

PURPOSE:

The County recognizes the unique nature of operations within the Citrus County Visitors and Convention Bureau and the need to establish guidelines outside the more traditional policies established for employee travel and purchasing. This Administrative Regulation is established to facilitate needs while providing for accountability and fiscal restraint.

POLICY:

- a. It is the intent of Citrus County to reimburse employees and agents under contract with Citrus County for travel on official tourism business in accordance with Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes and Section 112.061, Florida Statutes.
- b. All authorized travel expenses will be reimbursed to County Visitors & Convention Bureau employees or to employees of companies or individuals contracted for tourism services on behalf of the County at the actual expense incurred and documented by receipt. Total expenditures shall not exceed budgeted limits as established by the Tourist Development Council or County Administration.

GENERAL PROCEDURE:

- a. APPROVAL REQUIRED. All travel for Visitors and Convention Bureau staff and authorized agents under contract must be authorized and approved by the Visitors and Convention Bureau Director, and by the County Administrator for the Visitors and Convention Bureau Director, and funds must be available in the approved Visitors and Convention Bureau Budget. Those travel events that are not covered in the budgeted or contingencies categories in the Visitors and Convention Bureau Budget must be presented to the Tourist Development Council for approval.

Approval for travel, travel advances and reimbursement shall be made on the appropriate forms and by the procedures established by the County Administrator and the Management and Budget Director.

All travel and advancement requests shall be submitted sufficiently early to minimize the need for expedited handling, except in the case of emergency travel, authorized by the County Administrator.

The County Administrator must approve travel by authorized persons not employed or under contract by the County who are called upon to contribute time and services as consultants or advisors or participants for travel on County tourism business.

The Board of County Commissioners shall approve non-budgeted out-of-state travel and travel outside the continental limits of the United States.

b. DOMESTIC TRAVEL – TOURISM EVENTS, CONVENTIONS, TRADE SHOWS.

1. Common Carrier. Travel shall be booked at the best available coach price.
2. Ground Transportation. Taxi, shuttle and public transportation shall be reimbursed at actual cost including gratuity. Rental car use shall be booked or reimbursed for domestic travel at best rate available. Travelers shall use the rental car company holding the county bid, where available.
3. Meals. Meals shall be reimbursed at actual cost plus gratuity for groups or special menus or events. Continental breakfasts, snacks drinks or other small incidental food items provided under a registration fee will not be considered a provided meal and full meal substitute would be reimbursable at actual cost.
4. Accommodations/Lodging. In-state travel outside 50 miles of office location is reimbursable at actual cost for standard occupancy at the best available rate or at the headquarters hotel.

Travel within 50 miles of the office – Accommodations expense reimbursement must be authorized by the tourism director if travel to home after the daily activities is deemed unsafe, or supervision of guests being entertained is necessary.

Travel to destinations within Florida is tax exempt for accommodations. Travelers shall supply the hotel/motel with a Florida Sales Tax Exemption Certificate when checking in.

Expenses for the use of in-room dispensers or movies are not reimbursable.

5. Gratuities. Gratuities shall be governed by Florida Statutes. When the Statutory language is not applicable, gratuities shall be limited to no more than 15% or \$1.00, whichever is greater, except for parties of eight or more where 18 – 21 % may apply as established by the restaurant/resort.
6. Other Expenses. Reimbursable expenses include tolls, ferry fares, tuxedo and costume rental, parking fees, charges for business telephone calls, including cell phone roaming charges, facsimiles, or high speed internet access charges for use of computer, actual mileage reimbursement at the current Citrus County Rate, mandatory valet parking, hotel resort fees, parking attendants and shuttle drivers, charges for changes in travel dates or departure times for airline ticket and hotel accommodations if pre approved by the Visitors & Convention Bureau Director or County Administrator, laundry and dry cleaning charge for travel of seven (7) or more days. Business association, trade association, tourism industry association, Chamber of Commerce meetings, or event expenses are authorized for payment or reimbursement when the subject matter is tourism related.

c. TRAVEL IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES. Foreign travel must be approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Foreign travel will be conducted in compliance with federal standards detailed in the publication, "Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas)."

1. Common Carrier. Travel shall be booked at the best available coach price.
2. Ground Transportation. Taxi, shuttle and public transportation shall be reimbursed at actual cost including gratuity. Rental car use shall be booked or reimbursed for foreign travel at best rate available.
3. Meals. Meals shall be reimbursed at actual cost plus gratuity for groups or special menus or events. Continental breakfasts, snacks drinks or other small incidental food items provided under a registration fee will not be considered a provided meal and full meal substitute would be reimbursable at actual cost.
4. Accommodations/Lodging. Reimbursable at actual cost for standard occupancy at the best available rate or at the headquarters hotel.

Expenses for the use of in-room dispensers or movies are not reimbursable.

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d. TRAVEL INVOLVING TRADE SHOWS/CONVENTIONS/TOURISM INDUSTRY AND ASSOCIATION MEETINGS. Expenses related to attendance at trade shows, conventions, association and tourism industry meetings, sales meetings and receptions and events are authorized for payment or reimbursement at actual cost pursuant to this Resolution depending on whether the travel is foreign or domestic.

Pursuant to section 125.0104, Florida Statutes, registration fees for Visitors & Convention Bureau employees and authorized agents under contract with Citrus County shall be paid in advance by County check or credit card or be paid by reimbursement.

- e. TRAVEL RELATED ENTERTAINMENT. Payment or reimbursement is authorized for any tourism promotion, event, meal, or occasion organized by the Citrus County Visitors & Convention Bureau or other tourism organizations or agencies including, but not limited to, entertaining travel writers, journalists, travel agents, tour operators, airlines, travel consultants, wholesalers, consolidators, meeting planners, consumers, dignitaries and VIP's from foreign countries or anyone who can bring, direct or encourage travel or publicity to Citrus County. (Collectively or singularly referred to as "Tourism Promoters").

Expenses such as meals for County employees who attend a function with Tourism Promoters in an official capacity are authorized to be included in the total cost of the function for payment or reimbursement.

1. Meals. Meals include food and beverages associated with meetings, dinners, promotions, cocktail parties and similar events, whether catered or provided by Citrus County or other tourism organizations or agencies, at a facility or private location. Gratuities for groups or special menus or events are authorized for payment or reimbursement. Gratuities on discounted or complimentary meals are authorized as calculated on the full fair market price of the meals up to 20%. County employees must follow State and County policies covering acceptance of discounted or complimentary meals.
 2. Alcoholic Beverages. The cost of alcoholic beverages is authorized for payment or reimbursement for entertainment purposes for Tourism Promoters. The cost of alcoholic beverages for County employees is not reimbursable.
 3. Gifts. Tokens of appreciation and mementos of Citrus County given to Tourism Promoters are authorized for payment or reimbursement at actual cost.
 4. Transportation. Expenses for vans, limousines, buses or automobiles to transport Tourism Promoters are authorized for payment or reimbursement at actual cost.
 5. Accommodations. Expenses to house Tourism Promoters are authorized for payment or reimbursement at actual cost.
 6. Entertainment. Expenses to entertain convention, meeting, trade show or familiarization tour attendees. Examples of these entertainment expenses include, but are not limited to the costs for singers, dancers, magicians, astrologers, chefs, musicians, pageant winners, clowns, fisherman, animal trainers or massage therapists. These entertainment expenses serve a valid public purpose and are authorized for payment or reimbursement.
- f. COUNTY PURCHASING CARD USE. The Citrus County Purchasing Card may be used by Tourism Division staff for all travel, entertainment and registrations including the cost of restaurant meals.

- g. PAYMENT BY ADVANCEMENT OR REIMBURSEMENT. The County may pay by advancement or reimbursement, or a combination thereof, the costs of per diem and incidental expenses of employees of the County and other authorized persons, for foreign travel at the current rates as specified in the federal publication "Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas)."

The County may also pay by advancement or reimbursement, or by a combination thereof, the actual reasonable and necessary costs of travel, meals, lodging, and incidental expenses of employees of the County and other authorized persons when meeting with travel writers, tour brokers, or other persons connected with the tourist industry, and while attending or traveling in connection with travel or trade shows.

FOOTNOTES & REFERENCES TO RELATED AR's:

The policies outlined in this Administrative Regulation are specific to the Citrus County Visitors and Convention Bureau. These policies shall prevail if there are any disparities between this and another County Administrative Regulation.