

**WASHINGTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS
TRAVEL RULES & REGULATIONS FOR
COUNTY EMPLOYEES AND ELECTED OFFICIALS**

ARTICLE 1. Purpose: The purpose of this section is to establish the rules governing the eligibility for payment of expenses incurred by County Employees and Elected Officials during travel directly related to official County business.

Elected officials and department heads must approve all requests for official travel prior to the employee's departure. Elected officials and department heads will evaluate travel requests against factors including budget constraints, job-relatedness of traveler's activities, and other program considerations judged by the elected official or department head to impact on the request.

County payment for meals and/or overnight lodging will not be allowed within the following counties in Arkansas: Washington, Benton, Madison, Carroll, Crawford, Franklin, and Sebastian; as well as Delaware and Adair Counties in Oklahoma; except in the event a conference or seminar is held in Carroll or Sebastian Counties for 2 days or more. Example: Conference begins on Thursday, December 14, and ends on Friday, December 15.

ARTICLE 2. Transportation: For travel by air or bus, actual cost will be paid directly from the County to the vendor. Where possible, air reservations should be made 30 days prior to departure to maximize discounts. Vendor-supplied receipts must be submitted with payment requests. Taxicab and bus fares within the visited city will be reimbursed at actual cost with receipts required. Air travel must be at economy class.

Reimbursement for use of a private vehicle is allowable on a per-mile basis based on the Standard Mileage Rate as set by the U. S. General Services Administration (GSA). Employees can check with the Comptroller's office for the current Standard Mileage Rate. Reimbursement shall be based only on official miles driven, and the County shall not assume responsibility for any maintenance, operational cost, accidents, or fines incurred by the owner of the vehicle while on official business for the County. When more than one County employee is transported in the same vehicle, only one owner shall be entitled to mileage reimbursement.

Trip distances shall be computed from the odometer readings recorded on the employee's Personal Vehicle Mileage Record or Trip Expense Record. Should the employee, in the course of County related travel, use his/her vehicle for personal use, then the employee is required to list the beginning and ending odometer readings for each County related destination only, showing the interruption in mileage for personal use. If the employee travels to multiple destinations during one trip, he/she may list the beginning and ending odometer reading for the entire trip (excluding personal use) but shall list each destination point separately. (e.g. An employee travels round trip to Eureka Springs with stops in Siloam Springs, Gravette, and Rogers, then the employee

is to show the beginning odometer reading from Fayetteville and the ending odometer reading upon returning to Fayetteville but list each stop separately.)

Specific location, i.e., street address, building name and city or town, must be shown in the location from and to columns in the reimbursement forms. Map Mileage or computer generated maps such as *MapQuest* or *Yahoo Maps* may be utilized to determine mileage. County will only reimburse for the most direct route unless the employee is required to make alternate stops, which shall be noted on the Travel Reimbursement Form.

All employees traveling in personally owned vehicles for County business must have current vehicle insurance and a valid driver license. If said employee does not have current vehicle insurance and a valid driver license, then it is the responsibility of the elected official or department head to prohibit the use of a privately owned vehicle on County business. The elected official or department head in approving an employee claim for reimbursement of travel by private automobile is, in effect, certifying that he/she has made a reasonable effort to determine that the employee has current insurance

Personal vehicle mileage reimbursement shall not exceed available economy airfare, nor shall food and lodging expense be for more than one day of travel time to and from the destination.

Any elected official, or employee thereof, shall only drive county-owned vehicles for official County business. County vehicles may be driven outside Washington County for official County business only. The provisions herein do not effect or address the issue of commuting; this issue will be addressed separately by separate ordinance and/or policy.

ARTICLE 3. Taxicab and Rental Vehicles: Taxicab fare is reimbursable at cost with actual receipts required. Employees who intend to rent vehicles for official County business must secure approval from their elected official or department head.

ARTICLE 4. Meals: **Meals can be reimbursed at the per diem rate without receipts or may be purchased by using a purchasing card in which case receipts must be attached.** The County will pay no more per day than the Standard Meal Allowance as set by the GSA for the area in which the travel occurs. Current rates and exceptions for high-cost areas can be obtained from the Comptroller's Office or at web site www.gsa.gov. Meals will only be reimbursed or paid for travel that requires overnight lodging.

County employees will use the Meal & Incidentals Expense (M&IE) rate published in the current GSA per diem policy. In all cases, for two or more days of travel, the per diem rate for the first and last day of travel will be 75% of the maximum M&IE rate. For days other than the first and last day of travel, per diem may not be claimed for any meals included as part of a conference registration fee or included in

the cost of lodging. If all meals are provided by a conference, the daily incidental amount may still be claimed by the employee.

FY10 M&IE Breakdown

	The M&IE rates differ by travel location. View the per diem rate for your primary destination to determine which M&IE rates apply.					
M&IE Total	\$46	\$51	\$56	\$61	\$66	\$71
Continental Breakfast/ Breakfast	7	8	9	10	11	12
Lunch	11	12	13	15	16	18
Dinner	23	26	29	31	34	36
Incidentals	5	5	5	5	5	5

ARTICLE 5. Lodging: Actual costs for single-room rate lodging are paid by Purchase Card, when available; directly by the County to the establishment; or can be reimbursed to the employee with actual receipts attached to the payment request. It is recommended that the employee find lodging that offers government rates as established by the GSA for the specific area. In cases where an employee is attending a conference and the conference assigns or recommends the hotel, then the County will pay the conference rate. The County shall not pay for personal items such as movie rental, flowers, laundry services, room service, or alcoholic beverages.

ARTICLE 6. Parking: Expenses incurred for parking are reimbursable with actual receipts.

ARTICLE 7. Seminar and Conference Registration: Seminar and conference registration fees, etc., are paid directly by the County to the registrar, or can be reimbursed to the employee with actual receipts attached to the payment request.

ARTICLE 8. Purchasing Cards: Only authorized employees who have a Purchasing Card in their name may utilize that card for lodging. The Purchasing Card will also be allowed for meals but fuel purchases should be only made using the Purchasing Card when the County fuel cards are not accepted. If the Purchasing Card is used for meals during overnight travel it should be noted that the receipts for the Purchasing Card must be provided and checked for accuracy by the immediate supervisor on the appropriate travel form before submission to the comptroller’s office.

Marilyn Edwards, County Judge