




## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<b>Subject:</b> Legislative Body Reimbursement	<b>Index:</b> Finance <b>Number:</b> 1201-8
<b>Effective Date:</b> April 18, 2023	<b>Prepared By:</b> Finance and Administrative Services
<b>Supersedes:</b> Same Policy: May 15, 2007	<b>Approved By:</b> City Council 

### 1.0 **PURPOSE and PROCESS:**

The City of San Clemente travel and expense policy is intended to be consistent with all provisions of California State law, specifically California Government Code 53232. Where and if discrepancies between California State law and these policies exist, the provisions of California State law will prevail. All Councilmember travel expenditures in excess of \$250 require approval by the City governing body. The estimated travel expenses will be placed on the consent agenda of a City Council meeting prior to travel whenever possible. If travel is more urgent and justified, the travel expenses will be placed on the consent agenda of a City Council meeting immediately following the travel.

### 2.0 **APPLICABILITY:**

City Councilmembers are entitled to payment or reimbursement for the following:

1. Official meetings with representatives of regional, state and national government on City adopted policy positions.
2. Advocacy for City of San Clemente issues, when approved by the City Council.
3. Attending educational seminars designed to improve skills and knowledge. Associated expenses, supported with original itemized receipts, for registration, tuition, and parking are reimbursable.
4. Participation in regional, state and national organizations whose activities affect the City's interests.
5. Implementing an adopted strategy for attracting or retaining businesses which will typically involve at least one staff member.

The City of San Clemente will not reimburse Councilmembers for personal travel (or the personal portion of any trip); political or charitable contributions or events; family expenses including partner, children or pet expenses when accompanying a member on City business; entertainment expenses, including theater, movies (either in-room or at the theater), sporting events (including tickets, gym, massage and/or golf related expenses) or other cultural events; personal automobile expenses including repairs, traffic citations, insurance or personal losses incurred while on City business.

**3.0 TRANSPORTATION:**

When traveling, Councilmembers will use the most economical mode and class of transportation reasonably consistent with scheduling needs and space requirements. This includes the use of the most direct and time efficient route. In the event a more expensive transportation form or route is used, the cost borne by City will be limited to the cost of the most economical, direct, efficient, and reasonable transportation form. Government and group rates must be used when available.

When possible, airfares should be purchased using the Enhanced Local Government Airfare Program offered by the League of California Cities ([www.cacities.org/travel](http://www.cacities.org/travel)), the California State Association of Counties (<http://www.csac.counties.org>) and the State of California which are presumed to be the most economical and reasonable for purposes of reimbursement under this policy. When reimbursement for airport parking is requested, any airport parking more than 24 hours must be in long term parking or private economy lots. Reasonable and standard baggage handling fees will be reimbursed.

Reasonable and necessary charges for public transportation, taxi, or shuttle service are reimbursable at actual cost with receipts. Car rental is allowed when it is determined it is the most economical and reasonable mode of transportation during travel. Itemized original receipts must be submitted with vehicle rental reimbursement claims. If a personal car is used the Councilmember can seek reimbursement for mileage at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rates presently in effect.

**4.0 LODGING:**

Lodging expenses will be reimbursed or paid for when travel on official City business reasonably requires an overnight stay. Extended stays and extra nights, often for personal travel, are the responsibility of the Councilmember. If possible, lodging in connection with a conference or organized educational activity should be secured using the group rate provided by the conference or activity sponsor. In situations where conference group rates are not available, the IRS per diem rates for lodging can be used as a guide.

Non-reimbursable lodging expenses include, but are not limited to, costs for an extra person staying in the room, costs related to late check out or uncanceled reservations, and in-room pay-per-view movie rentals. Original itemized receipts must accompany claims for lodging reimbursements.

## **5.0 PER DIEM, MEALS AND TRAVEL RELATED EXPENSES:**

### *5.1 Per Diem*

Councilmembers are encouraged to request a per diem based upon the IRS per diem rates for meals and incidental expenses in the area the Councilmember is traveling. Per diem rates may be deducted for applicable meals included in conference or seminar registration and program fees. The per diem will be provided to the Councilmember in advance, when possible, and will only be calculated for the time of official travel. Extended stays for personal travel will not be eligible for per diem. Receipts are not required to claim the meal and incidental expenses per diem.

### *5.2 Meals*

Meal expenses and associated gratuities should be moderate, considering community standards and the prevailing restaurant costs of the area. The City will not pay for or reimburse alcohol/personal bar expenses, or meals for guests or spouses. The IRS per diem rates can be used as a guide for reimbursement.

### *5.3 Incidental Expenses*

Incidental expenses must be related to the purpose of the approved travel and not for personal reasons. For instance, when approved travel lasts for more than one week, laundry/dry cleaning expenses may be reimbursed. An attempt to list all potential incidental expenses is challenging, but Councilmembers are aware that all expenses will be identified on a travel expense report. Incidental expenses should be pre-authorized whenever possible as details of the travel are assembled.

## **6.0 *Travel Expense Report:***

A travel expense report will be generated for all official travel by members of the City Council. Reimbursement requests, identified on the report, must be submitted within 60 days of the original transaction or the completion of travel to be reimbursed. Documentation of all receipts detailing the amount paid, the items/services received and the date must be submitted with the Travel Expense Report. Requests for reimbursement will be processed within the normal Accounts Payable schedule.