



Travel Policy

Miami-Dade County Travel Policy

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POLICY STATEMENT

The County's Travel Policy has been prepared to serve as a reference tool to aid those individuals traveling on behalf of Miami-Dade County on official County business. These guidelines apply to all travel expenses regardless of the source of funds.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- ✓ Provide guidance to travelers, travel arrangers, approvers, and auditors on cost-effective management of travel expenses.
- ✓ Define the responsibility and accountability of the traveler and those approving travel on behalf of Miami-Dade County.
- ✓ Define the consequences of not adhering to the County's Travel Policy.
- ✓ Set the rates of reimbursement for mileage, lodging, and meal per diems for those traveling on official County business.
- ✓ Provide the connectivity between the County's Travel Policy and the County's INFORMS travel module.

The County's Travel Policy is applicable to all Miami-Dade County officials, employees and other authorized persons/organizations conducting official County business under the Mayor's purview. Elected Officials, their employees, and reporting offices may adopt their own Travel Policy in accordance with the Florida Statutes FS 112.061. These offices include, but are not limited to the Board of County Commissioners, State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Clerk of the Courts, and the Eleventh Judicial Circuit.

County approved travel is generally defined as all travel related to Miami-Dade County official business in excess of one's normal business day commute. County-approved travel does not include commuting between home and normal place of employment. Travel is also defined as travel outside the immediate vicinity of Miami-Dade County, which is generally defined as the area including and between the City of West Palm Beach and Marathon Key, Florida.

Department Directors should use their judgment in determining who should travel on behalf of their department and how many individuals should travel. Department Directors, individuals designated by the Department Director to authorize or approve travel, and the individual traveler will be held accountable for complying with the County's Travel Policy. Failure of the traveler to comply with the Travel Policy may result in denial of travel expense reimbursements or future travel advances.

Updates and/or changes to the County's Travel Policy may be made periodically and will be communicated either via email and/or memorandum. Amendments will be available electronically on the County's website and effective on the date of issuance. These amendments will supersede all previous Travel Policies.

WHO NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND THIS POLICY?

All individuals responsible for making County travel decisions/reservations on behalf of the County must comply with the County's Travel Policy. Members of outside organizations traveling on behalf of the County must also understand and comply with this Policy. In addition, it is the traveler's responsibility to understand and comply with this Policy as well as individuals approving the travel documents.

Elected Officials, their employees and reporting offices can opt to follow these guidelines/procedures or adopt their own travel guidelines/procedures in accordance with Florida Statutes FS 112.061.

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DEPARTMENTAL TRAVEL LIAISON

A Department Travel Liaison is an individual, within a department or organization, assigned to assist and/or prepare all travel related documents within a department or division. The Departmental Travel Liaison should be knowledgeable of the County's Travel Policy, as well as be familiar with the County's travel website. It is the responsibility of the Department Director or authorized designee to alert the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department as well as the Office of Management and Budget of any changes to or any additions and/or deletions to the departmental travel liaison contact list.

ISSUANCE OF DOCUMENT NUMBER

Document numbers for **Travel Authorizations (TAs)** and **Expense Reports (ERs)** are assigned by INFORMS Travel and Expense (T&E) Module. Approved exceptions where TAs and/or ERs are routed outside of INFORMS, should have document numbers assigned by the Department. Departments are responsible for keeping a log of manually assigned Travel Document numbers and should follow the following format: BU FY XXX. BU=Department's AP Business Unit, FY= Fiscal Year XXX=numerical sequence beginning with 001. For example, FN23001 would be used for the first routing exception for the Finance Department during fiscal year 22-23.

TRAVEL APPROVALS

Department Director and/or authorized designee is responsible for approving TAs and ERs for departmental personnel, consultants, guest speakers, interviewees, interview panelists, and the like, as well as designating which funds are to be used to record the cost of the travel. In addition, they are required to adhere to their annual adopted departmental travel budgets. Proper documentation is required with all travel for support and auditing purposes.

No traveler can approve their own TA or ER, including Department Directors. Travel Authorizations for a Department Director must be approved by the position they directly report to.

All foreign, group and/or legislative travel authorization **must be** approved by the Office of the Mayor or their authorized designee.

For Travels relating to Elected Officials, their staff and reporting Departments/Offices (Entities not under the Mayor's purview), Elected officials or authorized designees are responsible for approving their travels, as well as that of their staff. Travel for departments/offices reporting to Elected Officials shall be approved by the authorized designee according to their corresponding Travel Policy in accordance with the Florida Statutes Title X Chapter 112.061.

For individuals appointed to serve on County Boards, their travel must be:

- approved by the Chair of the committee
- the minutes of the meeting approving the travel must be submitted
- must include the required authorized signatures
- must include the required supporting documentation

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TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

All travelers must have an approved Travel Authorization (TA) within INFORMS for each trip before traveling. TAs should be approved by the Department Director and/or authorized designee before incurring any expenses. International, legislative and group travels must also have the Mayor and/or authorized designee's approval before incurring any expenses.

A "job aid" on how to enter information into the INFORMS travel authorization screen can be found on the County's INFORMS website under Financials and Supply Chain Management – Training Materials. The job aid will provide the individual with instructions on creating the Travel Authorization, as well inputting all the required information necessary to initiate travel.

Non-County employees and previously approved exceptions authorized to travel on behalf of Miami-Dade County on official County business, must obtain their authorization by initiating a Travel Request Form outside of INFORMS. Please note that a W-9 is required in order to process any reimbursement for non-County employees.

The TA must clearly indicate the purpose of the trip, why travel is necessary, and how the trip benefits the County. This information must be included in the notes, comments, or as an attachment.

The "**Estimated Cost**" section on the TA must be completed whether **the County or an outside organization is paying** for the travel expenses. The TA must be accompanied with supporting documentation for all estimated expenses such as airfare, lodging, ground transportation, etc. Travel related costs must be reimbursed, in compliance with Florida Statutes, for the amount equal to the value of the most efficient and economical means, taking into consideration travel time, season, cost of transportation, and per diem or subsistence required. Whenever practical, travel itineraries should be scheduled in a manner that does not result in unnecessary travel-related expenditures. By planning arrival and departures closely to the business schedule of a trip, additional expenses such as lodging and/or food can be avoided. Travelers not able to comply with these parameters must request approval from their Department Director and/or authorized designee.

Departments that have specific internal travel procedures shall continue to adhere to their departmental policies. However, it is mandatory that travelers confirm with the departmental travel liaison that they comply with the County's Travel Policies and administrative orders.

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

Air Travel

When air travel is necessary, the lowest, most economical available airfare should be procured. The use of discounted fares is encouraged unless the probability and penalties associated with cancellations or changes outweigh the savings.

The use of discounted fares, requiring an early and/or extended stay beyond scheduled official County business is allowed if there is a material cost savings to the County. If savings are significant when extending travel, lodging and meals may be reimbursed. Travelers requesting this travel extension may be required to take personal leave for any additional time not required for official County business. The Department Director and/or authorized designee must authorize the extended leave, when appropriate and consideration should be given to time away from work responsibilities.

The traveler and/or department's travel liaison is responsible for choosing the most economical airfare available for their particular travel itinerary. Things to consider when choosing the most economical airfare:

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- Connecting flights
- Two-hour windows for departure and arrival times provided that official County business is not affected
- Alternate airports should be considered when factoring in the cost of any additional ground transportation needed to transport the traveler to the official County business site
- Special fares for individuals who are part of a group or convention (travelers are required to advise their travel liaison prior to TA preparation/approval, should this be available)

The County will reimburse the traveler for the cost of holding a seat reservation. The County acknowledges that seating arrangements for airlines vary and that to ensure a seat on a plane, a traveler may need to pay extra to reserve a seat. Seat upgrades are not reimbursed.

When submitting the TA for approval, the traveler must include a copy of three flight options to prove that the lowest, most economical airfare was requested and procured. These flight options must be dated within the same timeframe as the TA submission. If the most economical airfare is not secured, a justification from the traveler, authorized by the Department Director or authorized designee, must be provided with the TA and/or ER stating why a more expensive option was chosen and why it is in the best interest of the County for the traveler to secure the higher priced fare.

If airfare prices have increased since the approval of the TA, three new flight options should be obtained at the time of purchase to justify the change in price and to demonstrate that the most economical option on that date was chosen. This documentation must be attached to the ER.

If traveling on official county business and the traveler opts to purchase a ticket with their personal accumulated “frequent flyer miles” or “rewards” of any kind, they will not be reimbursed for the usage.

The traveler is responsible for the safekeeping of all travel documents and travel advances received. In the event a ticket is lost or stolen, the traveler may be held responsible for all replacement costs.

The Clerk of the Court and Comptroller’s Finance Operations Department, OMB, and any other authorized designee reserve the right to return all travel requests/travel expense forms to the department due to lack of proper documentation prior to any travel advances and/or reimbursements being processed.

Ticket Restrictions and Refunds/Credits

Individual travelers will be held responsible for adhering to the travel restrictions imposed on ticket purchases. Before purchasing a ticket, the traveler should read the rules and regulations that pertain to cancellations, itinerary changes, and refunds and any fees, penalties, and restrictions on the ticket. Each booking website publishes its own set of rules and regulations that outline the terms and conditions of ticket offerings.

It is the traveler’s responsibility to inform the department travel liaison of any airline ticket credits or vouchers received due to unscheduled changes in the traveler’s itinerary by the airline while on County business. It is the Department’s responsibility to track and maintain all travel credits/vouchers and ensure that they are only used for future County business travels.

When vouchers are offered by airlines as incentive to reschedule a flight, travelers should not volunteer to receive vouchers if such action would result in additional travel expenses.

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Traveling with Luggage and Materials

Travelers will be reimbursed up to one checked bag per travel when traveling up to four days. For trips five or more days, travelers will be reimbursed for up to two checked bags. In cases where the traveler is carrying work related materials, the cost for those checked bags will be reimbursed; however, the TA must specify the need for additional luggage in advance. The traveler **must always** provide a copy of the checked bag receipt from the airline to be reimbursed for any additional luggage charges.

Travel/Booking Agent Fees

Travelers are not permitted to use travel/booking agents unless previously authorized by the Department Director or authorized designee and only in extreme and unusual circumstances. Should a travel/booking agent be required, a memorandum or written explanation approved by the Department Director or authorized designee within the department is required and must be attached to the TA addressing the savings realized and benefits to the County.

Automobile Travel

The use of an automobile should be considered for shorter in-state trips when savings outweigh travel costs and time permits. Department Directors or authorized designee within the department should also consider the employee's time away from work when comparing the use of an automobile in lieu of air travel. Automobiles may be utilized when equipment, displays or other items are being transported as part of official County business. Due to special insurance restrictions, **no County or personal vehicle is to be used out-of-state on official County business without express written permission of the People and Internal Operations Department (PIOD) Risk Management Division.**

When the traveler is opting to use a County vehicle for County business trips, the Fleet Management Division of the People and Internal Operations Department (PIOD) will determine whether a County vehicle or commercial rental vehicle is the most cost efficient form of transportation. County vehicles used for travel will be assigned by the PIOD Fleet Management Downtown Motor Pool, in order to ensure that the vehicle's condition is acceptable for travel.

Non-County individuals may be transported in a County vehicle within the boundaries of the City of West Palm Beach to Marathon Key, Florida if involved in official County related business. If traveling outside these boundaries, authorization from the Department Director or authorized designee within the department via memo prior to travel as well as written authorization from the Director of PIOD's Risk Management Division is required. The memo must state the reason the non-County individual is traveling with them and should be attached to the TA. Administrative Order No. 6-2: "Assignment, Operation, Acquisition, Maintenance and Disposal of County Vehicles" dictates these requirements.

When traveling out of state on official County business via a county vehicle or personal vehicle, the traveler must seek guidance and permission from the Risk Management Division of the People and Internal Operations Department (PIOD) as to what is required.

For more information on using County vehicles, please reach out to PIOD's Fleet Management Division at 305.418.2727

Car Rental

Rental cars should be utilized when the cost is less than that of a local taxi or other mode of transportation. Inquiries should always be made as to any special transportation services provided by conferences and/or hotels to and from the airport and

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meeting or conference location to avoid unnecessary expenses. Generally, rental vehicles should not be used on travel that is two days or less.

If the rental of a vehicle with relevant parking costs is determined to be the most cost-effective mode of ground transportation, the most economical car available is to be rented. Mid-size or larger vehicles should only be rented when three or more travelers are sharing a vehicle. Additionally, the traveler must consider parking fees and state those estimated expenses on the TA. Should the traveler incur parking fees, a receipt for those charges as well as for fuel must be submitted with the ER.

The traveler **must always purchase the collision damage waiver insurance** offered by car rental agencies. **Personal coverage is not adequate** when on official County business. When re-fueling a rental vehicle as required by the rental agreement, travelers must use the most economical option available and re-fuel at a gas station instead of using the car rental gas service option.

Costs for any special services or equipment requested by the employee, for example the rental of a GPS, will not be reimbursed unless directly related to official County business and a memorandum or written explanation is approved prior to travel by the Department Director or authorized designee must be submitted with the ER.

If rental car is not equipped with a toll transponder and the traveler decides to use their personal transponder, they must submit a toll statement (e.g. SUNPASS) with their ER.

If a personal toll transponder is not used, and toll charges are incurred, a statement from the rental car company listing such charges must be submitted with the ER. If the rental car company does not provide an itemized statement, the traveler may submit a copy of their personal credit card statement showing the toll charges for specific travel.

Mileage Reimbursements

When requesting mileage reimbursement, the traveler must include a printout of their mileage map with the TA. This is required when determining the number of miles to be driven from the traveler's point of departure to their destination. All points of departure, when driving from Miami-Dade County shall either be the traveler's assigned place of work or residence. There are a variety of tools on the world wide web to assist the traveler in mapping their mileage from point A to point B (e.g., MapQuest, Google Maps).

Employees who use a private vehicle to conduct official County business must provide proof of insurance and a valid State of Florida Driver's License to the departmental travel liaison and the Departmental Personnel Representative prior to travel, in accordance with Administrative Order No. 6-3: "Use of Private Vehicles".

Mileage reimbursement for the use of a personal vehicle during County travel, as approved by the Board of County Commissioners per Resolution R-1345-03, is the U.S. General Services Administration federal mileage rate. Travelers can refer to the U.S. General Services Administration website <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715> for the most updated mileage reimbursement rate. This link can also be found on the County's travel website.

For travel where the cost of airfare is less expensive than mileage reimbursement, the traveler may still prefer the use of his/her automobile for personal reasons. In these cases, the Department Director or authorized designee must approve the traveler's additional time away from work. The traveler will only be reimbursed up to the airfare amount. When submitting the TA, the traveler must also submit at least three alternative airfares in addition to the standard mileage mapping.

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Tolls

Tolls paid while conducting official County business will be reimbursed. Receipts must be included in the ER. When requesting reimbursement for Tolls, please either include the toll receipt or a printout of the toll payment system report (e.g., SunPass). To calculate Florida Tolls, use the Toll calculator <https://floridasturnpike.com/TollCalc/> and include the estimated toll as part of your TA.

Other Transportation Modes (Bus, Rail, Private Aircraft, etc.)

Consideration will be given to other modes of transportation when costs and travel time suggest there are reasonable alternate modes of transportation. The County will reimburse for applicable expenses, at the current stipulated federal rate, for mileage reimbursement according to the U.S. General Services Administrative guidelines. If a private aircraft is used, costs will only be reimbursed up to the cost of the lowest airfare quotes.

LODGING EXPENSES

Administrative Order 6-1 "Travel on County Business" requires the cost of lodging expenses to be kept to an absolute minimum. All lodging (both domestic and foreign) and meal reimbursement rates will correspond directly to the published rates provided on the U.S. General Services Administration website. The U.S. General Services Administration listing of domestic and the U.S. Department of State foreign maximum allowable lodging rates can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287> (domestic) and http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp (foreign) This link can also be found on the County's travel website.

When attending conferences/educational trainings where a hotel or group of hotels have been designated by the conference committee as "conference hotels", the daily maximum allowable lodging rate may be exceeded, if the traveler is staying in one of these designated hotels. When submitting the TA, proof of such designation must be attached. This can be in the form of an agenda, copy of the registration, flyer etc. If this information is not included with the traveler's TA, the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department reserves the right to return the submitted documents to the Department for the proper paperwork.

When preparing for travel, it is important that all travelers inform the departmental travel liaison of any conference rates or other reduced rates, to include but not limited to senior citizen discounts, membership discounts, conference discounts, etc. In addition, the traveler and/or departmental travel liaison should always check the hotels for government rates, as well. It is important to note that the traveler may need to present proper County identification on demand to receive the government-discounted rates when applicable at the prevailing hotel.

Any no-show charges are strictly the responsibility of the traveler unless approved in advance by the Department Director or authorized designee. Should the Department Director or authorized designee approve such charges, or any other fees related to lodging, excluding taxes, a memorandum or written explanation approved by the Department Director and/or authorized designee needs to be attached to the traveler's ER stating why it is in the best interest of the County to pay for such charges. If this information is not included with the traveler's ER, the Finance Department reserves the right to return the submitted documents to the Department for the proper paperwork.

Lodging expense reimbursement will not be provided for travel within the immediate vicinity of Miami-Dade County, generally defined as the area including and between the City of West Palm Beach and Marathon Key. Any exceptions must have the

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prior approval of the Department Director and the Office of the Mayor or authorized Mayoral designee. All approvals must be in writing and attached to the TA and ER. **If a group of ten or more travelers are going to the same location and no special rate is available, the departmental travel liaison must be notified so he/she can attempt to negotiate a group rate.**

Individuals traveling on official county business can opt to lodge in an **“airbnb”** if the daily rate does not exceed the maximum allowable lodging rate as stipulated in “Lodging” section of this document. If an individual is opting to stay in an **airbnb**, it should be noted on their TA and ER. If the final receipt does not itemize the expense, additional documentation to include reservation dates, daily rate, and any fees associated should be included, as well as proof of payment.

MEAL EXPENSES

Miami-Dade County uses the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) meal reimbursement rates for domestic travel and the U.S. Department of State’s foreign maximum allowable meal reimbursement rates for foreign travel, which can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287> (domestic) and http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp (foreign). These links can also be found on the County’s travel website.

Should the traveler have meals included as part of their trip whether traveling domestically or abroad, these meals should be deducted from their maximum allowable meal reimbursement rate. If a traveler needs to deduct any provided meal, the rate breakdown for breakfast, lunch and dinner is listed on the GSA website above for domestic travel, and at http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=114&menu_id=81 for foreign travel.

When calculating the meal reimbursement for the first and last day of travel for domestic or international travel, please refer to the links provided above.

In addition, meal allowances will not be provided for travel within the immediate vicinity of Miami-Dade County, which is defined as the area including and between the City of West Palm Beach and Marathon Key.

Trips with a duration over 30 days will not be allowed to claim meal reimbursement after the 30th day of travel.

Any exception to the Policy must include a written explanation and approval from the Department Director.

OTHER REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

Travelers opting to be reimbursed for expenditures incurred as a result of traveling on official County business, must have substantiated receipts showing the transaction as having been processed. Receipts for a traveler’s meal does NOT need to be substantiated as travelers are given a daily meal allowance which is addressed in the “Meal Expenses” section of this document.

- ✓ **Taxi/Shuttle/Rideshare Service** – Taxi/shuttle/rideshare service (ex. Uber, Lyft) expenses are reimbursable when used for official County business to and from business related activities. Receipts must be obtained from the taxi/shuttle/rideshare service operators and attached in the ER in order to receive a reimbursement. Shuttle services are encouraged as costs are typically lower for this service. Local taxi/shuttle/rideshare service expenses will only be reimbursed in lieu of parking at the Miami International Airport or Hollywood/ Ft. Lauderdale International Airport.

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- ✓ **Parking charges** – Parking charges associated with an approved rental vehicle, County vehicle, or personal vehicle is reimbursable while on official County business provided that a receipt is attached on the ER. This includes hotel parking, airport parking, garage parking or any other parking associated with official County business.
- ✓ **Valet Parking**- The County will reimburse the traveler for valet parking when it is the only option at the hotel and self-service parking is not available service. It is up to the traveler, when driving to the destination, to inquire with the hotel on the parking services provided and include that information as part of the traveler's TA and ER in order to be reimbursed. The County will not reimburse for valet parking if self-service parking is available at the traveler's lodging destination. Any exceptions to this rule will have to be included in an approved memo from the traveler to the Department Director or authorized designee stating why it is in the best interest of the County that the travel valet park as opposed to using the self-service parking. The approved authorized memo needs to be included as part of the traveler TA and ER.
- ✓ **Telephone calls/faxes** - Telephone calls/faxes for County-related business are reimbursable. One personal phone call of reasonable duration per day will be reimbursed. In order for a traveler to be reimbursed, receipts must be included in the ER.
- ✓ **Currency conversions** - Currency conversion charges on international travel are reimbursable.
- ✓ **Registration fees** - Registration fees for conferences or courses can be paid via MDC p-card after a TA is fully approved. Registration fees can also be paid to the vendor when the registration paperwork is submitted along with the traveler's TA via the regular Accounts Payable process. If sufficient time (seven working days prior to travel) is not allowed for a check to be issued and mailed prior to the conference, the traveler has two options: 1) have a check issued payable to the vendor and hand delivered at the conference by the traveler or 2) the traveler can opt to pay in advance (once TA is approved) and be reimbursed when submitting the ER with proof of payment.
- ✓ **Curbside check in** - The County will reimburse the traveler for curbside check in when the traveler is carrying additional County materials previously approved by the Department Director or authorized designee other than the employee's normal personal travel baggage. The authorized approval needs to be in memo form and signed by the Department Director or authorized designee and included in the traveler's TA and ER.
- ✓ **Tips** – Except for meals, reasonable tips and gratuities may be reimbursed to the traveler as per the following:
 - (a) Actual tips paid to taxi drivers which shall not exceed fifteen percent of the fare.
 - (b) Actual amount paid for **mandatory** valet parking which shall not exceed \$1 per occasion and which was incurred in the performance of public business.

TRAVEL EXPENSES NOT REIMBURSED BY THE COUNTY

- ✓ First/Business class airfares unless previously approved with accompanying memorandum or written explanation approved by the Department Director and/or authorized designee and Mayor's Chief
- ✓ Airline clubs
- ✓ Airline upgrades
- ✓ Seat upgrades
- ✓ Travel Insurance
- ✓ Luggage insurance
- ✓ Luggage wrapping

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- ✓ Alcohol
- ✓ Any additional expenses as a result of traveling with spouse/guest
- ✓ Books, magazines, newspapers for personal use
- ✓ Childcare, babysitting, house-sitting, pet-sitting/kennel charges (if not work related)
- ✓ Excess charges incurred based on personal preference rather than County policy
- ✓ Expenses for the repairs/damages of privately owned vehicles
- ✓ Expenses related to damages to uninsured rental cars
- ✓ Traffic or parking tickets or fines
- ✓ Gifts/Flowers
- ✓ Haircuts and personal grooming
- ✓ Shoeshine services
- ✓ Insurance coverage for privately owned vehicles
- ✓ Laundry/dry cleaning (An exception may be made for extended domestic/foreign travel with receipts and authorized memorandum or written explanation approved by the Department Director and/or authorized designee)
- ✓ Lost or stolen items
- ✓ Online charges for Internet access are not reimbursable unless previously approved by the Department Director and/or authorized designee
- ✓ Passport charges, vaccinations, and visas, when not required as a specific and necessary condition of the travel
- ✓ Personal entertainment and/or tours including in-flight/hotel pay-per-view movies, headsets, health club facilities, and/or social activities
- ✓ Personal travel insurance
- ✓ Porter charges
- ✓ Excessive Tips
- ✓ Travel mileage rate reimbursement expenses in a personal vehicle to the airport from home and vice versa.
- ✓ Car rental gas service fees
- ✓ Expenses paid via a payment processor where the last 4 digits of a credit card do not appear on a receipt (ex. Apple Pay)
- ✓ Any expenses paid using accumulated miles, points, or rewards of any kind

CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

The County **does not pay** for extracurricular breakfasts, lunches, dinners and/or activities not included as part of the standard meetings, conferences, or educational training packages. If a traveler wishes to attend such events, he/she can do so at their own expense.

However, if a Department Director determines that it is in the best interest of the County that the traveler attends such events, a memorandum or written explanation approved by the Department Director or authorized designee stating why it is in the best interest of the County the traveler attend for the exception, **must be included** in the traveler's TA and ER.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

All international travel must be approved by the Department Director and the Office of the Mayor or authorized Mayor designee. For non-mayoral departments/offices, refer to the Travel Approvals section on page 4 of this policy.

Administrative Order 6-1 "Travel on County Business" requires the cost of lodging expenses to be kept at an absolute minimum. All lodging and meal reimbursement rates will correspond directly to the published rates provided on the U.S.

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Department of State Bureau of Administration's website. For more information on this subject, please refer to the lodging and meal reimbursement section of this document.

Passports, vaccinations, and visas: When traveling abroad on official County business, it is the traveler's responsibility to ensure that they have the proper documentation, current passport, visa, and vaccinations required for that country. The U.S. Department of State has a website http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html which provides the traveler with important information necessary when traveling abroad. You can also find this link on the County's travel website.

Fees for visas, passports, and vaccinations are allowable when they are a specific and a necessary condition for fulfilling a work assignment on behalf of the County. A memorandum or written explanation approved by the Department Director documenting the need for these expenses must be included in the traveler's TA and ER.

Currency Conversions: When traveling abroad on official County business and requesting reimbursement for expenditures incurred, the traveler must submit to the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department a printout of their currency conversion rates for each individual day of travel. Currency conversion sites can be found on the world wide web. Currency conversion reimbursement rates are based on the daily rate for the Country of destination for each day of travel.

MULTIPLE TRAVELERS

If multiple travelers are attending the same meeting, conference or educational training, all travel requests should be processed at the same time through the departmental travel liaison. If this is not possible, please note in the TA that other requests are forthcoming. Multiple travel requests to the same meeting, conference, or educational training, should be coordinated by the departmental travel liaison to maximize savings.

In addition, each traveler must pay for their own expenses IF an MDC p-card is NOT used. Travelers should not pay for other travelers' expenses if they will be seeking reimbursement from the County.

PERSONAL TRAVEL COMBINED WITH COUNTY BUSINESS TRAVEL

Documentation:

When a traveler wishes to combine County business with personal travel, it is important that it be noted on the Travel Authorization (TA). In addition, a memorandum or written explanation approved by the traveler's Department Director or authorized designee requesting authorization to do so, must be attached.

Expenditures:

If a traveler is combining an official County business trip with a personal trip, the traveler cannot charge any expenses for non-County staff on the County's p-card or charge expenses resulting from their personal trip. In addition, the traveler cannot be reimbursed for any additional expenditures incurred from combining the business/personal trip outside of official County business.

Airfare:

When traveling earlier or departing later as a result of combining County business with personal travel, two sample round trip air fares must be included as part of the TA. The samples submitted must show: (1) the cost of the entire airfare including both business and personal travel (two quotes, see requirements in 'Air Travel' section) and (2) the individual business airfare round trip on its own (two quotes, see requirements in 'Air Travel' section). This is necessary to determine and disclose any

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additional costs that may be incurred from personal travel. Should the cost of the ticket be greater, as a result of the traveler combining personal with business, it is the responsibility of the traveler to pay the County for the difference in airfare costs.

When preparing the TA, it is important that in the authorization a statement is included noting that the traveler will be responsible for paying the difference in airfare, should it be necessary and when the personal travel begins.

BASIC TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION

Travel Authorization (TA) Documentation

Requests for travel require the completion and submission of a TA to the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department. The traveler's TA should include the following documentation, when applicable:

- ✓ At least three (3) alternative airfare quotes
- ✓ A printout of the maximum allowable lodging and meal reimbursement rates from either the U.S. General Services Administration website or the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Administration's website
- ✓ Mileage map print out
- ✓ Conference brochures and/or supporting itinerary
- ✓ Designated Conference hotel reference
- ✓ Car rental information
- ✓ Toll Calculator print out
- ✓ Registration information for check requests
- ✓ Spreadsheet showing the calculations for the estimated meal and lodging (excluding taxes) rates
- ✓ Any supporting documentation required from an organization
- ✓ All required authorized memorandums or approved written explanations authorizing any exceptions to the County's Travel Policy
- ✓ Required authorized signatures (for non-County employee travels)

It is important to note that if the traveler's TA does not contain the required documentation necessary, the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department reserves the right to return the TA back to the department for the proper documentation, prior to approving.

Expense Report (ER) Documentation

A "job aid" on addressing travel expenditures can be found on the County's INFORMS website under Financials and Supply Chain Management – Training Materials. The job aid provides instructions on travel expense report guidelines, expense reporting presentation, expense report recording and p-card reconciliation and transactions.

- Associated TA
- Applied Travel Advance (if applicable)
- Final receipts must be submitted with the traveler's ER for **ALL** expenses lines (whether prepaid or to be reimbursed). Examples of required receipts include but are not limited to:
 - ✓ Airline tickets

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- ✓ Luggage
 - ✓ Flight Itinerary documentation
 - ✓ Lodging
 - ✓ Car rental
 - ✓ Special car rental equipment
 - ✓ Tolls
 - ✓ Parking
 - ✓ Fuel (when required)
 - ✓ Taxi or special transportation
 - ✓ Communication bills
 - ✓ Passport fees
 - ✓ Visa receipts (when required for international travel)
 - ✓ Vaccination receipts (when required for international travel)
- Conference Agenda (if different from the one provided in the TA)
 - Justification memorandum/ or approved written explanation for any deviations or exceptions to the Policy
 - Meal per-diem calculation
 - Mileage calculations

ER forms are to be completed and submitted within five working days upon completion of travel. Travel advances **will not be issued** to any individual in a department with delinquent expense reports.

TRAVEL ADVANCES

A **County employee** may be advanced up to 80 percent of the estimated out-of-pocket travel expenses. Travel advances **will exclude** items pre-paid by the County. Travel advances may be obtained from the Travel Group of the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department. The Travel Advance must be requested within the TA and be fully approved seven (7) working days prior to the traveler's departure date.

It is important to note that the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department may deny travel advance privileges to any individual or department for failing to properly document or promptly submit their ERs.

The following departments issue their own travel advances and travelers from these departments will need to contact the respective departmental travel liaisons as to the internal travel procedures for travel advances.

- Housing and Community Development
- Miami-Dade Aviation Department
- Water and Sewer Department

It is **NOT** the intent of the County to have a county employee experience financial hardship as a result of paying for their expenses, when traveling on official county business. We recommend MDC p-card use for all eligible expenses. Please refer to the p-card policy for further detail. It is the responsibility of the traveler to ensure all proper documentation/receipts are turned in with their ER. If the traveler is missing the required documentation, they may be responsible for reimbursing the county back for said funds. Should a traveler lose required documented receipts, they should reach out to their departmental travel liaison as well as the Travel Group of the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department for direction on how to handle.

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Lost or Stolen cash or checks: Lost or stolen travel advance checks should be reported to the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department Travel Group as soon as possible. The Check Replacement Affidavit form should be submitted to the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department Travel Group for payment re-issuance.

Travel Advances for Non-County Employees: Travel advances are NOT normally given to non-County individuals. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Department Director, in advance, with a memorandum or comment explaining the reasons why an advance is needed for a non-County individual. The memorandum or comment must also explain how the monies advanced will be recaptured if the travel does not occur or if the traveler does not submit the required paperwork, upon completion of their travel. This must be approved by the Department Director and/or authorized designee and the department's Deputy Mayor, and must be submitted with the traveler's TA.

PERSONAL PAYMENTS

County travelers may opt to use a personal payment method when procuring travel. If the traveler procures travel related expenses using a personal payment method, the traveler must still adhere to the County's Travel Policies, prior to purchase. A fully approved TA is required prior to making any travel related purchases. A traveler **will not be reimbursed** for travel expenses incurred personally if authorization from the Department Director or authorized designee is not granted. Apple Pay is not to be used as a payment method for any travel-related expense.

FREQUENT FLYER MILES

In a Request for Opinion RQO 04-165, the County Travel Coordinator sought an advisory opinion from the Commission on Ethics and Public Trust regarding frequent flyer miles obtained by County employees, consultants, and/or job applicants on County business. Because the Code of Ethics does not generally apply to County consultants or job applicants, the Ethic's Commission opinion was limited to County employees. The opinion was governed by the Code of Ethics, Section (e) "gifts."

Employees traveling on official County business sometimes pay for travel expenses with their personal credit cards. As a result, they may earn frequent flyer miles, assigned to them personally, and not transferable to the County. Because the miles have an economic value for which the employee has not paid lawful and adequate consideration, they are gifts, as defined by Section (e) of the Code.

The Ethics Commission opined that an employee who pays for County-related travel expenses with a personal credit card may use the frequent flyer miles he/she acquires, but the employee may not convert or sell the miles for cash. Additionally, if the value of the miles exceeds \$100 during any quarter, the employee must disclose the miles as a gift. This opinion is in keeping with federal law, which permits federal employees under similar circumstances to retain frequent flyer miles for themselves. Additionally, the IRS does not tax frequent flyer miles unless the miles are converted into cash or used for other purposes.

An individual traveling on official County business **cannot** use their accumulated personal frequent flyer miles to purchase the ticket. Personal frequent flyer miles used for travel by an individual on official County business **will not be reimbursed.**

County employees which earn frequent flyer miles related to County travel expenses and convert those miles to cash can be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

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CANCELLATION AND CHANGES TO TRAVEL

If an approved trip has been cancelled, the Travel Authorization must be cancelled in INFORMS. Cancellations of travels for which travel advances were issued or any change that results in an overpayment requires that monies be returned to the County within five (5) business days of cancellation or change. Documentation of the cancellation or change must be submitted to the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department.

If itinerary changes are required during travel, the traveler is expected to obtain prior approval from their departmental travel liaison who in turn, will advise and obtain approval from the Department Director and/or authorized designee. If there is any monetary or job-related impact as a result of the requested change, this must also be approved prior to such changes. In addition, any changes made must follow the County's Travel Policy. Should changes to the travel itinerary be necessary, it is the traveler's responsibility to either contact the airline in question or the customer service number provided at the time of the ticket purchase. The traveler should always be aware of any penalties and/or charges assessed when making a change to the itinerary. Generally, if prior approval was obtained, any costs associated with the cancellation or change to a traveler's itinerary will be absorbed by the individuals' department, office, or organization. Modifications to travel plans should be the exception, not the norm. However, departments reserve the right to deny reimbursements when the traveler fails to adhere to the County's Travel Policy and/or their departmental policies and procedures.

If the change in itinerary occurs **PRIOR** to the approval of the TA, the TA must be updated to reflect such change.

If the change in itinerary occurs **AFTER** the approval of the original TA, such TA must be cancelled by the traveler and a new TA must be submitted and fully approved prior to the travel.

If the change in itinerary occurs **AFTER** the departure of the traveler, a memorandum or approved written explanation by the Department Director or authorized designee documenting the reasons for the change and the additional costs incurred must be submitted with the traveler's ER.

Changes to itineraries at the end of the trip solely for personal convenience are discouraged. However, it is the discretion of the Department Director as to whether the traveler will be held responsible for any additional charges incurred. Such changes, whether reimbursable or not, must be supported by a memorandum or written explanation approved by the Department Director or authorized designee.

TRAVEL PAID FOR BY A THRID PARTY OR OUTSIDE ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY*

A letter from all outside organization on the company's letterhead or an official company email itemizing the travel expenses must be attached to the TA.

*Pursuant to ordinance 04-55, if the outside organization is a county contractor, vendor, service provider, bidder or proposer, it is the Department's responsibility to seek prior approval from the BCC.

Methods of processing travel paid for by a third party or outside organization:

- 1) Travel paid by an outside organization **PRIOR** to commencement of travel – When an outside organization pays all costs upfront, it should be handled as normal County travel, abiding by County Travel Policies to include completion of a TA and ER. Note the travel documents should show no cost to the County by expense type as applicable.

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- 2) Travel paid by an outside organization **AFTER** travel is completed – When a travel is paid in advance by the County and some or all costs are reimbursed by an outside organization it should be handled as normal County travel, abiding by County Travel Policies to include completion of a TA and ER. The ER should detail which expense was paid for by the County and which was paid for by the outside organization. When the outside organization is reimbursing the County with a check, the check must be made payable to Miami-Dade County. If the organization reimburses the employee, it is the employee's responsibility to reimburse the County. Proof of reimbursement (deposit, wire confirmation, etc.) must be provided in the ER.

INFORMS TRAINING MATERIAL

INFORMS training materials on Travel Authorizations (FIN 214) and Expense Reports (FIN 215) can be found at: <http://www.miamidade.gov/global/humanresources/training/materials-rollout-2.page>

TRAVEL WEBSITE ADDRESS

The County's Travel Policy can be found on the County's Travel website: <https://www.miamidade.gov/global/management/county-employee-travel.page>

QUESTIONS AND UPDATES

For questions and updated information on the County's Travel Policy, please check the County's travel website, your assigned departmental travel liaison, the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller's Finance Operations Department, Travel Group at 305-375-5111 or contact the County's Travel Coordinator in the Office of Management and Budget at 305-375-5143.