



# TOWN OF BLACKSTONE

## Travel Authorization & Expense Reimbursement Policy

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### 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a travel authorization process along with guidelines for payment and reimbursement of expenses relating to approved in-state and out-of-state conferences, trainings, and meetings.

### 2. APPLICABILITY

All Town of Blackstone elected, or appointed board and committee members and all Town of Blackstone elected, or appointed employees are subject to the provisions of this policy.

### 3. POLICY

It is the policy of the Town of Blackstone to reimburse employees for reasonable expenses which they incur as a result of attending in-state or out-of-state conferences, trainings or meetings on behalf of the Town. Employees must request approval for travel using the travel authorization form that includes backup of each line item on the form prior to travel. The travel authorization is a best estimate. No expenses will be paid without the pre-approved travel authorization. All personnel will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses after submission of the appropriate documentation to include actual proof of purchase. Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is prohibited by M.G.L. c. 44 Section 58.

### 4. PROCEDURES

#### 4.1 Travel Procedures

Employees will be reimbursed for in-state and out of state travel only when such travel has been approved in advance by the Town Administrator using the Travel authorization form. The executed form along with receipts will be submitted at the same time for reimbursement.

#### 4.2 Conferences, Trainings and Meetings

The Town will pay for approved conferences and meetings. Employees should include the cost of the registration on the Travel authorization form. All registration fees should be directly paid by the town to the organization holding the conference or meeting through the regular warrant process. If these fees are unable to be paid ahead of time through the warrant process, the employee may pay for the approved conference or meeting directly out of pocket within reason. The fee must be listed on the Travel Authorization form to be approved along with other reimbursement requests. All receipts must be included with the Travel Authorization Form when seeking reimbursement. Employees will not be reimbursed for social events at conferences (such as golf tournaments or recreational tours). The Town Accountant will only approve the use of manual checks to pay for conferences and seminars in extraordinary circumstances.

### 4.3 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.

### 4.4 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, shuttles, or buses) with receipts as authorized by the approved Travel Authorization Form.

### 4.5 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. In such cases, the employees will NOT be reimbursed for any sales tax charged. However, the Town will not pay for finance charges associated with credit card purchases of travel arrangements or other travel expenses.

### 4.6 Meals

4.6.1 Employees shall be reimbursed for meal expenses in accordance with the following schedule. Employees must submit original and itemized receipts for meals purchased.

<b>Meal</b>	<b>Maximum Allowance</b>	<b>Applicable Period</b>
Breakfast	\$ 8.00	on work status before 7:00 a.m.
Lunch	\$12.00	on work status from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Dinner	\$20.00	on work status after 5:00 p.m.

4.6.2 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.

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 allowance is \$40.00. **Employees will not be reimbursed if a free meal is offered as part of the conference.**

Employees who attend a full day conference or workshop will not be entitled to breakfast unless they stayed over the night before the conference.

4.6.3 Incidental Expenses will not be reimbursed. Incidental expenses are described but not limited to: (A) Tips given to porters, taxi's, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, and wait staff. (B) Transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken or water and/or any other food or drink provided in the room at a cost.

4.6.4 If a conference includes function meals, such as closing banquets, special luncheons, etc. the Town will reimburse the full cost of such 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 also be entitled to a meal allowance for that meal.

4.6.5 Employees attending partial day workshops will not be eligible for meal reimbursements unless the meal is included in the conference registration.

#### 4.7 Use of Personal Vehicles

The Town will reimburse for mileage, tolls, and parking fees for employees who drive their personal vehicle while on approved municipal business. Mileage reimbursement estimated amounts must be provided on the Travel Authorization form. Mileage shall be reimbursed at the applicable IRS rate as set by the Town of Blackstone Policies and Procedures.

#### 4.8 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 avoid the appearance of fraud, waste, or abuse in travel expenditures, they are not a replacement for individual employees being aware of the Town's specific policies related to travel expenses.

Misrepresenting expenses and intentionally submitting false claims is fraudulent and could result in criminal penalties.

#### 4.9 Reimbursement

- Employees traveling together should fill out reimbursement requests separately, being careful not to overlap reimbursement requests and invoices.
- Employees must sign all requests for reimbursement.
- All expenses must be business related.
- Receipts should be attached to all travel expense reimbursement requests. All receipts 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 All receipts should be original receipts and no copies will be accepted.
- Approved Travel Authorization forms MUST be attached to the reimbursement request

along with the conference/meeting agenda and backup information as provided by the organization holding the event.

- Employees should submit travel reports 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 requesting reimbursement must submit the appropriate Travel Reimbursement Request voucher as provided by the Town Accountant's office. The reimbursement request should include the approved authorization form, registration information, conference agenda or meeting information as available, original detailed receipts for all expenses, print out of mileage, and any other information outlines in this policy.
- All reimbursement requests should be submitted for processing within 30 days of travel.

#### 4.10 Other Circumstances

This policy is meant to cover the most common types of expenses related to employee travel. The Town Administrator or designee 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. Any additional expense to what is listed in this policy should be requested on the Travel Authorization form prior to any expenditure.



# Town of Blackstone Travel Authorization Form

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Request Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

In State: \_\_\_\_\_ Out of State: \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop/Conference Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Location (City/State): \_\_\_\_\_ Workshop Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Return Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I request an allotment of funds as follows:**

- Registration \_\_\_\_\_
- Plane/Train/Bus \_\_\_\_\_
- Hotel \_\_\_\_\_
- Meals \_\_\_\_\_
- Mileage \_\_\_\_\_
- Parking \_\_\_\_\_
- Tolls \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Rental Car \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Best Estimate)

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Rental Car Justification/ Other Specification and Explanation:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I anticipate incurring the expenses listed above for attending this event. *(Please submit program materials with this approval request.)* Do not register until you receive approval.

**Employee Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Department Head Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Approved ____	Denied ____
_____	
<b>Chad Lovett</b>	Date
<b>Town Administrator</b>	

Approved ____	Denied ____
_____	
<b>Lauren Taylor</b>	Date
<b>Town Accountant</b>	