



UNION PARISH
TRAVEL AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY
Adopted by the Union Parish Police Jury effective 10/3/17
Updated by the Union Parish Police Jury effective 5/7/20

PURPOSE: Policy to establish uniform procedures in the usage and the request for reimbursement of all travel related expenses on behalf of the Union Parish Police Jury (herein referred to as “Police Jury”).

SCOPE: This policy applies to all employees and elected or appointed officials of the Police Jury while traveling on official business on behalf of the Police Jury. This extends to any other official or department claiming reimbursement from the Police Jury for official business travel.

POLICY STATEMENT: The Police Jury recognizes the importance of, and the necessity of travel by employees and officials in carrying out their responsibilities and duties. In a rapidly changing society, it is important that officials and staff maintain the highest level of training and proficiency as possible. Because of this, the Police Jury recognizes the importance of attending conferences and meetings for the purpose of continued education and training for expanding services and programs for the citizens of Union Parish.

It is the policy of the Police Jury to reimburse staff or officials for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in connection with approved travel on behalf of the Police Jury. The Police Jury strongly encourages use of travel discounts when making travel arrangements.

Travelers seeking reimbursement should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Reimbursement is allowed only when reimbursement has not been and will not be received from other sources. If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this travel policy, then the most conservative course of action should be taken.

Business travel policies are aligned with Police Jury reimbursement rules. All business-related travel paid with Police Jury funds must comply with Police Jury expenditure policies.

Authorization

All non-routine travel, including any over-night stays, must be authorized with **prior approval** from the Police Jury. This applies to all departments including, but not limited to Landfill, Road Dept., Section 8/HUD, Registrar of Voters and JP/Constables. Travelers should verify that planned travel is eligible for reimbursement before making travel arrangements. Within sixty (60) days of completion of a trip, the traveler must submit a Travel Reimbursement Form and supporting documentation to obtain reimbursement of expenses.

An individual may not approve his or her own travel or reimbursement. The Travel Reimbursement form must be turned in to the Police Jury Secretary/Treasurer and signed by the Police Jury President. Travel Reimbursements for the Police Jury President must be reviewed and signed by the Police Jury Vice President.

Designated approval authorities are required to review expenditures and withhold reimbursement if there is reason to believe that the expenditures are inappropriate or extravagant.

Personal Funds

Travelers should review reimbursement guidelines before spending personal funds for business travel to determine if such expenses are reimbursable. See below for detailed policies. The Police Jury reserves the right to deny reimbursement of travel related expenses for failure to comply with policies and procedures.

Travelers who use personal funds to facilitate travel arrangements will not be reimbursed until after the trip occurs and proper documentation is submitted.

Exceptions

Occasionally it may be necessary for travelers to request exceptions to this travel policy. Requests for exceptions to the policy must be made in writing and approved by the Secretary/Treasurer and the Police Jury President. Exceptions related to the Police Jury President's expenses must be submitted to the Secretary/Treasurer and the Police Jury Vice-President for approval. In most instances, the expected turnaround time for review and approval is five business days.

Advances

The Police Jury does not allow advances for travel. This includes mileage, meals, rooms or airfare.

Claims for Expense Reimbursement

- All claims for reimbursement of business travel expenses must be submitted on the *Union Parish Police Jury Travel Expense Form*. The form must be completed and signed (in ink) by the traveler and be approved (in writing) by the immediate supervisor and the president.
- The traveler must attach to the form the original copies of the detailed/itemized receipts supporting all expenditures, and documentation of the business purpose. The traveler must also document on the form the (1) time and date of departure; (2) time and date of return; (3) destination; (4) travel related costs paid direct by the parish; and (5) travel costs paid out-of-pocket.
- Any person who submits a claim and who willfully makes a claim which he/she does not believe to be true and correct that is fraudulent or is false shall be guilty of official misconduct. Whoever receives an allowance or reimbursement by means of a false claim is subject to severe disciplinary action as well as being liable within the provisions of state law.

- If a traveler voluntarily opts to not attend a luncheon or banquet that is provided for in the cost of registration, the traveler will not be reimbursed if he/she dines out during said luncheon/banquet.
- A copy of the conference agenda/itinerary or reason for travel MUST accompany the traveler's request for reimbursement.
- Reimbursement of travel expenses is based on documentation of reasonable and actual expenses supported by the original, itemized receipts where required. Reimbursements that may be paid by the Police Jury are detailed as follows:

Automobile (personally owned – domestic travel)

- A valid driver's license issued within the United States and personal automobile insurance are required for expenses to be reimbursed. Drivers should be aware of the extent of coverage (if any) provided by his or her automobile insurance company for travel that is business or not personal in nature.
- Reimbursement for use of a personal automobile is based on the current Federal mileage rate. As of January 1, 2020, that rate is **57.5** cents per mile; subject to change at any time.
- The approved distance is based on origination from the Union Parish Police Jury Annex to the listed destination of the conference or meeting. Proof of mileage is to be provided by the traveler through the use of on-line maps and documentation is to be provided in the reimbursement request. Mileage will be verified by the Secretary/Treasurer.
- Travelers may opt to request reimbursement for gasoline in lieu of the Police Jury mileage rate. In these instances, original, itemized receipts are required.

Automobile (rental – domestic travel)

- Reimbursement for a commercial rental vehicle as a primary mode of transportation is authorized only if the rental vehicle is more economical than any other type of public transportation, or if the destination is not otherwise accessible. Vehicle rental at a destination city is reimbursable. Original receipts are required.
- The Police Jury authorizes reimbursement for the most economic vehicle available. In certain circumstances large vehicles may be rented, if submitted and pre-approved in writing by the Secretary/Treasurer and Police Jury President.
- The rental agreement must clearly show the date and the points of departure/arrival, as well as the total cost. Drivers must adhere to the rental requirements, and restrictions must be followed. Original receipts are required.
- When vehicle rentals are necessary, the Police Jury encourages travelers to purchase collision damage waiver (CDW) and loss damage waiver (LDW) coverage. The Police Jury will reimburse the cost of CDW and LDW coverage; all other insurance reimbursements will be denied.
- Drivers should be aware of the extent of a coverage (if any) provided by his or her automobile insurance company for travel that is business or not personal in nature.

Business Meals – Including Tips

- Employees will be reimbursed for reasonable and actual expenses for meals incurred while on official Jury business travel. Itemized receipts showing the date and charges are required to be included with the reimbursement request form. Any employee expense report received without the receipts will be returned to employee.
- Reasonable expenses will follow the tier structure TOTAL rates outlined in the State of Louisiana Travel Policy (time limits do not apply).
 - Example: As of the 2019-2020 State of Louisiana Policy, Tier 1 is \$53 total for a day’s travel to specified cities. For the purposes of the Police Jury Travel Policy, this total may be applied at any point during the day (not restricted to breakfast, lunch, or diner).
 - For partial day travel, the total will be pro-rated on the number of hours of travel and reviewed for reasonableness.
 - Current rates as of July 1, 2019 are as follows; subject to change with the State Policy:
 - Tier 1: \$53 – Includes all in-state cities except for cities/Parishes listed in higher tiers
 - Tier 2: \$61 – Includes New Orleans, St. Bernard, Jefferson and Plaquemines Parishes and out-of-state cities except for cities listed in higher tiers.
 - Tier 3: \$65 – Includes Austin, Atlanta, Cleveland, Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver, Ft. Lauderdale, Hartford, Houston, Kansas City, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Nashville, Oakland, Orlando, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Portland, Sacramento, San Antonio, San Diego, Sedona, St. Louis, Wilmington, all of Alaska and Hawaii.
 - Tier 4: \$71 – Includes Baltimore, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, Boston, Alexandria, Arlington, New York City and Washington DC.

As previously stated above, if a traveler voluntarily opts to not attend a luncheon or banquet that is provided for in the cost of the registration, the traveler will not be reimbursed if he/she dines out during said luncheon/banquet.

Reasonable tips for 15% - 20% of the total meal cost may be included for reimbursement, to be included in the daily total allowed. Excessive tips, even within the daily allowable total, will not be reimbursed.

Taxes on meals are not reimbursable.

Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

Conference Registration Fees

- If possible, conference fees are to be prepaid through the Police Jury Office via check payment.

- If conference fees were not prepaid, the Police Jury will reimburse these fees, including business-related banquets or meals that are part of the conference registration. Original receipts to support the payment are required. If the conference does not provide a receipt, then a cancelled check, credit card slip/statement or documentation that the amount was paid is required for reimbursement.
- Entertainment activities such as golf outings, sightseeing tours and conference t-shirts will not be reimbursed.
- Registration fees paid directly by an individual will not be reimbursed until the conference is complete.

Lodging (commercial)

- The cost of overnight lodging (room rate) will be reimbursed to the traveler if the authorized travel is 90 miles or more from the Union Parish Police Jury Annex; AND the conference begins prior to 8:00 AM on the subsequent date of travel. Exceptions to this restriction may be approved in writing by the Secretary/Treasurer and the Police Jury President. Please note if traveling in excess of 160 miles, the time restraint of the conference starting time no longer applies.
- Employees/officials will be reimbursed the lodging rate plus taxes IF the lodging is out of state.
- It is the traveler's responsibility to furnish an itemized hotel bill for reimbursement. Personal phone calls, movies and other non-compliant expenditures will be deducted from the hotel bill.
- When the hotel or motel is the conference or convention site, employees are encouraged to book their lodging at that establishment. When reservations are not available at the conference hotel and multi-hotels are offered in conjunction with a conference, traveler shall seek process and utilize the least expensive.
- When the conference or convention is not hosted at a hotel/motel, reasonable lodging expenses will follow the tier structure rates outlined in the State of Louisiana Travel Policy.
 - Current rates as of July, 2019 are as follows: subject to change with the State policy:
 - Tier 1: \$94-\$100
 - Tier 2: \$94-\$161
 - Tier 3: \$170
 - Tier 4: \$200-\$225
- The Police Jury will reimburse lodging expenses at reasonable, single occupancy or standard business room rates. Only single room rates are authorized for payment or reimbursement unless the second party is representing the agency in an authorized capacity. If the lodging receipts shows more than a single occupancy, the single room rate must be noted. If reimbursement for more than the single room rate is requested, the name of the second person must be included.

Airfare

- Travelers are expected to obtain the lowest available airfare that reasonably meets business travel needs. An original itemized airline receipt, an e-ticket receipt/statement or an internet

receipt/statement is required. The receipt must show the method of payment and indicate that payment was made.

- Travelers are encouraged to book flights at least 30 days in advance to avoid premium airfare pricing. First-class tickets are not reimbursable.
- Coach class or economy tickets must be purchased for domestic or international flights. A higher priced coach ticket cannot be purchased for a subsequent upgrade in seating.
- Airline charges for the first checked bag for a business trip are reimbursable with an original itemized receipt, original e-ticket receipt/statement, or internet receipt/statement.

Rail transportation

- The Police Jury will pay for rail transportation provided that the cost does not exceed the cost of the least expensive airfare.
- Rail transportation may be prepaid by the Police Jury if submitted and pre-approved in writing by the Secretary/Treasurer and the Police Jury President.
- An original itemized receipt, original e-ticket receipt/statement, or internet receipt/statement is required. The receipt must show the method of payment and indicate the payment was made.

Other Incidentals

- Business Expenses: Business expenses, including faxes, photocopies, internet charges, data ports, and business telephone calls incurred while on travel status, can be reimbursed. The costs of personal telephone calls are the responsibilities of the individual. Original itemized receipts are required.
- Parking: Original receipts are required for parking fees (including airport parking). The lodging bill can be used as a receipt when charges are included as part of the overnight stay.
- Tolls: Original receipts are required for tolls fees incurred.
- Miscellaneous Transportation: Original receipts are required for taxi, contracted driver (Uber/Lyft), bus, subway, metro, ferry, and other modes of transportation for each occurrence. If the transportation does not provide a receipt, then a cancelled check, credit card slip/statement or documentation that the amount was paid is required for reimbursement.
- Incidentals: Incidental expenses such as laundry services, dry cleaning, and service tips (e.g. housekeeping or concierge tips), unless specifically cited in this policy, will not be reimbursed.

Vacation in Conjunction with Business Travel

- In cases in which vacation time is added to a business trip, any cost variance in airfare, car rental, or lodging must be clearly identified on the Travel Request form. The Police Jury will not prepare any personal expenses with the intention of being “repaid” at a later time, nor will any personal expenses be reimbursed.
- Additional costs for travel, lodging, meals, or other expenses for spouses or other family members will not be reimbursed unless the individual has a bona fide business purpose for traveling or attending the event.

Non-reimbursable Travel Expenses

The following items that may be associated with business travel will not be reimbursed by the Police Jury. This is not an exhaustive list of non-reimbursable items. If an item is not clearly defined in this policy, the traveler should consult with the Secretary/Treasurer of the Police Jury before incurring the costs.

- Airline club memberships
- Airline upgrades, including business class or first class of any flights
- Child care, babysitting, house-sitting, or pet sitting/kennel charges
- Commuting between home and the primary work location
- Costs incurred by traveler's failure to cancel travel or hotel reservations in a timely fashion
- Evening or formal wear expenses
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Laundry and dry cleaning
- Passports, vaccinations, and visas when not required as a specific and necessary condition travel
- Personal entertainment expenses including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay per view movies, in theater movies, social activities and related incidental costs
- Conference t-shirts
- Travel accident insurance premiums or purchase of additional travel insurance
- Other expense not directly related to business travel.

Waivers

All Waivers of the policy must receive prior approvals from the Police Jury, except in declared emergency situations.