

## TRAVEL POLICY

### **I. Purpose**

This policy defines an allowable business expense as a necessary, reasonable, and appropriate expense incurred for valid business purposes of the Village. While such allowable expenses may be eligible for payment, other funding sources may have more restrictions and must be followed. The policy provides criteria for determining allowable and certain unallowable expenses.

This policy also provides substantiation requirements to pay allowable business expenses. In general, this policy ensures appropriate use of Village funds, and complies with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and state and federal guidelines.

### **II. Policy**

The Village of Ardsley ("Village") recognizes that its employees may be required to travel or incur other expenses from time to time to conduct business. The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines and procedures governing the use of Village funds for business travel and other business in compliance with applicable law and regulatory requirements and ensure proper stewardship of public funds. This Policy applies to all Village personnel and it is the responsibility of each employee to familiarize themselves with this Policy and adhere to the Policy when incurring travel and other business expenses on behalf of the Village.

In general, travel should be conducted in the most economical means to accomplish the business of the Village. The Village will pay for reasonable costs of business travel, attendance at business related conferences, seminars, community events and professional events and other reasonable ordinary and necessary business related expenses incurred by Village personnel to advance the Village's interests, provided such expenses are allowable and properly authorized and documented in accordance with this Policy as it may be amended from time to time.

To ensure accountability, safeguard Village funds, employee advances and reimbursements for travel and business expenses must comply with the following:

- Expenses must have a business connection, which means that the employee must have incurred ordinary and necessary expenses while performing services as a Village employee. An "ordinary expense" is one that is common and accepted among municipalities; a "necessary expense" is an expense that is helpful and appropriate and will benefit Village business.
- Expenses must be reasonable and appropriate to the business purpose and incurred for a permissible expense under this Policy. Expenses may not be lavish or extravagant and should be incurred at the lowest cost available or feasible, consistent with good business practices. Receipts and invoices are required that document the nature and amount of the expenditures. Mileage allowance logs/documentated distance estimates from Google Maps, Mapquest or other computer generated directions to and from the off-site location to Village Hall are deemed substantiation rather than actual expenses for operating a personal vehicle.
- Sales tax will NOT be reimbursed so employees must provide the vendor with a copy of the

Tax ID letter from the Village Treasurer's Office to ensure that sales tax is not charged.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this Policy could result in the employee having reimbursement requests denied and/or having reimbursements or advances be taxable to the employee. Depending on the nature of the failure to comply, the employee may also be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal.

These guidelines apply to all Out of Town Travel regardless of the source of funding (Village, grants or other). Any exceptions to this Policy must be approved by the Village Manager and documented as to the business reason for such exception.

### **III. Procedures**

#### **1. Authorization**

Business travel, including travel for training purposes, must be approved in advance by the Village Manager.

#### **2. Advances**

Advance purchases of airfares, hotel deposits and conference registration may be made on the Village's credit card administered by the Village Treasurer. Employees may work with the Treasurer's office to make those reservations. Any changes to travel plans impacting the charges made on the Village's credit card must be made in a timely manner so as not to have the Village incur expenses for which there is no travel or other public benefit received.

#### **3. Claims for Expense Reimbursement**

All claims for reimbursement of business travel expenses must be submitted to the Village Treasurer's Office.

The employee must submit the original copies of the detailed/itemized receipts supporting all expenditures and documentation of the business purpose. Credit card receipts, alone, are not adequate proof of the public funds expenditure.

Any person who submits a claim and who willfully makes a claim which he/she/they does not believe to be true and correct, or is false, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and, if egregious, may also be subject to further charges.

- Each traveler must submit their own reimbursement request for expenses incurred. Employees will not be reimbursed for more than their own expenses and receipts must show expenses that can be identified as the employee expense.
- Expenses incurred for accompanying spouses, companions or family members are considered personal in nature and expenses incurred for or by them will not be reimbursed by the Village.
- Incremental travel costs incurred for personal business during the course of a Village business trip are the responsibility of the employee. Personal expenses incurred during the business trip must be identified.

#### 4. Transportation Guidelines

**Airfare:** Commercial air travel will be reimbursed at the coach/economy class rates if an alternate public transportation is not available or when the use of airline travel is more economical or practical for conducting Village business.

Airline selections should be based on securing the lowest priced and/or most feasible airfare available at the time of booking. Air travel arrangements should be made as far in advance as possible in order to take advantage of reduced fares. Frequent flyer memberships should not influence employees to select a flight other than the lowest priced flight available.

Charges for handling, storing and checking baggage are permissible expenses. Cancellation fees/penalties require a valid business explanation to be eligible for reimbursement (*e.g. event cancellation, changes or delays in flight connection*). First class travel, fees on upcharges for ticket upgrades and tickets purchased with frequent flyer miles are not reimbursable. Travel insurance will not be reimbursed.

**Travel by Rail:** Rail travel will be reimbursed at the coach/economy class rates if an alternate public transportation is not available or when the use of rail travel is more economical or practical for conducting Village business. Ticket selection should be based on securing the lowest priced and/or most feasible fare available.

**Taxi/Car Service:** Business use of taxi/car service is permitted when: (1) traveling overnight for Village business between hotel and airport/station, conference or business meeting/event location, (2) when Village vehicle is not available to attend business meetings/events and public transportation is otherwise unavailable or impractical.

**Personal Vehicles:** A personal vehicle may be used for business purposes if approved in advance by the Village Manager or in the case of police officers, by the Police Chief.

Claims for mileage reimbursement will be paid in accordance with the mileage allowance authorized by the Internal Revenue Service in effect on the dates of travel. Mileage includes the cost of gasoline and will not be separately reimbursed. Employees must submit a purchase requisition with a copy of Mapquest, Google Maps or other computer generated directions to and from the off-site location to Village Hall.

**Parking, Tolls and Related Expenses:** Expenses for parking and tolls associated with attendance at an approved conference/event, or when using a personal vehicle and street parking is not available, are permitted. Valet parking is not reimbursable unless the hotel or venue prohibits guests from parking their own vehicle.

**Rental Vehicle:** Employees traveling overnight on Village business may rent an automobile only when other less expensive or practical means of transportation is not available. Rental vehicles must be approved in advance and only upon showing that the rental is the only or most economical means by which the purpose of the business trip can be accomplished. Employees shall use a low-cost auto rental firm, refill the gas tank

before returning the vehicle and avoid drop-off charges by returning the vehicle to the renting location. Only the cost of a compact model is reimbursable unless 1) unavailability is documented; 2) the vehicle will be used to transport more than two employees; or 3) the cost of a larger vehicle is no more than the rental rate for a compact. Employees should waive all additional insurance when renting autos.

**5. Business Meals:** Reimbursement for business meals will be made as follows but in no case will reimbursement be made for alcoholic beverages:

**Overnight Travel:** The Village will reimburse an employee for the reasonable cost incurred for meals while traveling overnight on Village Business. During overnight travel, meals reimbursement begins when the trip commences and ends when the employee arrives home. The reasonable cost of meals may not exceed \$60 per day when attending an approved conference/event involving overnight travel. Employees traveling overnight on Village business are expected to incur no additional costs for meals which are provided as part of a fee for attendance at conferences, workshops and other events.

**Conferences and Seminars:** When attending an approved conference/event involving overnight travel, the cost of lodging is included in and will need to be paid from the maximum allowable reimbursement established for the employee's attendance at that conference/event. When available, lodging should be selected based on conference recommended hotels or the lowest priced, feasible option in the immediate area of the event. Attending functions related to the conference (i.e. tours, golf tournaments, etc.) are considered personal in nature and will not be reimbursed.

## **6. Registration Costs**

The Village may reimburse employees for attending formal, scheduled meetings, seminars, conferences and events held by recognized organizations in which the Village maintains membership or has an active interest and which are convened to conduct business, provide opportunities for, or further the goals of, established partnerships or impact information on subjects of general interest to the Village.

For conferences/events in which a package of lodging and meals is an integral part of the scheduled activities and the cost of those expenses is included in the conference/event fee paid by the Village, employees may seek reimbursement of other expenses actually incurred in connection with such conference/event provided that such expenses are allowable under this Policy.

## **7. Internet Fees**

Reasonable costs for use of Wi-Fi at hotels or conference venues are permitted if free Wi-Fi is not available for business use.

## **8. Gratuities**

Tips and similar fees related to permissible expenses are permitted within normally acknowledged standards, i.e. 15%-20%.