



**CORTLAND COUNTY  
POLICY AND PROCEDURES  
AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL**

**I. General Guidelines**

- A. This establishes policies and procedures for County employees regarding:
  - 1. attendance at conferences, conventions, trainings, and meetings held outside the County; and
  - 2. travel on county business and related expenses, including meals.
- B. This policy applies to non-elected and elected County employees, except where guidelines have otherwise been established through a collective bargaining agreement. In those instances, the collective bargaining language shall prevail.
- C. Authorization to attend an in-state conference, convention or training, regardless of cost, and/or authorization to incur travel expenses shall be granted by the respective Department Head in the form of a travel order or similar document signed by the Department Head. No claims for expenses shall be audited, allowed, or paid unless such form shall be attached thereto. Travel or conference taken prior to receiving proper authorization as described herein may be deemed an unauthorized leave and any claims for expense reimbursement will be denied. All out-of-state travel, and travel paid for with grant money shall be approved by the Director of Budget & Finance.
- D. Determination that requests for reimbursement of travel expenses are in compliance with established County policy and procedure is the responsibility of each department. All travel expense reimbursements are subject to audit.
- E. Reimbursement for travel arising out of an employee's election or appointment as a director or officer within agencies or groups other than those directly under the supervision of the Cortland County Legislature will not be allowed under any circumstances but should be billed back to the organization for whom the activity was undertaken.

**II. Approval Process**

The following procedures must be followed when an employee of the County attends a conference, convention, training, or meeting held outside the County and concerning County goals and objectives.

- A. A travel authorization request must be prepared and forwarded to the department head for approval/disapproval.
- B. If the travel
  - 1. is out of state,
  - 2. utilizes grant money,
  - 3. exceeds your travel budget line,
  - 4. has a total cost estimate (including registration, meals, tolls, parking, etc.) exceeding \$1,000 per person, or
  - 5. includes multiple staff members from the same department,the Department Heads must forward the travel authorization request to the Director of Budget & Finance for approval **and** to the statutory committee chair for information.
- C. The County Administrator, all Department Heads and Legislators must submit the travel authorization request for his/her travel to the Legislative Chairman for approval.

### III. Conditions of Reimbursement

- A. Travel arising out of the performance of an employee's job duties, including all incidental expenditures of funds, shall be reimbursed by the County, providing such expenditures meet all conditions of this policy.
- B. Documentation of expenses incurred during travel must be submitted on the County Travel Expense Record Form and attached to the reimbursement request along with a copy of the approved Travel Authorization Request.

### IV. Transportation Allowance

- A. Travel shall be conducted in the most economical mode of transportation. When public transportation, including air, train, or bus will be used, it should be demonstrated that this form of transportation would be more economical in terms of money and/or time than travel by automobile. Employees will be reimbursed the cost of public transportation incurred when supported by the proper receipt. The County will not reimburse any excess baggage fees for air travel.
- B. Reimbursement for use of personal automobiles to travel on County business will be based solely on the most recent IRS allowable reimbursement rate, and shall be provided contingent upon submission of mileage verification through MapQuest or a similar mapping program. Mileage reimbursement will be allowed for the driver of the vehicle only regardless of the number of employees traveling in the same vehicle on the same trip. To maximize savings to the County, employees traveling to the same destination shall car pool whenever possible.
- C. Automobile repair or towing expenses for personal automobiles when used for travel on County business are not reimbursable.
- D. Tolls and parking expenses will be reimbursed at actual cost incurred by the employee when supported by proper receipt. Traffic or parking violation tickets are the responsibility of the individual charged with the violation(s), with the exception of violation(s) arising out of deficiency in automobiles owned by the County.
- E. An employee's travel time (work hours) will be compensated in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, and shall be provided contingent upon submission of mileage verification through MapQuest or a similar mapping program
- F. Travel time and/or related expenses that exceed the basic, minimum requirements of the travel will be at the employee's own expense (i.e. adding an additional overnight stay for convenience or desire, unnecessary early pick-up or late drop off of rental car, etc.)
- G. All travel reimbursement shall comply with Federal Income Tax Regulations §1.162-2(e), its amendments or any predecessors of this regulation.

### V. Meal Allowance

- A. The County will pay up to a total of \$32.00 per day for meals during travel outside of Cortland County. To be eligible for full meal reimbursement, travel must have commenced prior to 7:00 a.m. and must have extended past 7:00 p.m. If the duration of the travel is less than a full day, the reimbursement maximum will be on a per-meal basis as follows:

Breakfast	-	\$ 7.00
Lunch	-	\$10.00
Dinner	-	\$15.00

To be eligible for breakfast, travel must have commenced prior to 7:00 a.m.; to be eligible for dinner, travel must have extended beyond 7:00 p.m. Lunch will be reimbursed when employer imposed restrictions inhibit an employee's regular routine.
- B. Meal expenses will be reimbursed at the actual cost incurred by the employee when supported by the proper receipt. When approved, the County will pay the lesser of the actual expenses incurred to the established maximum allowance. No charges for alcoholic beverages will be reimbursed.

- C. Gratuity, not to exceed 15%, will be allowed in addition to the meal, when supported by the proper receipt.
- D. Costs for meals held in conjunction with conferences, that are not covered by conference fees, that exceed the guidelines set forth above, will be reimbursed at the actual cost when supported by the proper receipt.
- E. Employees traveling to major metropolitan areas (cities of over 200,000 as defined by the New York State Economic Development web site) shall be reimbursed up to 1.5 times the meal allowance when supported by the proper receipt.
- F. Per diem meal payments are allowable in lieu of receipts under the following conditions:
  - 1. The decision is made at the Department Head level;
  - 2. Whatever the Department Head decides to do must be consistent throughout the department (either all per diem, or all receipts),
  - 3. The policy must remain consistent for the department once it is put in place by the incumbent Department Head.
  - 4. Per Diems will be paid out at the designated amount per respective meal but only with the travel request signed by the authorizing Department Head (or their assigned signatory).
  - 5. Per Diems cannot revert back to receipts nor can receipts revert to per diems once the format has been determined and/or utilized.
  - 6. Under the per diem format, tips/gratuities are not allowable and are made solely at employee discretion.
- G. All meal reimbursements shall comply with Federal Income Tax Regulations § 1.162-2(e), its amendments or predecessor.

## **VI. Lodging Allowance**

- A. Lodging accommodations shall be arranged in the most reasonable and economical manner. An itemized bill must accompany request for reimbursement. When two employees are staying at the same hotel, motel, etc. at the same time, sharing accommodations is encouraged when appropriate.
- B. In situations where an individual who is not a County employee accompanies a County employee traveling on County business, no expenses related to the non-County employee are reimbursable. Reimbursable expenses for the employee cannot be more than if the County employee traveled alone.
- C. New York State taxes, local taxes, etc. on lodging are reimbursable if not exempt by the taxing agency. Employees shall obtain and present the tax exemption letter.

## **VII. Miscellaneous**

- A. Travel authorization requests are not required for travel for the normal conduct of business within contiguous counties, including but not limited to, transportation of clients, pick up of County materials, and/or routine meetings.
- B. When emergency travel is required, the Chair of the Legislature or the Director of Budget & Finance may approve the travel.

## **VIII. Contiguous Counties**

- A. Broome
- B. Cayuga
- C. Chenango
- D. Madison
- E. Onondaga
- F. Tioga
- G. Tompkins