



CITY OF BEND

Employee Travel

Policy No. FIN-0202

City Manager Administrative Policy

Bend Code Chapter 1.30.005 provides for 'City Manager Authority to Adopt Administrative Regulations, Policies and Guidelines.' All regulations, policies and guidelines adopted by the City Manager shall be consistent with the City of Bend Charter, the Bend Code, and council ordinances.

The following policy conforms to the above stated standards.

Authorized by City Manager:

DocuSigned by:

Eric King

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Eric King, City Manager

Reviewed by Legal Counsel:

Signed by:

Ian Leitheiser

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Ian Leitheiser, City Attorney

Dated: 8/4/2025

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Policy No. FIN-0202

Adopted: 08/04/2025

Owner: Finance Department; Chief Financial Officer

Revised:

Revision No.

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards and approval and documentation requirements for employee travel and allowable expenses that may be incurred while traveling on official City business.

II. Policy Statement

Travel expenses paid for by the City must have a public purpose and serve the public interest. City staff travel for a variety of reasons. These include: training and professional development, connecting with peer agencies and leaders, participating in conferences, economic development, sharing best practices, and more. These opportunities can benefit employees, the City, and the community. Department Heads determine travel priorities for their department.

III. Scope

This policy applies to all City Departments, City representatives, staff, and other parties traveling on official City business. All employees and City representatives are required to follow this policy unless otherwise directed by a collective bargaining agreement.

IV. Definitions

City Representative: An individual who is not a City employee, who is traveling on behalf of the City or as a member of a City group and who is representing the City during such travel. Also see “Public Official”.

Department Head: The Director or most senior manager of the department for which the traveling employee works.

Per Diem: The allowance provided to employees for meals and incidental expenses while in Travel Status. The federal General Services Administration (GSA) establishes Per Diem rates for destinations within the lower 48 Continental United States (CONUS). The GSA Lodging Per Diem rates are used for comparison purposes only, along with other sources, when determining reasonable lodging rates.

Public Official: As defined in ORS 244.020(15) any person who, when an alleged violation of ORS Chapter 244 occurs, is serving the State of Oregon or any of its political subdivisions or any other public body as defined in ORS 174.109 as an elected official, appointed official, employee or agent, irrespective of whether the person is compensated for the services.

Purchasing Card, also known as Pcard: The City’s commercial credit card which allows a City employee to make purchases on behalf of the City.

Tax Home: As described by the IRS, the entire city or general area where your main place of work is located. The city/general area for the purposes of this policy is the City of Bend and the region of Deschutes County.

Travel Status: The status of an employee when they are working away from their Tax Home and may require overnight lodging.

V. Policy Terms & Provisions

A. Legal Considerations and Stewardship of the Public Trust

All City employees have a personal responsibility to assure that travel is in the best interest of the public and a good use of City funds. Employees and City Representatives should be aware that the IRS has very strict guidelines and documentation requirements for fringe benefits related to travel and business expenses. All travel documentation is public record under Oregon law. For this reason, all City travel requires submission of detailed documentation. City employees are entrusted by the public as stewards of public resources and must ensure that all purchases involving public funds are justifiable as appropriate uses of public resources.

B. Sustainability

City of Bend envisions a sustainable future, in which the City responsibly satisfies the needs of its residents, provides a healthy and satisfying work environment for its employees, and minimizes its impact on the environment.

As City staff and representatives consider traveling on City business, sustainability should be a factor in decision making. This includes but is not limited to:

- Considering the most direct route related to mileage and/or travel time;
- Considering whether the objectives and purpose could be met without traveling;
- Considering whether staff could reasonably travel together in fewer vehicles;
- Considering whether public transit or train travel is an option for the location;
- Traveling in lower emission vehicles when possible; and

- For air travel in particular, reducing the number of individuals traveling.

C. Non-City Employee Travel

The City does not pay for or reimburse non-employee travel with the following potential exceptions: a) person incurs the cost as a member of the City Council or other City sponsored committee, b) person is providing services under a contract requiring such payment, or c) costs are pre-approved by the City Manager.

D. Department Heads

Department Heads are responsible for implementation and compliance with this policy within their departments. Departments have some flexibility and discretion in administering the policy and may have department rules that are consistent with this policy, but in no case may department rules be more lenient or set any lesser standards than those in this policy.

In some cases, there may be reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act that can apply to employee travel. These options may relate to travel duration, conference events, lodging accommodations, food and beverage options, airfare, modes of transportation, etc. Potential reasonable accommodations must be coordinated with the department head and the Accessibility and Equity Manager.

E. Finance Department

The Finance Department has authority for overall administration of this policy. In doing so, it provides training and monitors all City travel, reviewing required forms and documentation for compliance. Questions regarding the intent or application of this policy should be directed to Finance.

F. Overnight Travel

Overnight travel is reimbursable when an employee travels to a destination on City business and it is not reasonable to return the same day. The table below should be used to determine reasonableness. Any one of the considerations listed may justify the determination. Department Heads may approve other scenarios not captured in the table below on a case-by-case basis. Overnight travel and duration must be approved in writing by the Department Head.

Issue	Considerations
Proximity of event from Tax Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 75 miles from tax home, • A drive-time of at least one hour, and/or • Poses unreasonable inconvenience for the employee. <p>Employee safety and environmental considerations should also be used when determining the necessity of overnight accommodation.</p>
Duration of the event (number of days)	Any event which exceeds one (1) day in duration
Anticipated daily event schedule	When the event begins prior to or finishes after employee's scheduled work hours
Non-Exempt Hours Worked	When the employee's Travel Status going to or coming from would put the employee into overtime status or non-compensable time as defined by Oregon BOLI.

G. Per Diem

Per Diem is provided for employees in overnight Travel Status on official City business. Employees may not use their PCard or seek actual reimbursement for meals incurred while traveling except as otherwise provided in this policy. The City follows Federal GSA Per Diem guidance.

There are two options by which to request Per Diem for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) which are covered by the City:

- Request Per Diem in advance of travel; or
- Request Per Diem subsequent to travel.

Per GSA rules, the Per Diem rate for the first and last day of travel is prorated 75%.

Advance Per Diem requests must be submitted at least two weeks before travel. Advance Per Diem payments are paid on regular payroll dates and will not be processed out of the payroll cycle. If paid an advance per diem and the employee's travel is cancelled for any reason or if a meal is paid for by a vendor or other third party, the employee must repay the City that portion of any advances paid.

1. Provided meals

Meals provided at a conference must be deducted from Per Diem claimed.

If the employee is unable to attend an event where a meal is offered, the employee must provide documentation which verifies a conflict preventing the employee from attending, such as:

- The event with a meal was sold out;
- The employee was traveling at the time of when the meal was offered; or
- The employee had a conflicting meeting or another scheduled event at the same time the meal was offered.

Employees with food allergies or with specific dietary needs may request Per Diem for meals when options that meet the employees' dietary restrictions are not available. It is incumbent upon the employee to seek these options with the conference or meeting organizer, and the employee must include a statement to demonstrate that accommodation was not available when Per Diem is requested.

A vendor or another third-party may occasionally pay for an employee's meal when the employee is in Travel Status. On these occasions, City employees should not seek Per Diem if meals are hosted by an outside party. Before accepting a meal from a vendor or another third-party, the City employee should carefully review the Oregon Government Ethics Law (**ORS Chapter 244**) and the Oregon Administrative Rules (**Chapter 199**). When in doubt, staff should decline a paid meal.

H. Travel Related Expenses

1. Lodging

When travel requires booking lodging, employees will obtain the overall best value that reasonably meets business travel needs. Staff must book directly with the lodging entity, rather than through a travel booking site.

Reasonable lodging rates may be researched online, keeping in mind the distance from a conference/training location and a preference for government rates if available. Lodging nightly rates should not exceed 150% of the GSA daily lodging rate without Department Head approval.

Standard accommodation includes hotels and motels. Lodging options may also include short-term rentals, bed and breakfasts, and related accommodations. To conserve budgetary resources, employees may share lodging accommodations

when traveling on city business; however, this practice is not required and employees may opt for an individual room.

a. Non-Allowable Lodging Expenses:

- Hotel/motel room service, mini-bar and amenities charges
- Room upgrades
- Porter service for personal luggage
- Excessive oversized/overweight baggage fees (see 2.C above)
- Laundry service
- In-room movies
- Pet fees

b. Allowable Lodging Expenses:

- Hotel Wi-Fi access, with Department Head pre-approval
- Early or late check ins/outs, with Department Head pre-approval

2. Airline Travel

Airline travel is typically permitted for overnight travel only, unless there is a business need for one-day travel via airline (e.g., same day flight between Redmond and Seattle). Employees should make reservations at least a month in advance of travel to avoid premium ticket pricing.

Reasonable airfare prices may be researched using a reputable travel booking site with consideration of reasonable departure and arrival times and layovers, however, airfare must be purchased directly with the airfare entity, rather than through a travel booking site. If a direct flight costs more than a multi-leg flight, the direct flight may be considered a reasonable option with supervisor pre-approval.

Allowable expenses include:

- Luggage fees for up to one carry-on and one checked, standard size bag
- Seat selection within economy/coach class

- Wi-Fi access, if the primary purpose is to conduct city business while in-flight

Airfare will be economy or coach class (not including categories such as premium economy, economy plus or other premium economy options). If an employee wishes to upgrade seating, utilize early check-in or purchase any other premium service, such expenses shall be paid by the employee and will not be reimbursed.

3. Combining Personal Travel with City Business

With written supervisory approval in advance of booking travel, employees may add personal travel to business travel. When an employee combines official City business travel with personal travel, the employee is required to pay for any travel expenses that include the personal portion of the trip and then submit a reimbursement expense claim only for those costs necessary for the City's business portion of the trip. Employee expense reimbursement claims will be processed for travel related expenses equal to the costs that would have been incurred if the employee travelled exclusively for City business. Comparable price documentation must be obtained and printed as support on day of purchase. Reimbursement, which may be requested prior to the trip, will be made at the lower of the two quotes with and without personal travel.

Personal travel preferences will not dictate routes, methods or other aspects of travel. Employees should be aware that including family members or others on personal travel associated with business travel, or while the employee is traveling for business, could create ethical implications under state law; employees should not use or attempt to use their official position to receive a financial gain or to avoid a financial detriment that would not be available but for the employee's position. Employees are personally responsible for compliance with ethical obligations and may contact the City Attorney's Office or the Oregon Government Ethics Commission for advice or input related to this topic.

Reimbursement and payment for meals Per Diem and lodging for the employee will be allowable only for the period of time the employee is in Travel Status for City business.

State law prohibits public employees from using government rates, discounts, or contract services for personal use. See also the section on rental vehicles below.

4. Ground Transportation

There are four types of ground transportation that the City will generally allow: City Owned Vehicle (COV), rental car, Personally Owned Vehicle (POV), and Other Ground Transport (shuttle buses, public transit, taxis, ride shares, etc.). Departments may establish additional restrictions based on fleet availability.

- When conference or lodging accommodations do not provide meals, and meals are not accessible within a reasonable walking distance, the City may reimburse cost of transportation that is necessary to obtain food.
- The City will not reimburse employees for transportation costs when the purpose of transportation is personal (such as recreational activities, sightseeing, etc.).
- Only City employees, or others on official City business, may ride in a COV or City-paid rental car.
- If an employee elects to use their POV for business-related travel when air travel would be more economical for the City, employee's mileage reimbursement is limited to the cost of what the City would have incurred had the employee traveled by air instead.

Under no circumstances will the City reimburse employees or pay for any traffic citations or tickets incurred while on City business that are incurred based on the employee's driving, decisions, or behavior, regardless of vehicle ownership.

a. City Owned Vehicles (COV)

When an employee is traveling in a COV while conducting City business, the COV is covered under the City's liability insurance policy. COV may not be used for personal travel outside of incidental purposes, such as stopping for groceries or meals en route. Fueling COVs must be in accordance with the **Fueling City-Owned Vehicles SOP**.

b. Rental Cars

When traveling out of state, rental cars are not the preferred mode of travel but may be allowed, provided lodging, conference venue or other worksite destination points are not within a reasonable walking distance and a rental car is the most cost-effective option.

Rental cars may be used to conduct official City business only and are covered under the City's insurance policy. Employees renting a vehicle to conduct City business must obtain and carry the City's insurance carrier's name and telephone number prior to renting the vehicle. This is necessary in the event proof of insurance is required by law. Employees under the age of 25 must check with the car rental company prior to traveling to ensure the employee will be allowed to rent a car.

An employee may use a PCard to purchase fuel for or recharge a rental car. Employees should refuel the vehicle before returning to the rental company if this will result in lower fuel rates. When selecting vehicle types, the most economical and sustainable option should be used.

Employees should decline the additional insurance offered by rental companies when traveling within the United States or Canada. When traveling outside the U.S. or Canada employees are required to purchase the additional insurance offered by the rental company. All international travel, including the rental of cars in international locales, requires pre-approval by the City Manager.

c. Personally Owned Vehicle (POV)

When possible, use of COVs are preferred, however, use of POVs may be the best option for local travel, one-day assignments or some overnight travel.

Employees must have current vehicle liability insurance when using a POV for conducting City business. Employee's personal vehicle insurance will be the primary coverage in the event of a claim.

POV mileage is reimbursed by the City at the allowable amount determined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Mileage should be calculated using a standard map application such as, but not limited to, Google Maps, or Apple Maps, or by recording vehicle odometer readings at the beginning and end of each business-related drive. The City will reimburse for only the most direct route.

For local travel, if the employee is leaving from or returning to a personal residence, the employee should only charge actual mileage that is greater than the employee's normal commute. Local travel between City facilities or within the Bend City limits is not reimbursable under this policy. For overnight travel, the employee may request the full mileage from home to destination, including from their home to the airport.

d. Parking

Use of parking meters, parking lots and garages are reimbursable if used while conducting official City business. In general, the City will cover the lowest cost options for parking.

- The City will reimburse parking at Redmond Airport for the duration of business-related travel.
- When given the option of self-parking versus valet parking, the City will only reimburse for the lowest cost option.

e. Other Ground Transportation

The cost of taxis, shuttle buses, public transit and ride sharing services (such as Uber or Lyft) are reimbursable when such services are necessary to conduct official City business. Pcards may not be used for these services. An employee expense reimbursement claim will be required after travel.

5. International Travel

Travel outside of the continental United States must be pre-approved by the City Manager. Employees are responsible for providing their own personal travel documents and maintaining compliance with current IT policies.

6. Travel Rewards

Travel rewards include coupons, discounts, credit card rebates, frequent flyer miles, tickets and vouchers for being bumped from an airline flight. Travel rewards are part of employee compensation and benefits package. City officials and employees are responsible for tax reporting requirements of travel awards, if any.

7. Authorizations:

- a. Employees must obtain pre-approval for overnight travel from their Department Head, appropriate chain of command, or designee.
- b. City Council members or volunteer committee members must obtain pre-approval for overnight travel from the City Manager.
- c. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or designee in the CFO's absence, will review all travel expenses and pre-approve appropriate travel expenses for the City Manager.

I. Conferences

Departments may send up to two staff to the same offsite conference provided there are no operational impacts on the department or the City. More than two staff members from a department may attend with Executive level pre-approval (City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Fire Chief, Police Chief, or Executive Officer).

1. Conference-Related Events

a. City Paid/Free with Conference Registration

The following conference-related events are generally allowable:

- After-hours banquets open to all conference participants;
- Tours related to the subject matter and purpose of the conference; or
- When included in minimum levels of standard registration.

If an event falls outside of the above examples employees should obtain prior approval from their Department Head.

b. Vendor Provided/Paid

Employees should reference the definition of gift in **ORS 244.020(7)** to ensure compliance with state ethics law and with this policy for any events provided, hosted, or paid for by a vendor or other third party.

When an employee considers attending such an event, the employee must consider whether attendance would be consistent with their ethical obligations. Employees may seek advice or input from the City Attorney's Office or the Oregon Government Ethics Commission.

2. Conference-Related Prizes/Items

City funds shall not be used to purchase raffle tickets or other drawings or prizes. In accordance with **ORS 244.025**, if an employee is entered into a raffle drawing as a conference attendee, and wins a prize in excess of \$50 in total value, the raffle prize shall be declined unless:

- The raffle is open to members of the public,
- The raffle was available to all attendees,

- Acceptance of the raffle prize does not give rise to either an actual conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest under state law, and
- The prize can be utilized by the City in the course of business (and the recipient gives the prize to the City.)

If a conference attendee or presenter receives an item in excess of \$50 in value as part of their registration (or services) the item will be given to the City to be used in the course of City business. If the item cannot be utilized by the City it shall be declined.

If the item does not exceed \$50 in value, the employee must ensure that acceptance of the item (in addition to other items from the same source) would not exceed the cumulative annual \$50 limit from a single source.



Language Assistance Services & Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities

You can obtain this information in alternate formats such as Braille, electronic format, etc. Free language assistance services are also available. Please contact City Manager's Office at communications@bendoregon.gov or (541) 388-5505. Relay Users Dial 7-1-1.



Servicios de asistencia lingüística e información sobre alojamiento para personas con discapacidad

Puede obtener esta información en formatos alternativos como Braille, formato electrónico, etc. También disponemos de servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Póngase en contacto con City Manager's Office en communications@bendoregon.gov o (541) 388-5505. Los usuarios del servicio de retransmisión deben marcar el 7-1-1.