

**BANDERA COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPENSES AND TRAVEL VOUCHER**

**ELIGIBILITY**

1. This policy applies to all employees, department heads and elected/appointed officials.

**REIMBURSABLE EXPENDITURES**

2. For authorized trips, only actual expenditures will be reimbursed subject to the limits set forth in this policy document and as authorized by Department Head/Elected Official. The following items are reimbursable within the limits explained in the supporting sections:
  - a. Personal vehicle
  - b. Rental car
  - c. Out of state travel
  - d. Air travel
  - e. Lodging
  - f. Meals
  - g. Telephone calls
  - h. Registration fees
  - i. Valet or standard parking fees
  - j. Tollway fees—no receipt required.

To be reimbursed, original receipts, original car rental agreement, itemized hotel receipt, training agenda and any supporting documents must be turned in with the voucher.

**PERSONAL VEHICLE**

3. If a county vehicle (Department vehicle or the county shared vehicle parked at the Auditor Office) is unavailable or not feasible, personal vehicle travel shall be reimbursed at the Official State Rate listed on the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website:  
<https://fm.x.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/travel/texttravel/rates/current.php>
4. Traveler will be reimbursed for the actual mileage traveled. Mileage should be from home or work and voucher must show the address of the departure and arrival point and total mileage. A reasonable amount of mileage for travel to restaurants or between lodging and the event location is reimbursable as authorized by Department Head/Elected Official. For two or more employees traveling in the same vehicle, only one employee should claim the actual mileage traveled.

**RENTAL CAR**

5. Auto rentals should be limited to situations where the county shared vehicle parked at the Auditor Office is unavailable or other means of transportation are not practical, economical or available and for emergency situations. Reimbursable costs include the daily fee of up

to a mid-sized car, fuel, parking, and tolls. Original receipts and original rental agreement must be turned in with the Travel Voucher.

## **OUT OF STATE TRAVEL**

6. Employees must get approval from Commissioners Court prior to traveling out of state. Law enforcement is exempt from this policy when transporting prisoners.

## **AIR TRAVEL**

7. When the most cost-effective travel is by air, reimbursement will be limited to coach fare except for the instances noted below:
  - a. In the event of medical necessity
  - b. In an extreme emergency

## **LODGING**

8. Bandera County will pay for accommodations up to the single, standard room rate unless two or more county employees are sharing a room. Employees shall book specially-contracted, cancellable, conference rates as soon as possible to ensure the best rate. Hotel costs shall be kept to the conference rate or less including if they must book at a different hotel than the normal venue. If there is no contracted rate, hotels (w/o tax/fees) will be covered up to the GSA.GOV daily lodging rates (search for Texas GSA Hotel Rates or ask the Auditor Office) or \$130 (whichever is higher). For travelers to be authorized lodging on multi-day conferences, a conference must (1) be at least 60 miles away, (2) be in San Antonio or (3) have required, working evening events.

9. Bandera County will pay for the prior night of lodging accordingly:

<b>Miles</b>	<b>Conference Start Time</b>
60 – 120	On or before 10:30 a.m.
121 – 240	On or before Noon
241 – 360	On or before 3:00 p.m.
361 – 480	On or before 6:00 p.m.

Non-official duty activities before the education portion starts, such as receptions or meals, are not considered part of the conference for lodging decisions or per diem pay. Employees may count up to 30 minutes prior to education start time for registration if on the agenda.

Prior night lodging inside Loop 1604 for a conference starting before 8:30am is an exception to the above with prior approval by Department Head/Elected Official.

If employee travels more than 480 miles, the County will pay for the prior night regardless of the conference start time.

## **MEALS**

10. Per Diem rates for meals and incidentals, when overnight stay is required will be set at the Texas Standard Rate under the U.S. GSA Per Diem Rates ([Per diem rates | GSA](#)). Detailed

agendas for training are required for reimbursement and traveler must note any meals\* the County will NOT reimburse which are meals provided by the conference registration or at other government expense.

\* Provided meals are reduced at the Standard Rate deductions on Texas Standard Rate under the U.S. GSA Per Diem Rates ([M&IE breakdowns | GSA](#)). For meals provided on the day of departure and the last day of travel, traveler must deduct the entire allocated meal cost from the decreased per diem rate though total deductions will not cause traveler to receive less than the amount allowed for incidental expenses. Exceptions are:

- a. Meals without a main source of protein such as eggs or meat
- b. Meals that do not conform with religious or medically required dietary needs. However, travelers must request conference organizer/venue provide an alternate meal conforming to religious/medical need. Voluntary diets are not included in this exception.

11. Employees day traveling outside the County, with a minimum travel requirement of 5 hours and an expectation of taking a meal break at own expense may be paid a flat rate per diem (under 120 miles round trip = \$20; 120 miles or more = \$35) or 75% of the per diem rate if travel is over 12 hours but less than 24, that will be taxed and applied on the employee's paycheck in one of the two payrolls following submission of the travel voucher. Receipts are not required though the travel voucher is.

12. Up to one hour time will be paid to employees during per diem-reduced, scheduled, working meal events. During non-travel days, employees will be paid a minimum of eight hours salary as long as employee attends all scheduled sessions.

## **TELEPHONE CALLS**

13. County will reimburse "county business" phone calls not covered by a calling plan.

## **REGISTRATION FEES**

14. Registration fees can be prepaid to the sponsoring organization by Accounts Payable or reimbursed to travelers when receipts are submitted with the travel voucher.

## **NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENDITURES**

15. Reimbursement shall not be made for expenditures incurred for the sole benefit of the traveler such as concierge service, entertainment, movie rentals, etc. Other expenditures not reimbursable include:

- a. Traffic fines for parking or speeding violations
- b. Lost or stolen cash or other personal property
- c. Repairs to personal vehicles used for county travel
- d. Cancellation fees/hotel/rental car costs for unreasonable failure to cancel hotel or transportation reservations
- e. Spouse or family member expenditures
- f. Commuting costs between home and the office
- g. Laundry service

## **TRAVEL WITH COMPANION / OTHER COUNTY EMPLOYEES**

16. Companion (personal guest) travel and other related travel expenditures will not be reimbursed. The employee is responsible for allocating only his/her portion of expenditure on the travel voucher and for identifying them on hotel and other receipts. When lodging costs more due to adding non-reimbursable travelers, the employee must note that on the receipt, provide proof of the single room rate, and claim only the single rate. When possible, if a non-reimbursable traveler travels, pay expenses separately so their charges don't show on the receipts which can create misunderstandings/miscalculations.
17. When multiple people from the same department stay in the same hotel room/home share, only the payer claims it on their voucher (write the names of who stayed there on the receipt). Other travelers should write in the lodging area of their voucher that it was covered by the other traveler.

## **TRAVEL CASH ADVANCE OR ADVANCE PAYMENTS**

18. Travel cash/check advance requests for registration, hotel, per diem, known parking expense, rental car, etc. should be submitted to the Auditor's Office for approval for payment no less than four weeks before travel and therefore must be well planned in advance. Checks will be processed on the Commissioners Court prior to travel.
19. With advance payments, the travel voucher must be submitted to the Auditor's Office within one week of return and a duplicate copy of any receipts showing expenditure of advance payments sent to Accounts Payable to reconcile the advance. Expected refunds of unused cash from advances should be submitted to the Auditor's Office ASAP after travel however traveler should not make payment until the Auditor Office does a review of the voucher. If the voucher is not submitted within a week following travel, HR is authorized to debit the entire advance from the employee's next pay check.

## **TRAVEL VOUCHER**

20. The Travel Voucher is provided by the Auditor's Office. It is the only form accepted for reimbursement and should be submitted within one week of return. Employees must submit it and supporting documentation to the Auditor's Office. Original documents such as itemized hotel bills, the page of an airline ticket showing the itinerary and cost, and the one or two-way mileage, receipts for other expenditures, and the training agenda (showing dates and times) must be attached for documentation. Credit card charge slips will not serve as adequate documentation for reimbursement. If a Travel Cash Advance or check to cover an expense was acquired, it must be noted on the travel voucher. Travel voucher submissions 91 days past return or 15 days after a new Fiscal Year starts may be denied.
21. Missing Receipts: If a traveler loses/never received their receipt, they must do all they can to get a new receipt (i.e. calling hotel). If still not possible, they can provide a memo (typed or handwritten but signed) stating, "I certify I paid for [state purchased item(s)] on MM/DD/YYYY and lost (or never received) the receipt." (If it is for a hotel, add "I further certify that no food, alcoholic drinks, nor additional expenses for myself or guests were

charged.”). Traveler should include a page from their credit card statement and circle or highlight the charge and their name. If another payment method was used, so state instead.

22. The traveler is required to sign the travel voucher certifying the claimed amounts are actual and reasonable; the trip purpose or conference/training name must be indicated. The travel voucher must be reviewed/approved by the Department Head or their designee. Elected Official and Department Head vouchers will be approved by the Auditor Office. All signatories should ensure that only legitimate expenses are being claimed on the voucher.
23. The Auditor’s Office is responsible for the final review of all travel voucher. During the review, the Auditor is authorized to return any questionable or incomplete/incorrect vouchers to the Department Head/Elected Official to obtain additional approval or documentation supporting claim. Documentation and explanations are key to successful voucher submissions. Employees should write any additional information that will help the voucher examiner understand and process the voucher and remove any papers not needed to process the claim.