

AI-9055
Burn Ban Signs
WORKSHOP

3.

Date: 04/29/2008
Submitted By: Brenda Garza, COUNTY JUDGE
Submitted For: Brenda Garza
Department: COUNTY JUDGE

Information

CAPTION

Update on Burn Ban Signs to be placed around Hidalgo County.

BACKGROUND

Fiscal Impact

<u>FISCAL YEAR:</u>	<u>ACCT. #:</u>
<u>FUNDS AVAILABLE Y/N?:</u>	<u>MATCHING FUNDS Y/N?:</u>
<u>BUDGETARY IMPACT:</u>	

Signs have already been purchased. No funding needed at this point.

Attachments

No file(s) attached.

AI-9058

4.

**Proposed Revisions to the Travel Policy Guidelines and Procedures
WORKSHOP**

Date: 04/29/2008
Submitted By: Yolanda Agado, AUDITOR'S OFFICE
Submitted For: Ray Eufrazio
Department: AUDITOR'S OFFICE

Information

CAPTION

- A. Discussion regarding proposed revisions to the Travel Policy Guidelines and Procedures.
- B. Discussion regarding proposed Meal/Food Policy.

BACKGROUND

Fiscal Impact

<u>FISCAL YEAR:</u>	<u>ACCT. #:</u>
<u>FUNDS AVAILABLE Y/N?:</u>	<u>MATCHING FUNDS Y/N?:</u>

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

No funding needed.

Attachments

- Link: [PP Meal/Food Policy](#)
 - Link: [PP Travel Policy](#)
 - Link: [Meal/Food Policy](#)
 - Link: [Travel Policy](#)
-
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HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS MEAL POLICY

Overview

Policy and Guidelines



- Payment or reimbursement of non-travel meals, refreshments, and related expenses are allowable if incurred during a County sponsored event where:
 - ▣ Attendees include at least one County employee and one or more non-County employees; or
 - ▣ Attendees include County employees from more than one County department. Such events should be infrequent (no more than four times during the calendar year per County department).

Policy and Guidelines



- The County sponsored event must:
 - Be to conduct substantial and bona fide official County business;
 - Last three or more consecutive hours
 - Occur during recognized meal periods
- Expenditures may be incurred only for those attendees whose presence is necessary for the purpose of the event.
- Expenditures that will result in taxable income will not be reimbursed.

Policy and Guidelines



- ❑ Sufficient appropriation in the budget (object 630, food)
- ❑ Grant funds may be used if specifically authorized
- ❑ Meals may not exceed \$8 per person or \$250 per event
- ❑ Refreshments may not exceed \$4 per person or \$125 per event
- ❑ Related expenses may not exceed \$25 per event

Policy and Guidelines



- Documentation requirements
 - Purchase order
 - Original itemized invoice or receipt
 - Completed Form M-1, “Non-Travel Meals, Refreshments, and Related Expenses Claim”
 - Documents date, time, place, amount, and business purpose of event
 - Written agenda
 - Sign-in sheet

Prohibited Expenditures



- ❑ Alcoholic beverages
- ❑ Supplies for coffee breaks, office refreshments, etc.
- ❑ Regularly scheduled staff meetings
- ❑ Social events such as celebrating holidays or birthdays
- ❑ Employee recognition, volunteer recognition, or thank you events
- ❑ The cost of meals or refreshments covered by a registration fee
- ❑ Charitable or political functions

Questions or Comments



HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS PROPOSED TRAVEL POLICY

April 22, 2008

Overview of Proposed Revisions

Overview of Proposed Revisions

- 1 Authorization for Travel
- 2 Coordination of Travel
- 3 Travel by Aircraft
- 4 Travel by Personal Vehicle
- 5 Travel by Rental Vehicle
- 6 Lodging
- 7 Meals
- 8 Travel Advances
- 9 Travel Cancellations
- 10 Travel Reimbursements

Authorization for Travel

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Current Policy<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Requires budgetary approval of travel by the Department of Budget and Management for all in-state and out-of-state travel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Proposed Policy Revisions<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ A purchase order will have to be requested to ensure that sufficient funds are available.■ Department of Budget and Management (DBM) must approve all out-of-state travel PRIOR to the trip taking place<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Exceptions: transporting detainees or conducting investigations■ Traveler will be responsible for expenses if pre-approval from DBM is not obtained. |
|---|---|

Coordination of Travel

- Applies when county employees travel in a personally owned vehicle, county vehicle, or leased motor vehicle.
 - Required when:
 - 2 to 4 County employees
 - Employed by the same County Department
 - Travel on the same dates
 - With the same itinerary
 - To conduct the same official County business.
 - Exception: Official/department head determines that coordination of travel is not feasible **PRIOR** to the trip taking place
 - Determination must be based on a trip-by-trip basis and factors related to official County business
 - A written statement made by the official/department head identifying the reasons for the determination must be provided to the County Auditor's Office
 - Reimbursements for factors not related to official County business will be disallowed.

Travel by Aircraft

- Current Policy
 - The most economical airfare should be obtained. If travel more expensive than coach fare is obtained, then the difference must be paid by the official or employee.
- Proposed Revisions
 - Only coach fare allowed. If travel more expensive than coach fare is obtained:
 - Fare must be paid with the traveler's own funds
 - Difference in price will not be reimbursed
 - Refundable fares should be considered if possibility of a trip cancellation exists.
 - If a package fare is obtained (e.g., Friends Fly Free) when traveling with family or friends,
 - traveler will be responsible for payment of the airfare
 - The County will only reimburse 50% of the cost.

Travel by Personal Vehicle

- Current Policy
 - The County will reimburse the lesser of the currently adopted rate per mile (rate may vary if grant funds are being used) or the coach airline fare. Mileage is calculated on a point-to-point basis using the official mileage charts, plus reasonable incidental travel.
- Proposed Revisions
 - Employee must have a valid Texas driver's license and current automobile insurance policy.
 - In-County Travel
 - Daily travel log must include specific destination points and purpose of travel, including address information
 - Employee must submit monthly reimbursement requests
 - Commuting expenses will not be reimbursed

Travel by Rental Vehicle

- o **Current Policy**
 - Rental cars are to be restricted to compact or mid-sized sedans unless several individuals will occupy the car or other unusual circumstances exist.
- o **Proposed Revisions**
 - If the department has an assigned county vehicle, reasons for obtaining a rental vehicle must be justified in a written statement by the public official.
 - Travelers are required to use the State of Texas contracted rental companies.
 - State contract rates include basic insurance coverage.
 - Vehicle rentals one day prior to and/or one day after the trip may be allowed only if same day rental and return is not practical.

Travel by Rental Vehicle (cont.)

- o **Proposed Revisions (continued)**
 - **Size and type restrictions:**
 - Compact, midsize, or full-size vehicles are allowed for up to four county employees
 - Midsize sport utility vehicle or minivan are allowed for four or more county employees
 - Luxury or large sport utility vehicles are not allowed.
 - Traveler is responsible for payment of rental vehicle if rental vehicle is not of the allowable size and type. County will only reimburse for the allowable size and type at the state contract rate.
 - The original car rental receipt and car rental agreement must be submitted with the Final Travel Expense Claim.



Lodging

- o **Current Policy**
 - If a spouse and/or dependants accompany the official or employee, the difference in hotel rates above the single rate must be deducted.
- o **Proposed Revisions**
 - Use of the State of Texas travel management services contract for hotels in Texas is required unless cost benefits may be achieved by other means.
 - The county will pay:
 - If in-state, the most economical single occupancy room rate up to \$100 plus applicable tax, or
 - If out-of-state, the most economical single occupancy room rate, or
 - If staying at the hotel where the seminar is being held, that hotel's applicable rate for the most economical single occupancy room rate.

Lodging (continued)

- Proposed Revisions (continued)
 - Hotel stays one day prior to and/or one day after the event may be allowed, if necessary.
 - Hotel stays one day prior to the event are **NOT** allowed when the destination is within 100 miles from the traveler's normal place of work and the event begins on or after 10 am.
 - Hotel stays one day after the event are **NOT** allowed when the destination is within 100 miles from the traveler's normal place of work and the event ends at or before 3:00 pm.



Meals

- Meals
 - \$30 per diem in-state (out-of-county)
 - \$39 per diem out-of-state
 - Prorated for partial days
 - No receipts required, unless required by grant
 - Meals for travel not requiring an overnight stay are not reimbursable.

Meals (continued)

□ Meals: In-State

Trip Start Time	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total
Before 8:00am	\$8	\$10	\$12	\$30
8:00am -	\$0	\$10	\$12	\$22
After 1:00pm	\$0	\$0	\$12	\$12

Trip End Time	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total
Before 8:00am	\$8	\$0	\$0	\$8
8:00am -	\$8	\$10	\$0	\$18
After 6:00pm	\$8	\$10	\$12	\$30

Meals (continued)

Meals: Out-of-State

Trip Start Time	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total
Before 8:00am	\$9	\$12	\$18	\$39
8:00am –	\$0	\$12	\$18	\$30
After 1:00pm	\$0	\$0	\$18	\$18

Trip End Time	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total
Before 8:00am	\$9	\$0	\$0	\$9
8:00am –	\$9	\$12	\$0	\$21
After 6:00pm	\$9	\$12	\$18	\$39

Policies and Guidelines

Meals (continued)

- Meals integral to the event, listed separately in the registration materials, may be allowed at a higher rate than the per diem; however, the daily per diem must be reduced by the applicable meal.
- The daily per diem must be reduced when meals are covered by the registration fee.

Travel Advances

Travel Advances

- Allowed if trip lasts for 3 or more days
- May be requested only for:
 - Meals
 - Based on the per diem rate
 - Actual number of days of the seminar/conference/meeting
 - Mileage
 - Calculated on a point-to-point basis using the Texas Mileage Guide
 - Incidental mileage will not be advanced
 - Incidental expenses (taxi fare, shuttle fare, fuel charges for car rentals, airport, and hotel parking)
 - Based on \$20 per day
 - Actual number of days of the seminar/conference/meeting

Travel Advances (continued)

- Requests must be submitted two weeks prior to the date needed
- May only be used by the requesting employee
- May not be used for a different trip other than the one listed on the original request
- Individuals must account for the travel advance within 20 calendar days after the seminar/conference/meeting date ends by completing Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"
 - Subsequent travel advances requested by the traveler with an outstanding travel advance will not be made
 - If Form T-4 is not settled within 60 days of trip return, the County Treasurer will deduct the advance from the traveler's next paycheck

Travel Reimbursements

- Travel expenses paid through personal funds and/or credit cards will be reimbursed upon completion of Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"
- Reimbursement will only be made if expense was incurred by the employee. The following will not be reimbursed:
 - Free transportation or lodging received in exchange for mileage, points, or other non-monetary credits
 - Reimbursement received from another source

Trip Cancellations

- Trip Cancellations
 - Traveler is responsible for making necessary cancellations
 - Notify County Auditor's Office if payments were made in advance
 - Notify Purchasing Department if travel credit card was utilized
 - Under certain circumstances, traveler may be reimbursed for expenses incurred on a canceled trip.
 - Natural disaster, illness, or personal emergency
 - Failure to cancel reservations for reasons other than those listed above will be at the expense of the traveler and be deducted from the employee's payroll check within 60 days of the seminar/conference/meeting date.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: M.1
Page: 1 of 5
Date Authorized:
Supersedes:

NON-TRAVEL MEALS, REFRESHMENTS, AND RELATED EXPENSES

REFERENCE

County Auditor's Form M-1, "Non-Travel Meals, Refreshments, and Related Expenses Claim"

AUTHORITY

Local Government Code § 112.002, "Accounting System in County With Auditor and Population of 190,000 or More"

Government Code § 611.001, "Lodging and Meal Expenses"

Generally, meals provided to employees are considered taxable wages that must be reported on Form W-2, subject to Federal income tax withholding, social security, and Medicare unless specifically excluded by a section of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). *IRC § 61, § 3121, § 3401*

Federal Tax Regulations § 31.3121(a)-1(h) and § 31-3121(a)-3 provide that amounts paid specifically—either as advances or reimbursements—for traveling or other bona fide ordinary and necessary expenses incurred or reasonably expected to be incurred in the business of the employer are not wages and are not subject to withholding if paid under an accountable plan.

A plan under which an employee is reimbursed for expenses – or receives an allowance to cover those expenses – is an accountable plan only if three conditions are satisfied: (1) there must be a business connection for the expenses; (2) the employee must either substantiate or be deemed to have substantiated the expenses; and (3) the employee must return to the employer amounts in excess of the substantiated expense. *IRC § 62(c); Reg. § 1.62-2(c); Reg. § 1.274-5T*

PURPOSE

The Hidalgo County Commissioners Court on _____ approved the policy set forth below. The policy expands on the current authorization for expenditures of food for jurors (Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 104.001), prisoners (Code of Criminal Procedure Art. 104.002), adult probation (Government Code § 76.008 and § 76.009), juvenile probation (Human Resources Code § 141.082, § 152.0012, and § 152.1141), and demonstration work conducted by the Texas Cooperative Extension (Agriculture Code § 43.033). The policy provides guidelines to departments concerning when non-travel meals, refreshments, and related expenses may be paid for with County funds. The procedures set forth below are prescribed by the Hidalgo County Auditor and are to be followed regarding the payment or reimbursement of non-travel meals, refreshments, and related expenses.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: M.1
Page: 2 of 5
Date Authorized:
Supersedes:

SCOPE

The policy, procedures, and guidelines apply to all Hidalgo County officials and employees. Applicability of this policy is limited to non-travel meals and refreshments. This policy does not apply to payment or reimbursement of meals while the employee or individual is on travel status. Refer to the Travel Policy for situations in which the employee or individual is on travel status.

DEFINITIONS

"County Sponsored Events" means meetings, seminars, conferences, training sessions, and similar functions to conduct official County business.

"Meals" means food and non-alcoholic beverages provided at breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

"Necessary Expense" means an expense that is appropriate for the conduct of County business.

"Ordinary Expense" means an expense that is common and accepted in County business.

"Refreshments" means non-alcoholic beverages and food items (i.e., fruit, pastries, chips, cookies, cake, candy, etc.) commonly served between meals, but not intended to substitute for meals.

"Related Expenses" means expenses for essential serving products such as paper plates, cups, and plastic utensils related to allowable non-travel meals and refreshments.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Meal expenses not involving an overnight stay are generally not reimbursable. However, the County of Hidalgo, Texas (County) will allow for the payment or reimbursement of non-travel meals, refreshments, and related costs incurred during County sponsored events for purpose of conducting substantial and bona fide official County business. Allowable events cannot consist entirely of County employees from one department and normally include non-County employees. Expenditures for non-travel meals, refreshments, and related expenses must:

- be ordinary and necessary;
- be an integral part of the event; and
- be properly documented.

To conform to IRS regulations governing business expenses, the County will not reimburse costs to a County employee for non-travel meals, refreshments, and related costs when the reimbursement results in taxable income to the employee.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: M.1
Page: 3 of 5
Date Authorized:
Supersedes:

A. Permitted Expenditures

1. Meals, refreshments, and related expenses may be paid or reimbursed with County funds for County sponsored events where:
 - a) Attendees include at least one County employee and one or more non-County employees; or
 - b) Attendees include County employees from more than one County department. Such events should be infrequent. For purposes of this policy, "infrequent" is defined as no more than four times during the calendar year per County department.
2. Expenditures may be incurred only for those attendees whose presence is necessary for the purpose of the event.
3. The County sponsored events must occur during a recognized meal period (i.e., breakfast 7:00 am to 8:00 am; lunch 12 noon to 1 pm; dinner 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm) in order to accommodate scheduling requirements.
4. The duration of the events must last three or more consecutive hours.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Commissioners Court meetings
- Commission/board/committee meetings.
- Business meetings relating to promotion of economic development, building community cooperation, or information gathering.
- Formal training sessions held for the purpose of instruction or dissemination of information to employees and/or general public.
- Interdepartmental business meetings.
- Interdepartmental training events held for the purpose of instruction or dissemination of information to County employees.
- Employee health fairs.

B. Guidelines for Permitted Expenditures

The following guidelines should be followed when making permitted expenditures for non-travel meals, refreshments, and related costs:

1. Budget: The sponsoring department must have sufficient appropriations in their budget (object code 630 *Food*) for such events.
2. Grant Funds: Federal, state or local government grant funds may be used to pay non-travel meals, refreshments, and related costs only if such expenditures are specifically authorized in the contract or grant, or by agency policy, and only to the extent and for the purposes authorized. In the event of a conflict between agency and county policy, the stricter of the two policies shall apply.
3. Reasonable Costs (including taxes and gratuity): Meals may not exceed \$8 per person or \$250 per event. Refreshments may not exceed \$4 per person or \$125 per event. The cost of related expenses may not exceed \$25.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: M.1
Page: 4 of 5
Date Authorized:
Supersedes:

4. Documentation Requirements: The following supporting documentation will be required for the County Auditor to process payment:

- a. Purchase order. The purchase order should include the event date, time, duration, and place; estimated number of attendees and affiliation; purpose of the event; and whether meals or refreshments will be provided.
- b. Original itemized invoice or receipt.
- c. Completed County Auditor's Form M-1, "Non-Travel Meals, Refreshments, and Related Expenses Claim" that documents the date, time, place, amount, and business purpose of the event.
- d. Written agenda.
- e. Sign-in sheet. The sign-in sheet must include the attendees' first and last names, title, and affiliation with the County. If it is not possible to provide a sign-in sheet, for instance in case of employee health fairs, the reason for not providing the sign-in sheet must be documented and an estimated number of attendees must be provided.

5. The County Auditor will not pay or reimburse meal expenses that lack documentation or a clear business purpose.

C. Prohibited Expenditures

Expenditures of county funds for the following are specifically prohibited:

- Alcoholic beverages,
- Supplies for coffee breaks, office refreshments, etc.
- Regularly scheduled staff meetings
- Social events such as celebrating holidays or birthdays
- Employee recognition, volunteer recognition, or thank-you events
- The cost of meals or refreshments covered by a registration fee
- Charitable or political functions

D. Alternative Ideas

County officials should consider allowing, and when appropriate facilitating:

- Brown bag meals – meals at which all meeting participants chip in together to cover costs, and potlucks.
- The scheduling of meetings at times other than meal times.
- Allowance of enough of a break in the day's schedule to allow attendees to go out for a meal.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: M.1
Page: 5 of 5
Date Authorized:
Supersedes:

PROCEDURES

A. County Department

1. Ensure that expenditures for non-travel meals, refreshments, and related costs comply with County policy and fund source restrictions.
2. Process a requisition in accordance with county purchasing policies and procedures. A requisition(s) should be issued for each event. The requisition should include the required information (Refer to Documentation Requirements for purchase orders under Guidelines for Permitted Expenditures)
3. Submit completed and signed County Auditor's Form M-1, "*Non-Travel Meals, Refreshments, and Related Expenses Claim*" to the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section.
4. Ensure that the "*Non-Travel Meals, Refreshments, and Related Expenses Claim*" is accompanied by the following documentation:
 - a. Purchase order.
 - b. An original itemized invoice or receipt.
 - c. A written agenda.
 - d. A sign-in sheet. The sign-in sheet must include the attendees' first and last names, affiliation with the County, and position. If it is not possible to provide a list of attendees, for instance in case of employee health fairs, the reason for not providing the list of attendees must be documented and an estimated number of attendees must be provided.

B. Purchasing Department

1. Review requisition submitted by county departments for compliance with this County policy as well as County purchasing policies and procedures.
 - a. If requisition complies with County policy, issue purchase order.
 - b. If requisition does not comply with County policy, deny the requisition and notify department of deficiencies.

C. County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section

1. Review County Auditor's Form M-1, "*Non-Travel Meals, Refreshments, and Related Expenses Claim*" and supporting documentation to determine compliance with County policy.
 - a. If request complies with County policy, process County Auditor's Form M-1, "*Non-Travel Meals, Refreshments, and Related Expenses Claim*", in accordance with internal procedures.
 - b. If request does not comply with County policy, deny the request and return County Auditor's Form M-1, "*Non-Travel Meals, Refreshments, and Related Expenses Claim*" to the requesting department with an explanation for the denial.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure:	T.1
Page:	1 of 21
Date Authorized:	
Supersedes:	04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

TRAVEL POLICIES, GUIDELINES, AND PROCEDURES

REFERENCE

County Auditor's Form T-1 "Application for Out-of-State Official Travel"
County Auditor's Form T-2 "Seminar, Hotel, Car Rental, & Airfare Check Request"
County Auditor's Form T-3 "In-County Travel Automobile Expense Claim"
County Auditor's Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim."
County Auditor's Form T-5 "Out of County – Travel Advance Request"

AUTHORITY

Local Government Code § 152.011 "Amount set by Commissioners Court"
Local Government Code § 152.035 "Reimbursement for Mileage Expenses" (County Auditor)
Local Government Code § 152.901 "Travel expenses for Certain County Agents and Board Members"
Local Government Code § 152.907 "Continuing Education Expenses for County and Precinct Officers"
Government Code § 611.001 "Lodging and Meal Expenses"
Government Code § 611.002 "Common Carrier Fares"
Penal Code § 39.02 "Abuse of Official Capacity"

Internal Revenue Service Publication 1542 "Per Diem Rates"
Internal Revenue Service Publication 15 "Employer's Tax Guide" (Circular E).
Income Tax Regulations § 1.62-2 "Reimbursements and other expense allowance arrangements"

BACKGROUND

Local Government Code § 152.011 authorizes the Commissioners' Court to set the amount of the travel expenses and other allowances for County and precinct officers and employees who are paid wholly from County funds.

Commissioners' Court approved the original policies, guidelines and procedures on June 1, 1996. On _____ 2008, the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court revised the travel policies, guidelines, and procedures that were previously amended on April 4, 2006. These travel policies, guidelines, and procedures supersede those found in the Hidalgo County Personnel Policy Manual ("Brown Book") and the Hidalgo County Civil Service Commission Rules ("Blue Book"). The travel policies, procedures, and guidelines set forth below are applicable to Hidalgo County Officials (Elected Officials, Appointed Officials, and Department Heads) and employees.

Hidalgo County has adopted an "Accountable Plan" for the reimbursement of business travel expenses. Pursuant to Federal Tax Regulation § 1.62-2, reimbursements for travel under an "Accountable Plan" must meet three requirements as follows:

1. There must be a business connection and the expense must be reasonable;
2. There must be a reasonable accounting of the expenses (amounts paid up to the allowable federal per diem rates are deemed substantiated); and
3. All excess reimbursements must be repaid in a reasonable time.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure:	T.1
Page:	2 of 21
Date Authorized:	
Supersedes:	04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

Federal Tax Regulation § 1.62-2(k) provides that, in addition to these three tests, the plan cannot exhibit a "pattern of abuse." If a payer's reimbursement or other expense allowance arrangement evidences a pattern of abuse of the rules of section 62(c) and this section, all payments made under the arrangement will be treated as made under a nonaccountable plan.

Pursuant to Federal Tax Regulation § 1.62-2(c)(5), payments or reimbursements under a nonaccountable plan are included in the employee's gross income, must be reported as wages or compensation on the employee's Form W-2, and are subject to withholding and payment of employment taxes (social security, Medicare, unemployment).

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

1. Travel expenses shall be allowed only for County Officials and employees while on official business. The purpose of the trip must be for the County's benefit and/or be related to the department's primary business activities as follows:
 - a. To obtain statutorily required continuing professional education;
 - b. To obtain continuing education related to an employee's work or maintenance of a license or certification;
 - c. To testify before legislative bodies, regulatory agencies and commissions, and other forums that may make decisions affecting the County and its affiliated organizations and operations;
 - d. To participate in professional organizations related to the employee or official's job assignment;
 - e. To conduct essential research and information-gathering for improvement of County operations or compliance with the law;
 - f. To monitor the development of state or federal legislation or implementation of legislation that might affect the County;
 - g. To participate in forums, coalitions, and discussions relating to the policy, legislative and regulatory interests of the County;
 - h. To pursue the County's interests in litigation or criminal justice;
 - i. To promote the economic development interests of the County; or
 - j. To carry out other purposes determined by Commissioners' Court to be in the interest of the County.
2. Sufficient funds must be available in the adopted budget before expenditure is made.
3. Travel expenses must be reasonable and necessary. Any inappropriate or excessive costs will be at the expense of the traveler.
4. Preference should be given to local and in-state training, unless training is not available locally or in-state.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure:	T.1
Page:	3 of 21
Date Authorized:	
Supersedes:	04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

5. AUTHORIZATION FOR OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

- a. Out-of-state travel shall be kept to a minimum.
- b. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) must approve all out-of-state travel before any reservations and/or travel are made (except for mandatory travel such as transportation of detainees and investigations). **Form T-1 "Application for Out-Of-State Official Travel"** must be submitted to the DBM in order to justify the need to travel out-of-state.
- c. The County is not obligated to pay for travel if prior approval from the Department of Budget and Management is not obtained.

6. METHOD OF PAYMENT FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES

- a. Direct Payment - The County Auditor's Office may pay registration fees, hotel, and airline reservations directly to vendors. The request for payment must be received with sufficient time for the check to be processed by the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section (at least two weeks prior to the date the check will be needed).
- b. Department's Travel Card - If request for payment is not received within the time specified above, the Purchasing Department should be contacted in order to request that payment be made through the Department's travel card (see Travel Card procedures).
- c. Traveler's Personal Credit Cards and/or Cash - Travel expenses incurred by employees and officials while conducting County business may be paid through personal credit cards and/or cash. The employee or official will be reimbursed by the County for reasonable and allowable expenses in accordance with this Policy upon completion of the travel and submittal of a properly filled **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"**. The County will not reimburse interest, over the limit, and late charges, incurred in a personal credit card by the traveler.
- d. Travel Advance - The employee or official may also receive a travel advance subject to certain restrictions (see Section 16).

7. COORDINATION OF TRAVEL

- a. "Coordination of travel" in this Section means County employees traveling together in a personally owned vehicle, County vehicle, or leased motor vehicle.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 4 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

- b. Coordination of travel is required when two, three, or four County employees employed by the same County department travel on the same dates with the same itinerary to conduct the same official County business. If more than four County employees employed by the same County department travel on the same dates with the same itinerary to conduct the same official County business, then coordination of travel is required for each group of four employees and for any fraction in excess of a multiple of four employees.
- c. When coordination of travel is required, reimbursement will only be made to the driver of the personally owned vehicle (mileage) or leased motor vehicle (fuel charges). Mileage incurred by a County employee to meet at a location or to pick up other County employees may be reimbursed. This mileage must be reasonable and documented in detail (see Section 9).
- d. Coordination of travel, however, is not required if the County Official determines before travel that coordination of travel is not feasible. That determination may be based only on factors relating to official County business. Determinations should be made on a trip-by-trip basis and must be provided in a written memo to the County Auditor's Office – Accounts Payable Section. If the County Auditor's Office determines that the rationale for the determination was not related to official County business, the reimbursement will only be made to one of the travelers.

8. AIR TRAVEL

- a. The most economical airfare should be obtained (only coach fare will be allowed). If travel more expensive than coach fare is obtained, the fare must be paid with the traveler's funds and the difference between the coach fare and the fare obtained will not be reimbursed to the traveler. Refundable fares should be considered if possibility of a trip cancellation exists. Commercial airlines are normally the most economical mode of transportation for out-of-state travel. Airline tickets should be reserved in advance, when possible, in order to obtain the most reasonable rates. The use of a travel agency to book air travel reservations is discouraged.
- b. Airline tickets purchased with the department's travel card must be reserved through the Purchasing Department (see Travel Card Procedures) and be related to travel expenses for County employees.
- c. Package fares (Friends Fly Free, etc.) are encouraged when two or more County Officials or employees are traveling to and from the same location and overall cost can be reduced.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 5 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

- d. The County will only pay one half of the cost of the package fare in cases where officials or employees fly with family or friends (Friends Fly Free, etc.). Airfare for package fares must be paid using the traveler's own personal credit card or funds. The official or employee will be reimbursed one half of the price of the coach fare upon completion of the travel and submittal of a properly filled **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"** and evidence of the price of the coach fare.
- e. The boarding pass and an original passenger receipt issued by the commercial airline company or an original itinerary issued by the travel agency must be submitted as supporting documentation for a reimbursement. The original receipt or itinerary must include the name of the employee and airline, the ticket number, the class of transportation, the travel dates, the amount of the airfare, and the origin and destination of each flight.

9. PERSONAL VEHICLE

- a. If the official or employee elects to travel by personal vehicle, the County will reimburse official business travel at the County adopted rate per highway mile. County Officials or employees currently receiving an approved car allowance will not be reimbursed, unless travel is outside of Hidalgo County. If the traveler is uncertain of the adopted rate, this information may be obtained by contacting the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section at (956) 318-2511. Please note that the mileage rate may differ if utilizing grant funds, questions should be addressed to the County Auditor's Office - Grants Accounting Section at (956) 318-2511.
- b. Mileage reimbursements for a traveler who chooses to drive out-of-state rather than fly should not exceed the lowest round trip coach airfare available at the time travel was authorized. Traveler must supply documentation to support what the airfare would have been at that time.
- c. When more than one traveler is going to the same destination, coordination of travel is required (see Section 7). The names of all persons traveling together on the same trip and in the same vehicle must be listed on **Form T-5 "Out-of-County - Travel Advance Request"** and **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"**.
- d. The driver is responsible for providing reasonable and necessary transportation to all the passengers while on the trip. If a passenger uses another form of transportation while on the trip, transportation expenses will not be reimbursed.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure:	T.1
Page:	6 of 21
Date Authorized:	
Supersedes:	04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

- e. Mileage is calculated on a point-to-point basis using the Texas Mileage Guide, plus reasonable incidental travel. Reasonable incidental travel may be reimbursed when the traveler provides specific address destination points by using "Mapquest" to determine mileage. The most direct distance to the destination will be allowed. Any out-of-way or unreasonable travel distance as determined by the County Auditor will be at the expense of the traveler.

- f. For in-county mileage reimbursement, a daily travel log must be maintained that indicates specific destination points (including address information) purpose of travel, and any other information deemed necessary. Employees must request reimbursement on a monthly basis with the completion and submittal of **Form T-3 "In-County Travel Automobile Expense Claim"** to the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section.

- g. Commuting expenses incurred in traveling between the employee's residence and their main place of work (County office) or for mileage/expenses incurred in any other travel of a personal nature are not reimbursable. If mileage incurred in a single day to a place outside the office exceeds normal commuting mileage (home to office and return), the difference between mileage incurred that day and commuting mileage is reimbursable. As guidance, please refer to the following examples:

Example 1: Debra lives in Mission. She has a meeting in Edinburg. She drives directly to Edinburg, attends the meeting, and returns home. She should check her odometer reading when she leaves her house and when she returns to her house. Her total round trip is 26 miles. Her normal commute is 10 miles round trip to the office each day. The 10 miles should be deducted from the total mileage and Debra would only be reimbursed for 16 miles.

Example 2: Mary lives on the southwest side of town, and has a 10-mile daily round trip commute to the office. She reports to the office in the morning and leaves for a 10 o'clock meeting at the Sheriff's Department. The meeting lasts until the end of the normal workday, at which time she goes home. Mary traveled 40 miles today, and she will be reimbursed for 30 miles.

Example 3: Daniel lives on the east side of town and his daily round trip commute to the office and back home is 15 miles. He has an eight o'clock meeting at the Department of Budget and Management. He goes directly from home to the Department of Budget and Management,

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 7 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

returns to the office after the meeting, and goes home at the end of the day. Daniel traveled 45 miles of which only 30 miles are reimbursable.

Example 4: Frank lives on the south side of town. He has a morning meeting at the Precinct 1 office. The meeting lasts all day, and Frank returns home from Precinct 1. A total of 20 miles were traveled today. Frank commutes 30 miles round trip to the office each day, therefore no request for reimbursement can be made.

- h. The County does not provide insurance coverage for private vehicles; therefore, each County Official is responsible to ensure employees traveling on County business have a current automobile insurance policy that provides adequate coverage. The name of the traveler must appear on the automobile insurance card. Reimbursement will not be made if the name of the traveler does not appear on the insurance card. Vehicular accidents, vehicle repairs, parking fines, towing charges and theft of property are the responsibility of the employee, not the County.
- i. County Officials should ensure that employees using a personal vehicle file a copy of their current insurance card and current driver's license with the County Auditor's Office. Mileage reimbursement will not be made if a current driver's license and current insurance card is not received by the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section and the driver did not have an unexpired driver's license or current insurance coverage at the time travel was made.

10. COUNTY VEHICLE

- a. The use of County vehicles is encouraged over private vehicles. Traveler is required to have a current driver's license. When more than one traveler is going to the same destination, "coordination of travel" (see Section 7) is required. Individuals not on County business cannot be transported in a County vehicle. Additionally, County vehicles cannot be used when combining conference and personal leave.
- b. Reimbursement will be made for actual expenses incurred and for which an appropriate original receipt is provided.
- c. The driver is responsible for providing reasonable and necessary transportation to all the passengers while on the trip. If a passenger uses another form of transportation while on the trip, transportation expenses will not be reimbursed.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 8 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

- d. Accidents, if any, must be reported to the local police before leaving the scene. The Department of Budget and Management - Safety Division must also be notified at (956) 318-2644, as soon as possible.

11. CAR RENTALS

- a. Car rentals will be reimbursed when it is the most economical means of transportation. Reservations for car rentals made under the name of Hidalgo County are required to be made through the State of Texas travel management services contract due to the insurance coverage provided (loss/damage waiver and liability insurance coverage). For further information contact the Purchasing Department at (956) 318-2626. Car rental reservations made with the department's travel card must be reserved through the Purchasing Department (see Travel Card Procedures).
- b. Car rental reservations should be made in advance to ensure availability of appropriate size and type of vehicle. When more than one traveler is going to the same destination, "coordination of travel" is required (see Section 7). In addition, a statement as to whether the department has an assigned County vehicle and the reasons for not utilizing the County vehicle should be noted on the purchase requisition. Rental cars are to be restricted to size and type as follows:
 - I. Compact, midsize, or full size car when used by one to four County employees.
 - II. Midsize sport utility or minivan when used by four or more County employees.
 - III. Rental of "luxury" and large "sport utility vehicles" such as a Chevy Suburban, Ford Expedition, or similar models are not allowed. However, rental of these types of models will be allowed if the car rental company honors the rate for the applicable size and type of vehicle allowed by policy.
- c. Rental of cars is acceptable for one day before the meeting or conference begins whenever same day rental is not practical. Return of rental vehicle one day after the meeting or conference ends is acceptable if same day return is not practical.
- d. If a County Official or employee wishes to rent a vehicle other than the vehicle size and type allowed by the policy, the individual will be responsible for paying the entire invoice amount and may seek reimbursement for the amount allowed by Policy. The traveler will only be reimbursed the state contract price rate for the allowable vehicle size and type. In addition, the department's travel card cannot be utilized to

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 9 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

book car rentals for a vehicle size and type not allowed by this policy. If the traveler accepts insurance coverage for a car rental in order to be covered during the trip, the entire cost of the insurance coverage will be a personal expense and not reimbursable.

- e. The name of each employee that may drive the rental car must appear on the rental agreement to ensure proper coverage.
- f. The driver is responsible for providing reasonable and necessary transportation to all the passengers while on the trip. If a passenger uses another form of transportation while on the trip, transportation expenses will not be reimbursed.
- g. It is encouraged that car rentals be re-fueled prior to returning the vehicle to the car rental company in order to avoid high-priced gas charges. In addition, the original gas receipt must be submitted to the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section with the completed **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"**.
- h. The original car rental receipt/bill and car rental agreement must be submitted as supporting documentation for payment or reimbursement. The original car rental receipt/bill must indicate the starting and ending dates of rental, rental rates, specify the name of the car rental company, specify the name of the renter and additional drivers, if any, and itemize all other expenses incurred. The car rental company agreement must include the name and signature of the individual that picked up and returned the vehicle, the time and date the vehicle was picked up and returned, the location where the vehicle was picked up and returned, and the amount of miles that were traveled.
- i. Accidents, if any, must be reported to the local police before leaving the scene and the rental car company. The County's Department of Budget and Management - Safety Division must also be notified at (956) 318-2644, as soon as possible.

12. TAXIS, BUSES, AND OTHER GROUND TRANSPORTATION

- a. Taxis, buses, or other ground transportation to and from airports are allowable expenses only when necessary. The use of a hotel shuttle service is the preferred method of travel at out-of-town locations, if available.
- b. Limousine service is not allowed.
- c. Original receipts must be submitted in order to obtain reimbursement.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure:	T.1
Page:	10 of 21
Date Authorized:	
Supersedes:	04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

13. LODGING

- a. The use of a travel agency to reserve hotel accommodations is discouraged. The traveler is required, to use the State of Texas travel management services contract for hotels in order to arrange the most favorable rate unless cost benefits may be achieved by other means. Questions regarding this contract may be addressed to the Purchasing Department at (956) 318-2626. Additional information may be obtained by visiting: www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/.
- b. Hotel reservations should be made in advance in order to obtain the most economical rates (government, conference, and other available discount rates, etc.).
- c. If traveling in-state, the County will pay the most economical single occupancy room rate up to a maximum of \$100 plus applicable tax per night (i.e. ocean view would not be allowed). However, if the traveler is staying at the hotel where the seminar/conference/meeting is held, the County will pay the applicable single occupancy room rate, conference rate, or government rate.
- d. If traveling out-of-state, the County will pay the most economical single occupancy room rate plus applicable tax per night (i.e. ocean view would not be allowed).
- e. Hotel reservations made with the department's travel card must be made through the Purchasing Department. The travel card cannot be utilized to book hotel reservations with rates higher than allowed by this policy. Hotel reservations at a rate above the allowable rate must be paid using the traveler's own personal credit card or funds (see Travel Card Procedures). If a spouse and/or dependent(s) accompany the official or employee, the County will not reimburse the difference in hotel room rates above the single occupancy room rate.
- f. Arrival one night before the day the meeting or conference begins is acceptable whenever same day travel is not practical. However, arrival the same day the meeting or conference begins is required if the meeting or conference is taking place within 100 miles from the traveler's normal place of work and the meeting or conference begins at or after 10:00 AM. Arrival the day that the meeting or conference begins is encouraged whenever the meeting or conference begins at or after 12:00 PM and the location of the meeting or conference is less than 300 miles away.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 11 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

- g. Return on the day after the meeting or conference ends is acceptable whenever same day travel is not practical. However, return the same day that the meeting or conference ends is required if the meeting or conference is taking place within 100 miles from the traveler's normal place of work and the meeting or conference ends at or before 3:00 PM. Return the same day that the conference or meeting ends is encouraged whenever the meeting or conference ends before 12:00 PM and the location of the meeting or conference is less than 300 miles away.
- h. Extra hotel nights for personal reasons will be at the officials or employees own expense and will not be reimbursed. Extra hotel nights for personal reasons will not be paid using County funds or the department's travel card.
- i. A traveler may not be reimbursed for a lodging expense incurred at a place that is not a commercial lodging establishment.
- j. An original lodging receipt showing payment in full must be submitted as supporting documentation for payment or reimbursement. The receipt must include the name and address of the commercial lodging establishment, the name of the employee, the single occupancy room rate, and a daily itemization of the lodging charges.

14. MEALS

- a. Meals for out-of-county travel will be reimbursed on a per diem basis as follows:
 - i. Out-of-county – In State Travel
 - A. Meals, including tips, will be reimbursed based on a per diem basis, currently \$30 per day (\$ 8-breakfast, \$10-lunch and \$12-dinner). This reimbursement limit applies without a carry over from one day to another. The per diem will be prorated for partial days. Trips beginning before 8:00 a.m. will receive \$30; trips beginning after 8:00 a.m. but before 1:00 p.m. will receive \$22; trips begins after 1:00 p.m. will receive \$12. Trips completed before 8:00 a.m. receive \$8; trips completed after 8:00 a.m. but before 6:00 p.m. will receive \$18; and trips completed after 6:00 p.m. will receive \$30. The employee is not required to keep receipts to document the cost of these meals. However, please note that receipts may be required if utilizing grant funds, questions should be addressed to the County Auditor's Office - Grants Accounting Section at (956) 318-2511.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure:	T.1
Page:	12 of 21
Date Authorized:	
Supersedes:	04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

ii. Out-of-County – Out-of-State Travel

A. Meals will be reimbursed based on a per diem basis, currently \$39 per day (\$9-breakfast, \$12-lunch and \$18-dinner). This reimbursement limit applies without a carry over from one day to another. The per diem will be prorated for partial days. Trips beginning before 8:00 a.m. will receive \$39; trips beginning after 8:00 a.m. but before 1:00 p.m. will receive \$30; trips begins after 1:00 p.m. will receive \$18. Trips completed before 8:00 a.m. receive \$9; trips completed after 8:00 a.m. but before 6:00 p.m. will receive \$21; and trips completed after 6:00 p.m. will receive \$39. The employee is not required to keep receipts to document the cost of these meals. Please note that receipts may be required by the County Official or when utilizing grant funds, questions should be addressed to the County Auditor's Office - Grants Accounting Section at (956) 318-2511.

- b. Meals that are an integral part of the seminar or conference and are listed separately on the registration materials may be allowed at a rate higher than the applicable per diem rate. However, the daily per diem rate will be reduced by the applicable meal per diem rate. Supporting documentation such as the registration receipt or printed material showing which meal(s) are covered is required.
- c. Travelers should not request reimbursement and are expected to reduce the amount of the per diem rate for meals which have been provided as part of the seminar cost or which were not paid for by the employee.
- d. Meals for in-county travel and travel not requiring an overnight stay will not be reimbursed unless the meal cost is part of a conference/ registration fee.
- e. Advances for meals will only be provided when traveling out-of-county for three days or longer.
- f. The meals for a spouse and/or dependent(s) will not be paid with County funds.

15. NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES:

- a. Alcoholic beverages
- b. Valet parking (if self-parking is available)
- c. Meals when conducting non-overnight travel

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure:	T.1
Page:	13 of 21
Date Authorized:	
Supersedes:	04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

- d. Tips and gratuities (note: these are included in the meal per diem rate)
- e. Personal phone calls - all phone calls are deemed personal calls unless proof is submitted that the call was for County business
- f. Personal items, such as prescriptions, cosmetics, movies, golf, health club, spas, haircuts, shoe shines, newspapers, laundry/dry cleaning charges, etc.
- g. Loss of funds or personal belongings
- h. Extra day or days on the trip for personal reasons
- g. Luxury & large sports utility vehicle rental cars (see exception in Section 11)
- h. Additional charges for accommodations, meals, travel, etc., for individuals not on County business who accompany the traveler on an authorized County business trip
- i. Fines, court costs, and related expenses
- j. Meals for non-overnight travel
- k. Interest, over the limit, or late charges incurred in a personal credit card
- l. Expenses deemed unreasonable, excessive, unsupported or unexplained

16. TRAVEL ADVANCES:

- a. Employees are encouraged to pay for travel expenses using their own personal funds and seek reimbursement from the County. Nonetheless, travel advances will be allowed if an employee's seminar/conference/meeting is scheduled to last for 3 or more days by completing **Form T-5 "Out of County – Travel Advance Request"**.
- b. Travel advances are to be given to the requesting employee and may not be given to or used by another employee. Likewise, the travel advance is issued for a specific trip and may not be used for a trip different than the one that was listed on the original request.
- c. Travel advances are the sole responsibility of the traveler and such funds should be safeguarded from loss or misuse. Advances will be recorded as a loan to the employee until the employee settles the advance through submission of **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"**.
- d. Travel advance requests must be received by the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section with sufficient time for the check to be processed (at least two weeks prior to the date the check will be needed). If request is not received within the time specified, a travel advance check may not be processed and the traveler will have to use a personal credit card and/or cash.
- e. Registration fees, hotel, and airline reservations will not be advanced to the traveler. County Officials and employees are expected to arrange for prepayment of these expenses wherever possible, by using the

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 14 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

department's travel card, purchase order, or by requesting that the County issue payment to the vendor. Those expenses that cannot be prepaid by one of these methods should be paid from the employee's personal credit card and/or cash during the period of travel. The County Auditor will grant exceptions on the advancement of registration fees, hotel, and airline reservations to the traveler on a case-by-case basis.

- f. Meals will be advanced based on the County's applicable per diem rate and for the actual number of days of the seminar/conference/meeting. Extra days traveled such as the day before and after the seminar/conference/meeting will not be advanced.
- g. If the official or employee elects to travel by personal vehicle within the State of Texas, the employee may be advanced mileage calculated on a point-to-point basis using the Texas Mileage Guide at the current County adopted rate per highway mile. Incidental mileage will not be advanced.
- h. Incidental expenses (taxi fare, shuttle fare, gas charges for car rentals, airport and hotel parking) will be advanced based on \$20.00 per day of the actual number of days of the seminar/conference/meeting. Extra days traveled such as the day before and after the seminar/conference/meeting will not be advanced. The County Auditor will grant exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
- i. If attendance at the meeting/conference is cancelled, travel advances should be immediately returned to the County Treasurer's Office no later than 20 calendar days after the seminar/conference/meeting date with a completed **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"**.
- j. Individuals receiving a travel advance are required to account for the advance within 20 calendar days after the seminar/conference/meeting date by completing **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"**. Original itemized receipts (except meal receipts) must be submitted in order to obtain reimbursement for allowable expenses paid by the traveler. Subsequent travel advances requested by the department on behalf of a traveler with an outstanding travel advance will not be made.
- k. If **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"** is not settled within 60 days of trip return, the County Treasurer will deduct the advance from the traveler's next paycheck. Once the advance is taken from the traveler's paycheck, the traveler will not be able to seek reimbursement from the County. A request for reimbursement after these 60 days will not be allowed. Unsettled expense advances for terminated employees will be deducted from their final paycheck.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 15 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

17. TRAVEL CANCELLATIONS

- a. If it becomes necessary to cancel a trip, the traveler is required to make all necessary cancellations, notify the Purchasing Department if department's travel card was used for reservations, and/or the County Auditor's Office – Accounts Payable Section if payments were made in advance (seminar registration, hotel accommodations, airfare, and car rental, etc.).
- b. An employee may be reimbursed for travel expenses or cancellation charges incurred as a result of attempting to conduct official County business if:
 - i. The travel expense is incurred for a reason related to official County business;
 - ii. The employee is unable to conduct the business because of a natural disaster or other natural occurrence; and the expense would be payable or reimbursable had the official County business been conducted; or
 - iii. The employee returns, before the official County business is completed because of an illness or a personal emergency.
- c. The supporting documentation for a travel expense or cancellation charge incurred under these circumstances must include a description of the official County business, natural disaster or other natural occurrence, or the County Department's determination that an illness or a personal emergency occurred that made the employee unable to conduct official County business. In addition, any checks in the possession of the employee for payment of travel expenses (registration, hotel, etc.) must be returned and be accompanied by a written request to void the checks. Any cancellation costs that did not result from the above-approved reasons will be disallowed and at the expense of the traveler.
- d. Failure to cancel reservations for reasons other than those listed above will be at the expense of the traveler and be deducted from the employee's payroll check within 60 days of the seminar/conference/meeting date.

18. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS

- a. The reimbursement rate for certain travel expenses may vary from the County's rate if grant funds are being used. Before expenses are incurred, questions should be addressed to the County Auditor's Office - Grants Accounting Section at (956) 318-2511.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 16 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

- b. Travel expenses incurred and paid through personal credit cards and/or cash while conducting official County business will be reimbursed only if reasonable, necessary, and allowable in accordance with this Policy upon completion of the travel and submittal of a properly filled **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"**. The County will not reimburse interest, over the limit, and late charges, incurred in a personal credit card by the traveler.
- c. The County will not reimburse a County employee for a travel expense unless the employee has incurred the expense. A County employee who receives free transportation or lodging in exchange for mileage, points, or other non-monetary credits belonging to the employee is not considered to have incurred an expense.
- d. A County employee may not accept a reimbursement or advance for a travel expense from more than one source. A County employee who anticipates receiving or actually receives a travel expense reimbursement or advance from another person/entity/association other than the County may seek a reimbursement or advance for the expense from the County only to the extent the amount of the person's reimbursement or advance is less than the amount of the total expense. If reimbursement is received from the County and another source, the reimbursement should be returned to the County Treasurer's Office no later than 20 days after receipt of the subsequent reimbursement.

19. SANCTIONS

- a. A County employee who violates this policy and misuses County property or funds will be subject to disciplinary action including termination and/or criminal charges.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 17 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

PROCEDURES

A. County Department

1. Ensure traveler has read and understands the County's travel policies, guidelines, and procedures as they relate to minimizing travel costs and documenting travel expenses with original receipts.
2. If grant funds are being utilized, verify reimbursement rates and travel guidelines with the County Auditor's Office - Grants Accounting Section at (956) 318-2511.
3. If traveling out-of-state, obtain approval from the DBM by submitting **Form T-1 "Application for Out-Of-State Official Travel"** before any reservations or travel is made.
4. Submit requisition to the Purchasing Department for seminar registration, hotel accommodations, airfare, car rental, and meals and incidental expenses, if any (requisition for meals and incidentals should be made under the name of the traveler). Ensure travel expenses are in accordance with the travel policy and requisition includes the following:
 - a. Seminar Registration: seminar/conference/meeting name, date(s), location, including city and state; name(s) of traveler(s); notation as to manner of travel (County vehicle, County provided rental, or use of personal vehicle).
 - b. Hotel Accommodations: seminar/conference/meeting name, date(s), location, including city and state; name(s) of traveler(s); type of room rental, daily hotel rate, and number of hotel nights.
 - c. Airfare: seminar/conference/meeting name, date(s), location, including city and state; name(s) of traveler(s); date(s) of travel.
 - d. Car Rental: purpose of rental (i.e. attend seminar/conference/meeting/elections); seminar/conference/meeting/elections name, date(s), location, including city and state; name of driver and additional driver, if any; name(s) of traveler(s); type and size of rental vehicle, daily rental rate, number of rental days, location where rental will be acquired and returned (address, city, and state). If department has a County vehicle, include a statement providing proper justification as to why the County vehicle will not be used.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure:	T.1
Page:	18 of 21
Date Authorized:	
Supersedes:	04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

- e. Meals and incidental expenses: name of traveler; seminar/conference/meeting name, dates(s), location, including city and state; meals and incidental expenses should be listed separately.
5. If utilizing the department's travel card, request the Purchasing Department to book seminar registration, hotel accommodations, airfare, and car rental.
 6. If requesting direct payment for seminar registration, and hotel accommodations submit **Form T-2 "Seminar, Hotel, Car Rental, & Airfare Check Request"** to the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section.
 7. If requesting a travel advance, submit **Form T -5 "Out-Of-County Travel Advance Request"** and submits requisition to the Purchasing Department for travel advance in the name of the traveler.
 8. Ensure that within 20 calendar days after completion of travel, traveler completes **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"** and returns any remaining travel advance funds to the County Treasurer's Office. **Form T-4**, along with a copy of the County Treasurer's receipt (if any), must be submitted to the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section only after it has been properly completed, supported, and signed. Reimbursement to the traveler, if any, will be delayed or denied until the original supporting documentation for expenditures made is received. Supporting documentation includes the following:
 - Original itemized hotel receipt indicating a zero balance owed
 - Airline boarding pass and original airline ticket receipt or travel agency itinerary
 - Original car rental receipt and car rental agreement
 - Seminar/conference/meeting agenda
 - Original receipt and/or confirmation for seminar, conference, etc.
 - Seminar certificate of completion, if available
 - Original taxi receipt
 - Original parking receipt
 - Printouts of MapQuest (if requesting incidental mileage reimbursement)
 - If coordination of travel is required, submit written justification for need to travel separately

Original receipts must be affixed to a sheet of paper in date order and attached to **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"**.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 19 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

9. Submit, if necessary, the approved **Form T-1 "Application for Out-Of-State Official Travel"** to the County Auditor's Office when requesting payment or reimbursement of travel expenses.
10. Submit, if necessary, **Form T-3 "In-County Travel Automobile Expense Claim"**, including specific address points on a monthly basis by the 10th workday following the end of the month in which the expense was incurred.
11. If it becomes necessary to cancel a trip, the traveler is required to make all necessary cancellations, notify the Purchasing Department if department's travel card was used for reservations, and/or the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section if payments were made in advance (seminar registration, hotel accommodations, airfare, and car rental, etc.).

If a trip was cancelled, any checks for payment of advanced travel expenses (registration, hotel, advances, etc.) must be submitted to the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section. The check must be accompanied by a written request from the County Official to void the checks.

In addition, if a trip was cancelled, **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"** must be completed and submitted to the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section along with supporting documentation for any travel expenses or cancellation charges incurred. In addition to the items listed on Section A8 above, supporting documentation should include the following:

- Description of the official County business
- Reason for cancellation that made the employee unable to conduct official County business (natural disaster, natural occurrence, illness, or a personal emergency). Cancellations for reasons other than those listed above will be at the expense of the traveler and be deducted from the employee's payroll check within 60 days of the seminar/conference/meeting date.

Failure to cancel reservations or cancellations for reasons other than those listed above will be at the expense of the traveler and be deducted from the employee's payroll check within 60 days of the seminar/conference/meeting date.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure:	T.1
Page:	20 of 21
Date Authorized:	
Supersedes:	04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

B. Purchasing Department

1. Review requisition submitted by department for seminar registration, hotel accommodations, airfare, and car rental, if any. Ensure requisition includes the information listed in Section A4 above and that request is in compliance with travel policy.
2. If request is in compliance with travel policy, issue purchase order for seminar, hotel accommodations, airfare, and car rental, if any.
3. Book seminar, hotel accommodations, airfare, and car rental for departments requesting payment by the department's travel card ensuring reservations comply with the travel policy and guidelines.
4. Upon notice by the department of a trip cancellation, cancel reservations made using the department's travel card.
5. If airfare was reserved using the department's travel card, maintain an inventory schedule of refundable airfare credits received as a result of a trip cancellation. The inventory schedule should include the department name, employee name, cancellation date, and re-schedule/use date.

C. Department of Budget and Management

1. Review **Form T-1 "Application for Out-Of-State Official Travel"** and approve request for out-of-state travel if need for travel is properly justified (i.e. training is not available in-state).

D. County Auditor

1. Audit and process **Form T-2 "Seminar, Hotel, Car Rental, & Airfare Check Request"** ensuring compliance with the travel policy & guidelines.
2. Audit and process **Form T-3 "In-County Travel Automobile Expense Claim"** ensuring compliance with the travel policy & guidelines.
3. Audit and process **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"** ensuring compliance with the travel policy & guidelines.
4. Audit and process **Form T-5 "Out-Of-County Travel Advance Request"** ensuring compliance with the travel policy & guidelines.

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MANUAL

Procedure: T.1
Page: 21 of 21
Date Authorized:
Supersedes: 04/04/06

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

5. Send notices, on a monthly basis, to departments when travel payments have been paid directly to the vendor or traveler and a **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"** has not been submitted.
6. Notify the County Treasurer of any travelers for which the County has made travel payments on their behalf and have not submitted **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"** within the specified time.

E. COUNTY TREASURER

1. Mail out travel checks unless the department has requested otherwise.
2. Notify the departments when the travel advance or travel expense reimbursement checks have been processed and are ready for pickup.
3. Verify identification and obtain signature of individual picking up the check before releasing the check.
4. Verify that remaining travel funds being returned to the County by traveler are accompanied by a copy of properly filled out and documented **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"**.
5. Forward receipt issued for remaining travel funds and **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"** to the County Auditor's Office - Financial Accounting Section.
6. Make arrangements to deduct from the traveler's paycheck any advance travel payments made to the vendor or the traveler if **Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"** is not submitted within the specified time in accordance with applicable laws.
7. Contact and verify with the County Auditor's Office - Accounts Payable Section that travel advances made to a terminated employee have been settled. If a travel advance has not been settled, deduct the outstanding amount from the employee's final paycheck.