

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY OF KITTITAS
STATE OF WASHINGTON

RESOLUTION No. 2023- 174

RESOLUTION AMENDING KITTITAS COUNTY TRAVEL POLICY

- WHEREAS,** Kittitas County has a Travel Policy which provides the guidelines and expectations to all county employees when traveling while on official county business; and
- WHEREAS,** The Kittitas County Travel Policy requires updates to ensure it is in compliance with all applicable State and Federal Laws in addition to best practices that ensure responsible and efficient use of taxpayer funds; and
- WHEREAS,** The Kittitas County Auditor's Office has completed updates to reflect process improvements and those changes have been endorsed by the County Policy Committee, Management Team, and reviewed by the Prosecuting Attorney's Office; and
- WHEREAS,** The updated policy provides language that permanently ties the county mileage reimbursement rate to the standard Internal Revenue Service mileage reimbursement guidelines.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: The Kittitas County Board of County Commissioners hereby approves the updated Kittitas County Travel Policy as presented in Exhibit A.

NOW, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: The Kittitas Board of County Commissioners does not require that future mileage reimbursement rate changes be approved via formal resolution so long as the rates are in accordance with the standard Internal Revenue Service guidelines.

DATED this 17th day of October, 2023, at Ellensburg, Washington.



Attest:

- Clerk of the Board – Julie Kjorsvik
 Deputy Clerk of the Board – Mandy Buchholz

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Cory Wright, Chairman


Brett Wachsmith, Vice-Chairman


Laura Osiadacz, Commissioner



Kittitas County Travel & Expense Policy

Policy Information

Policy Name/Number: Travel Policy		
Policy Type:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Disclosure Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Records Management Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Travel Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
New policy or revision of current policy?		
<input type="checkbox"/> New policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision of current policy	
Expiration/Renewal Date:		

POLICY COMMITTEE APPROVAL DATE: _____

Policy Content

1. SCOPE

Who does this policy apply to and under what circumstances? Who will be responsible for compliance of this policy?

This policy applies to all Kittitas County Departments, Divisions, Elected Officials, Department Heads employee, volunteer, or intern who must travel for authorized work purposes.

2. PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

Why is this policy needed? What is the issue or opportunity this policy will address? How will this policy address the issue/opportunity?

The purpose of this policy is to outline the circumstances under which County employees will be authorized to travel and receive travel reimbursement and ensure Kittitas County resources are expended in a manner that maximizes public benefit.

Whenever possible, travel costs should be paid directly by the County. This may be accomplished by the County paying for travel costs in advance or by providing the traveler with a County-issued purchase card or credit card.

All travel costs are subject to review by the Kittitas County Board of County Commissioners and the Auditor's Finance Office.

3. DEFINITIONS

Define unusual terms or words as they are to be understood in context of this policy.

Claim for Expenses

A form to be used by employees for claiming reimbursement of travel expenses.



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Coffee/Light Refreshment

Coffee encompasses any non-alcoholic beverage, such as tea, soft drinks, juice, or milk. A light refreshment is an edible item that may be served between meals (i.e. doughnuts, sweet rolls, fruit or cheese, etc.)

Commissioners' Role

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) will serve as the appeal board should any conflicts arise concerning travel reimbursement. The Auditor will adjudicate in the event the dispute involves the BOCC.

High-Cost Area

Area designated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as requiring higher than usual lodging and/or subsistence costs.

Meetings/Trainings

A group of individuals coming together to discuss a work-related matter and/or to develop knowledge, skills, or efficiency in their jobs.

Non-High Cost Area

All other areas not designated as high cost.

Official Residence

The city, town, or other location where an employee maintains a residence used as a primary domicile for themselves and/or their family.

Official Station

The city, town, or other location where an employee reports to work on a regular basis.

Regular Workstation

The primary building where an employee normally performs their county work.

Subsistence

Reimbursement for meals only.

Travel Status

Hours that an employee is away from their official workstation and residence on agency business.

Eight-hour Threshold Rule

Hours in travel status must total more than eight hours within a single workday in order to claim reimbursement for subsistence.

Traveler/Employee

Terms are interchangeable and intended to encompass any Elected Official, Department Head, Employee, Volunteer, or Intern who is traveling for authorized work-related purposes.



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4. POLICY

Set of general guidelines. Outlines the plan for tackling certain issues. Should be: clear and concise using simple language (avoid acronyms or jargon). Explains the rule NOT how to implement the rule (this is addresses in the procedures section).

4.1 Meals, Coffee & Refreshments at Meetings: Meals, coffee and refreshments are authorized for reimbursement only at specific county meetings or formal training sessions, and under certain circumstances. All Departments should check with the Finance Office before arranging for meals, coffee or refreshments at a meeting, formal training session, and certain other circumstances. This rule is not intended to be used for normal daily business of employees.

4.1.A Coffee & Light Refreshments: Reimbursement of coffee and light refreshments will be allowed at agency-sponsored meetings or formal training sessions if the following conditions are met:

1. County business is being conducted at the meeting or formal training session;
2. The coffee and/or light refreshments are available to avoid disruption of the meeting due to breaks;
3. The requesting Department receives advance approval from the finance office.

4.1.B County Provided Refreshments & Meals at County Sponsored Meetings: The County may provide refreshments and/or meals to County employees at select County sponsored meetings. The following conditions must be met before refreshments and/or meals will be provided:

1. County business is being conducted at the meeting or formal training session is being held;
2. The refreshments and/or meals are an integral part of the meeting for formal training session;
3. The meeting or training is being held for County employees; refreshments and meals may not be provided to the general public;
4. The Elected Official or Department Head of the office hosting the meeting/training reviews and authorizes the request;
5. The coordinator must have formal approval from the Board of County Commissioners before refreshments and/or meals will be provided;
6. The requesting Department receives advance approval from the finance office.

4.1.C Emergency Situations: During emergency situations such as, but not limited to, initial crime scene investigation, major crimes, emergency evacuation situations, natural disasters, search and rescue operations, etc., where stopping or traveling for a meal break could worsen the situation and/or increase costs to the County, the Authorizing Individual may provide County employees an on-scene meal at nominal cost. Nominal cost shall follow the OFM SAAM Section 10.90.20 fixed allowance for each meal.

4.2 Lodging Reimbursement: Overnight lodging reimbursement may be authorized for seminars, conferences, or business meetings if the following criteria are met:

1. The Elected Official or Department Head reviews and authorizes the travel;
2. The traveler must be away overnight from their official station and residence;
3. The event is taking place outside of Kittitas County (excluding Snoqualmie Pass); and
4. The event is 50 or more miles from the workplace (with the exception of Yakima at the discretion of EO/DH.)



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An exception request will need to be completed and approved by the BOCC if otherwise not meeting the requirements of this section.

Lodging reimbursement is allowed up to the amounts listed in Schedule A: Reimbursement Rates. The following items are required for reimbursements:

Reimbursement is not allowed for non-commercial lodging (i.e. staying with relatives or friends).

The finance office would prefer to have the rooms paid in advance directly to the hotel using a county credit card.

Travelers may maintain lodging points memberships with any hotel or motel organization at their own expense. Participation in these programs must not influence lodging selection that would result in incremental or additional cost to Kittitas County beyond the lowest reasonable lodging availability.

Meal Reimbursement: Meal reimbursement is on a set meal allowance basis as specified in Schedule A: Reimbursement Rates. The following rules apply to meal reimbursements:

1. The Elected Official or Department Head must review and authorize the meal reimbursement.
2. Meal expenses include the basic cost of a meal, any applicable sales tax and tips, up to the maximum per diem amount.
3. Travelers must be traveling outside the county (not including Snoqualmie Pass), more than 50 miles (one way) from their place of work and in a travel status for more than 8 (eight) hours within a workday to receive the daily meal reimbursement (\$31.) Travelers must meet each of these criteria AND be staying overnight away from home and/or place of work on official business to receive the full meal reimbursement (\$69.)
4. If the cost of a meal is included in a registration fee, the traveler cannot claim reimbursement for the identified meal. However, a Traveler with a bonified dietary restriction may request reimbursement for conference meals that do not comply with their dietary needs.
5. Meals will be reimbursed for the employee only. Travelers will not be reimbursed for the purchase of anyone else's meals.
6. With documentation, Sheriff's Office employees can be reimbursed for meals purchased for a material witness in a criminal investigation.
7. ~~Employees of Kittitas County, who are doing their job during lunch periods are not allowed to claim for reimbursement/or direct payment of lunch, as this time is part of their job (even if grant funded.)~~

4.4 Transportation Reimbursement

4.4.A Agency Vehicle: When driving an agency car for County business, the traveler must have a valid and active driver's license recognized under Washington State law, as well as car insurance. The driver's license and proof of insurance must be in the traveler's possession while driving any vehicle for official County business purposes. Travelers and passengers using agency vehicles are not eligible to claim mileage expenses. Receipts are necessary for gas purchases made for a government or agency vehicle in order to claim reimbursement.

4.4.B - Private Vehicles: With the approval of their Department Head or Elected Official a traveler may drive their personal vehicle to meetings, conferences or other business outside of the county, and may claim reimbursement in accordance with Schedule A: Reimbursement Rates. Employees are not authorized to use their personal vehicles and receive reimbursement when conducting routine



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business within the county. The exception to this being if a motorpool vehicle is unavailable and the use of personal vehicle is explicitly approved by the employee's direct manager or supervisor.

When an employee reports directly to an approved training or meeting site, mileage will be reimbursed at the mileage between the "official workstation" and the approved reporting site.

Passengers are not eligible to claim mileage expenses.

Mileage between points is to be calculated via Google Maps or other generally accepted mileage website or application. Vicinity miles should be added as a separate figure on the reimbursement form, but only vicinity miles essential to the trip will be reimbursed. Essential trips may include travel from the hotel to a conference site. Vicinity miles will not be reimbursed for reasons including, but not limited to entertainment or trips for food/beverage.

4.4.B Rental Car: If a traveler has paid for a rental car, they must attach the receipt to the Claim for Reimbursement form and indicating who paid and how payment was made.

No personal insurance (i.e. collision, liability) will be reimbursed.

4.4.C Air Travel: When traveling by air, the traveler must either have the travel or ticket agent bill the County directly or have an office administrator from their department book the travel through a third-party travel vendor. Travelers are not authorized to use their personal accounts with third party vendors to book travel. Travelers or their administrators should use a county credit card to book their flights.

In emergency situations where the traveler paid for the airfare, the receipt must indicate who paid for the ticket.

Reimbursement of transportation expenses will not exceed the cost of tourist ("economy") class or its equivalent.

Employees may maintain Frequent Flyer membership with any airline at their own expense; however, participation in these programs must not influence flight selection that would result in incremental or additional cost to Kittitas County beyond the lowest available airfare. Employees will not be reimbursed for a monetary value when mileage/points from these programs are used to book flights for Kittitas County business.

4.5 Miscellaneous Travel Reimbursement: Reimbursable miscellaneous travel expenses include:

1. Taxi fares, parking fees, and ferry and bridge tolls.
2. Registration fees required for attendance at a convention, conference, or official meeting.
3. Checked bags from airline travel
4. Tips for Uber/Taxi Drivers (not to exceed 20%)

Receipts are required for the following miscellaneous expenses all miscellaneous expenses.

4.6: County employees are authorized to use county funds to make approved travel arrangements (lodging, airfare, registration fees, etc.) for other County employees. However, they may not use personal funds (including, but not limited to: credit card, debit card, check, money order, etc.) to do so.

Travelers may use personal card for hotel deposits and incidentals if County Credit Card is not available.



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Travel authorization approved in advance by the Board of County Commissioners will be required for all travel that requires a budget amendment.

All out-of-state prisoner transport is exempted from the requirement for travel authorization.

4.7 Reimbursement of Training: It is the commitment of Kittitas County to develop its human resources through training and performance development efforts. Therefore, whenever an employing official deems it necessary to send one of their employees to a certifiable training program the employee should recognize the professional benefit they and the County will receive. The employee should also be cognizant of the expense the County will incur to train the employee. To that end, if the training certifies the employee, the Elected Official and/or Department Head may require the employee to complete the [Training Reimbursement Agreement](#) form which requires the employee to remain employed after the training with the county for six months, for every \$1000.00 (registration, travel costs and per diem) expended on such training.

4.8 Non-Reimbursable Expenses: The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement by Kittitas County:

1. Transportation to places of entertainment or similar personal activities;
2. Clothing, personal sundries and services;
3. Private trip insurance;
4. Medical, dental, and hospital services;
5. Alcoholic beverages;
6. Tobacco products;
7. Fines and penalties, such as parking tickets;
8. Travel fees such as TSA Precheck, Clear, Visa, and Global Entry;
9. Travel expenses incurred by a spouse, companion, or other individuals accompanying a Kittitas County employee on business travel;
10. Postage and shipping of personal items;
11. Entertainment expenses such as a sporting event.

Schedule A Reimbursement Rates

Lodging: You must be traveling outside Kittitas County and more than 50 miles (one way) from your place of work to claim lodging reimbursement.

Room Cost Only (excluding taxes)

Non-High Cost Locations	High-Cost Locations
\$133.00	\$222.00



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Subsistence: You must be traveling outside Kittitas County and more than 50 miles (one way) from place of work to claim meal reimbursement.

Meals*	All Areas	
Breakfast	\$13.00	\$31.00 (Daily Rate No Meals provided)
Lunch	\$18.00	
Dinner	\$38.00	\$69.00 Overnight (No Meals Provided)

**Please note: The IRS rules specify that County reimbursed meals to employees who travel and do not stay overnight are a taxable benefit.*

Mileage Reimbursement: The County purchases and maintains a vehicle fleet available to be used by County employees. Employees shall use county vehicles while conducting routine business within the county unless a motor pool vehicle is unavailable, in which case they must receive approval from their manager to use a personal vehicle and be reimbursed at the standard IRS mileage reimbursement rate.

However, Employees may choose to use a personal vehicle for their convenience while attending conferences, meetings, or other official business outside of the County, with the approval of their Department Head or Elected Official. Employees who choose to use their personal vehicle may be reimbursed up to the standard IRS mileage reimbursement rate.

- The County employee assumes all liability for damages that occur to them, others and/or their personal property.
- The employee agrees to comply with all applicable laws and regulations while operating their personal vehicle on official business.



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5. PROCEDURES

Meals, Coffee, and Refreshments Purchases: Vouchers for authorized meal, coffee, and refreshments purchases may be submitted to the finance office prior to the meeting/training event if purchased ahead of time, and no later than two weeks after the conclusion of the event, and must include:

1. A receipt for the meal/coffee/refreshments purchase.
2. The number of attendees at the event. This can be accomplished by attaching a registration list or sign-in sheet to the voucher.
3. Applicable signed contracts/agreements related to the meeting/training event.
4. A completed claim for reimbursement form, if the County employee used a personal form of payment to purchase meals and other refreshments, rather than a County credit card.

Payment for Meals, Coffee, and Refreshments may be made in one of three ways:

1. Use of the County Credit card
2. The facility/company providing refreshments directly bills to the County; or
3. The County employee/coordinator of the meeting or training session pays for the refreshments and submits a receipt and reimbursement voucher for the actual cost to the finance office.

Lodging Reimbursement: Vouchers for lodging reimbursement may be submitted prior to the meeting/training event if paid in advance, and no more than two weeks after the conclusion of the event. The voucher must include:

1. A receipt from the hotel/motel that includes the traveler's name, the single room rate, any applicable sales and hotel/motel taxes, as well as any hotel parking fees.
2. A copy of the meeting/conference/training agenda for which the travel is required.
3. A completed claim for reimbursement form, if the traveler used a personal form of payment rather than a County credit card.

Meal Reimbursement: Vouchers for meal reimbursement must be submitted no later than two weeks after the conclusion of the meeting/training event, and must include:

1. A copy of the meeting/conference/training agenda & registration for which the travel was required.
2. A completed claim for reimbursement form, indicating the destination, departure and return dates of the authorized meeting/conference/training.
3. A written memo from the Department Head or Elected Official attached to the reimbursement form which certifies the meals included with registration that did not conform to their employees' individual dietary restrictions. The employee will be reimbursed only for the meals that they were unable to consume.

Transportation Reimbursement: Vouchers for transportation reimbursement may be submitted prior to the meeting/training event if purchased ahead of time, and no more than two weeks after the conclusion of the event. Vouchers must include:

1. Receipts for all transportation purchases (airfare, rental car purchase and subsequent gasoline purchases, bus pass, overnight parking, etc.).
2. A copy of the meeting/conference/training agenda & registration for which the travel was required.



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3. A completed claim for reimbursement form, if the traveler used a personal form of payment rather than a County credit card.

Vehicle Mileage and Gas Reimbursement: County employees who utilize a Motorpool vehicle for business travel should use the County-provided gas card. If the gas card is not functioning, and the employee must use a personal form of payment, they must submit a voucher to the finance office and include the purchase receipt and a completed claim for reimbursement form.

County employees who utilize a private vehicle for work-related travel may submit a claim for reimbursement form indicating the location of the meeting/training event and the total mileage traveled to and from the event.

“Double Dipping:” Travelers may not receive travel reimbursement for the same reimbursement from more than one source, even if the source(s) is not another county or government agency.

6. LIMITATIONS/APPROVALS/RESPONSIBILITIES

Department Heads and Elected Officials are responsible for reviewing and approving or denying their employee’s travel purchases and reimbursement requests.

All County employees are responsible for following the rules and guidelines of this policy. Any County employee who falsely claims reimbursement for travel-related expenses may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Attachments

INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS WITH THIS FORM FOR POLICY COMMITTEE REVIEW:

- Previous version of this policy, if any.
- Any forms or documents that referred to in this policy.
- Any additional documentation related to this policy that will help clarify the content of this policy.