

# **Burbank City Council Expense Reimbursement Policy**

## **I Policy Statement**

The City of Burbank recognizes the constructive value of professional conferences, seminars, meetings, and training and provides travel funds for City officials, department managers, and other employees who attend such official events. City Council members shall be entitled to reimbursement for their reasonable expenses associated with travel, meals, lodging and other actual and necessary expenses associated with attending such events in a manner and in the amounts as set forth in this policy. This policy shall apply where City Council members act as members of the Redevelopment Agency and Housing Authority, and any other legal entity.

This policy shall be formally adopted by the City Council and any changes thereto shall also be adopted by City Council.

## **II Definitions**

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. AEvents@ shall mean and include professional conferences, seminars, meetings, and training.
- B. ACity@ shall include the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Burbank and the Burbank Housing Authority.
- C. ACouncil member@ shall also include where the City Council members act as members of the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Burbank, the Burbank Housing Authority, and any other entity or body duly created by the Burbank City Council.

## **III Authorized Expenses**

Expenses incurred by City Council members engaging and/or participating in the following activities and/or events constitute authorized and reimbursable expenses (as long as other requirements of this policy are also met):

- A. Communicating with representatives of regional, state and national government and their various agencies and entities on City,

Redevelopment Agency or Housing Authority adopted or authorized policy positions;

B. Attending educational seminars designed to improve City Council members' skill and information levels;

C. Participating in regional, state and national organizations whose activities affect the city's interests (e.g., California League of Cities, National League of Cities, California Redevelopment Association, etc.);

D. Attending City-sponsored events;

E. International travel, with prior approval of City Council.

#### **IV Unauthorized Expenses**

The following expenditures incurred by City Council members in the course and scope of their official duties shall not be reimbursed without prior Council approval:

A. The personal portion of any trip;

B. Political contributions;

C. Family expenses, including those of a partner when accompanying Council member on official business, child or pet care;

D. Entertainment Expenses, including theatre, shows, movies, sporting events, golf, spa treatments, etc.

E. Non-mileage personal automobile expenses including repairs, insurance, gasoline, traffic citations;

F. Personal losses incurred while on City business.

#### **V Travel**

All travel on City business shall be planned to provide for the most economical mode of transportation reasonably available. Reasonable travel modes include:

\$ Air

\$ Private car

\$ City-owned car

Travel expenses shall be allowed or reimbursed for days actually spent on City business, for programmed days of a conference or meetings, and for time spent in travel to and from these events. Expenses shall be computed for the days of the conference or event attended and for travel days not to exceed one day before and after the event and shall be allowed only if time and/or travel schedules prohibit travel at reasonable hours on the actual beginning and ending days of a conference. Reasonable hours are defined as between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. Reimbursement for more than one day of travel to and from the destination must be approved in advance by the City Council.

A. Air Travel

Allowable costs for air travel shall be calculated by using the shortest and most direct route with the least number of en-route stops. All air travel shall be booked as far in advance as possible, so as to receive the lowest fares possible except where the lowest fare is for an overnight flight, which may be chosen by the individual but is not required. Council members shall use government and group rates for travel offered in conjunction with the event when available. A Council member shall not be reimbursed for the cost of first class air travel except in extraordinary circumstances and approved by the City Council.

B. City Car

Use of a City-owned car is considered more economical than a private car. However, such use is limited to the availability of a pool car and is not mandatory.

C. Use of Private Vehicle

1. If a personal vehicle is used for travel, reimbursement shall be based on the lesser of the following two costs:

- (a) The least cost round-trip air travel available, or
- (b) The allowable per mile cost, as defined in the Internal Revenue Code (with annual adjustments in the Internal Revenue Code), from Burbank.

2. Mileage reimbursement of less than the allowable maximum petty cash amount should be paid through the department's

Petty Cash Account, however, all such mileage reimbursement must still be reported on the City Council Travel and Expense Claim Form and Report.

**D. Use of City-Owned Vehicle**

There shall be no allowance or reimbursement for transportation when a City-owned vehicle is used. However, any out-of-pocket expenses, including gas or maintenance costs incurred in operating the vehicle shall be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts.

**VI Lodging**

**A. Local Accommodations**

Except where necessary and where approved in advance by the Council, when possible, at a publicly noticed meeting, the Council members will not be reimbursed for hotel expenditures incurred for events occurring within a 50 mile radius of Burbank except where the event begins before 8 a.m. or ends after 10 p.m. In the event reimbursement is warranted, such reimbursement shall be only for the reasonable rate of said accommodations as set forth below.

**B. Non-Local Accommodations**

All Council members traveling outside the fifty (50) mile radius of Burbank shall be reimbursed the reasonable cost of the lodging and may either receive funds in advance, use a City-issued credit card, or be reimbursed for personal funds expended upon return from the trip. Reimbursable days for lodging requests should correspond to the foregoing travel policy regarding dates of arrival and departure. Council members are authorized for reimbursement for hotel accommodations for single occupancy.

**C. Reasonable Rates for Lodging**

Where the lodging is in connection with a conference or other organized educational activity, reimbursable lodging costs shall not exceed the maximum group rate published by the conference or activity sponsor, providing that lodging at the group rate is available at

the time of booking. If the group rate is not available, the Council member shall be entitled to reimbursement for actual costs of lodging that is comparable in location and quality.

Where lodging is necessary for an activity that is not related to a conference or other organized educational activity, reimbursement shall be provided at the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service for the community in which the activity takes place unless there are no lodging facilities in reasonable proximity to the activity which offer that rate at the time of booking. In the event there are no such lodging facilities available at the IRS reimbursement rate, reimbursement shall be at the actual lodging rate so long as the activity has been approved by the City Council. In the event there is not enough time to seek prior approval of the activity, the Council member shall seek approval of the activity by the Council as soon thereafter as reasonably possible. In the event the Council does not approve the activity for which the expenditure was made, the Council member shall not be reimbursed therefor.

#### D. Miscellaneous Expenses

City Council members shall be entitled to reimbursement for miscellaneous expenses incurred in the performance of their duties and in the course and scope of their activities as Council members and which are reasonably related to City business including:

1. Actual cost of telecommunication and fax charges when Council members are away from City Hall
2. Actual cost of telephone expenses, however, council members should endeavor to use City provided calling cards if possible or a City-issued cell phone, if possible.
3. Reasonable laundry and/or dry cleaning charges when necessarily related to the activity while traveling on City business;
4. Other miscellaneous charges reasonably related and necessary to the activity, including gratuities, parking, shuttle and taxi charges.

## **VII Meals**

City Council members shall be entitled to reimbursement for meals and associated gratuities in an amount equivalent to the per diem rate provided to city employees, however, they shall be required to submit actual receipts documenting the expense as set forth below. Where the community standards and/or prevailing restaurant costs of the area exceed the per diem rate, Council members shall be reimbursed for the actual costs of such meals and associated gratuities. Alcohol and bar expenses shall not be compensated without prior approval by the City Council.

Where Council members are attending a conference or other organized educational activity, and a meal or meals are provided as part of the activity, Council members shall not be reimbursed for any separate meal unless dietary needs require that the Council member purchase a different meal and/or city-related business necessitates that the Council member miss the hosted meal.

Council members who host a meal or meals in conjunction with a city-related business activity, shall be reimbursed for the actual costs of the meal and associated gratuities in accordance with the IRS schedule for the community in which the meal is eaten.

## **VIII Expense Reports**

In order to receive reimbursement Council members shall complete and submit to the Department of Financial Services a City of Burbank Travel and Expense Claim Form and Report (Expense Report) within a reasonable time after incurring the expense and in any event no later than 30 days thereafter. The expense report shall be accompanied by all receipts documenting each expense, including those acquired from the use of a City credit card. The Council member shall verify that the expenses for which reimbursement is sought were incurred on behalf of the City in the performance of official duties and that they meet the policies established in this policy.

Council members shall provide a brief report on meetings attended at the expense of the City at the next regular meeting of the Council. If multiple Council members attended the same event, a joint report may be made.

All documents related to reimbursable expenditures, including but not limited to the Expense Report and actual receipts are public records subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act. Any personal information including credit card numbers contained on any receipts may be redacted before publicly releasing such records.

## **IX Credit Card Use**

Use of a city-issued credit card shall be permissible for the reimbursable expenses listed herein. The credit card may not be used at any time for personal expenses, even if the Council member subsequently reimburses the City.

## **X Policy Violations**

Violations of this policy including falsifying expense reports may result in any or all of the following: (1) loss of reimbursement privileges, (2) demand for restitution to the City, (3) any other applicable state and federal penalties, including criminal prosecution. The City Council shall consider (1) or (2) above only at a publicly noticed Council meeting at which a hearing shall be held to determine whether or not a Council member has violated the policy and what the appropriate penalty shall be. The determination as to whether or not to hold such a hearing may be made only after a vote of a majority of the Council members present at any meeting during which the matter is considered. The hearing shall not be a full adversarial evidentiary hearing, and there shall be no direct or cross examination of witnesses except by the Council. The Council member who is being accused of violating the policy shall be entitled to present any evidence to the Council as to the validity and propriety of expenditures for which reimbursement was sought. The Council member being accused of violating the policy shall not participate in either the decision to hold the hearing or the decision on the hearing.