Travel Expenditures charged to the City credit card**

Travel expenses charged directly to the City credit card must follow these guidelines. For additional guidelines see the Credit Card Use Policy.