

Town of Needham
Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy
Benefits Administration #510

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for payment and reimbursement of expenses relating to approved in-state and out-of-state conferences and meetings. Regulations governing employee personal automobile use are contained in Personnel Policy #509.

2. APPLICABILITY

All General Government employees are subject to the provisions of this policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

Refer to Policy #100 Definitions for commonly used words and phrases.

4. POLICY

It is the policy of the Town of Needham to reimburse employees for reasonable expenses which they incur as a result of attending conferences or meetings on behalf of the Town. Employees will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses after submission of the appropriate documentation. Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is prohibited by M.G.L. c. 44 Section 58.

The method(s) of submitting requests for reimbursement shall be consistent with Finance Department procedures and this policy. The Finance Department will update the reimbursement request form as needed to satisfy the requirements of this policy and Massachusetts General Laws.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Travel Procedures

Employees will be reimbursed for in-New England travel only when such travel has been approved in advance by the Department Manager. All out-of-New England travel must be approved in advance by the Town Manager. Evidence of advance approval must be included with the Travel Expense Reimbursement Form and/or registration. All purchases should be made in the most fiscally responsible manner.

Employees are encouraged to purchase trip insurance for airfare. This is a reimbursable expense.

5.2 Conferences and Seminars

The Town will pay for approved conferences and seminars. Employees authorized to attend a conference, or seminar should submit conference registration forms/invoices on the appropriate payment voucher. Alternatively, the employee may pay for the approved conference or meeting directly and will be reimbursed after completing the Travel Expense Reimbursement Form. A receipt must be included with the Form. The Finance

Department will only approve the use of manual checks to pay for conferences and seminars in extraordinary circumstances.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law 44, Section 58, employees will not be reimbursed for alcoholic beverages. In addition, other non-reimbursables expenses include social events at conferences (such as golf tournaments or recreational tours), entertainment expenses (i.e. hotel movies), first-class/business class trips or upgrades, third-party deliveries fee (e.g. Door Dash, Uber Eats), tips, credit card fees, personal phone calls, laundry, traffic fines, parking tickets, family/companion expenses or personal trip insurance.

5.3 Lodging

If an employee is required to lodge while traveling, reimbursement should cover only the employee's cost of lodging and should not extend to any family members or other travel companions. Reimbursement may include incidentals such as the use of telephones, internet/Wi-Fi, and fax machines (if necessary).

Lodging expenses for stays less than 20 miles from the employee's home location must be approved in advance by the Town Manager.

5.4 Miscellaneous Expenses

The Town will reimburse employees for reasonable miscellaneous expenses such as travel to and from airports, parking, and travel within the conference destination (such as taxi cabs, ride share services, shuttles, or buses) with receipts.

5.5 Use of Personal Credit Cards

Employees may use personal credit cards to pay for travel-related expenses if there is no appropriate mechanism for the Town to be billed directly for the expense. The Town will not pay for finance charges associated with credit card purchases of travel arrangements or other travel expenses.

5.6 Meals

5.6.1 Employees shall be reimbursed for meal expenses in accordance with the following schedule. Employees need not submit receipts for meals purchased.

Meal	Maximum Allowance	Applicable Period
Breakfast	\$15.00	on work status before 7:00 a.m.
Lunch	\$17.00	on work status from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Dinner	\$30.00	on work status after 5:00 p.m.

5.6.2 For example, an employee who arrives at a workshop prior to 7:00 a.m. will be entitled to the breakfast allowance for that day (the most common users of the

breakfast allowance will be employees attending overnight conferences). An employee who is at a conference for a full day (or days) will be entitled to a lunch allowance for that day if lunch is not included and paid as part of the conference registration. Finally, an employee who is at a conference which runs past 5:00 p.m. will be entitled to dinner allowance for that day. An employee eligible for both the breakfast and dinner allowance in a given day will automatically be entitled to the lunch allowance except as provided above. The maximum daily meal, including tax, is \$62.00.

- 5.6.3 If a conference includes function meals, such as closing banquets, special luncheons, etc., the Town will reimburse the full cost of such a meal. Program information detailing the cost of the special function meals should be submitted with the reimbursement request if the meal was not included in the registration fee. In the event that the Town reimburses or pays directly for a meal as part of a registration fee, the employee shall not be entitled to a meal allowance for that meal.
- 5.6.4 Reimbursement for meal alternatives even when the program provides meals due to personal circumstances, is allowed up to the maximum allowance for each meal, provided a copy of the receipt for payment is included with the reimbursement request.
- 5.6.5 Employees attending partial day workshops will not be eligible for meal reimbursements unless the meal is included in the conference registration.

5.7 Complying with Travel Policy

Employees who violate travel policies will be held directly responsible for their actions. Consequences of disregarding Town travel regulations may include revocation of travel privileges, reparation payments, suspension, or termination. Moreover, improper documentation of otherwise valid travel expenditures creates the appearance of fraud, waste, or abuse and may result in similar consequences. The following section presents suggestions for employees when complying with travel policies. While these suggestions will assist employees to avoid the appearance of fraud, waste, or abuse in travel expenditure, they are not a replacement for individual employees being aware of the Town's specific policies related to travel expenses.

In most cases, a reimbursement form or other travel voucher issued by the Town must be submitted and signed by the Department Manager and when applicable, the Town Manager/designee, to receive reimbursement. Misrepresenting expenses and intentionally submitting false claims is fraudulent and could result in criminal penalties and could include disciplinary action up to and including termination.

5.8 Reimbursement

- Employees traveling together should fill out reimbursement requests separately, being careful not to overlap requests.
- Employees must sign all reimbursement requests.

- All expenses must be business related.
- Receipts should be attached to all travel expense reimbursement (except meals) requests. All requests should be itemized and dated. In addition, names of the persons who are included in the bill should be listed on the back of the receipt to avoid multiple reimbursements for the same expense.
- Travel approvals MUST be attached to the reimbursement request.
- Employees should submit travel reimbursement requests that identify the reason for the travel and benefits derived from such travel.
- Business associates, vendors, or family members accompanying an employee traveling for business purposes are not eligible for travel reimbursement costs.
- Employees are encouraged to submit reimbursements requests within a month of incurring the expenditure. If the travel reimbursement is close to the fiscal year end, a purchase order must be submitted for a place holder of the expenditures. If an expenditure crosses fiscal years and no purchase order exists, then the expense must go to Town Meeting to be approved before it can be reimbursed.

5.9 Ethical Considerations

- Section 3 of Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L) Chapter 268A prohibits state, county, or municipal employees from soliciting or accepting anything of substantial value for or because of any official act they have performed or will perform. This section of the law also prohibits the giving or offering of anything of substantial value to public employees for or because of their official position, even to express gratitude or goodwill. The State Ethics Commission has determined that anything worth fifty dollars (\$50.00) or more is always of substantial value for purposes of conflict of interest law.
- Acceptance of numerous items that are less than “substantial value” (\$50.00) may establish a pattern of gift giving from a private party or entity, hence violating Section 3 of the M.G.L 268A. Therefore, it is best for employees to avoid all gifts, discounts, or benefits from vendors or other private parties.

5.10 Other Circumstances

This policy is meant to cover the most common types of expenses related to employee travel. The Town Manager may approve other reimbursements not explicitly covered by this policy if it is in the best interest of the Town to do so, and if reimbursement for such expenses is not expressly prohibited by local by-law or Massachusetts General Law