

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2015- 1
OF THE
JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION
TRAVEL & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

PURSUANT to the authority vested in the Jefferson County Commission by the Code of Alabama, the following Administrative Order is hereby issued:

PURPOSE

To establish policies and procedures with respect to travel and staff development.

POLICY

1. DEFINITIONS

(a) "Appointing Authority" shall mean the County Manager, the County Attorney, or the governmental body or person who possesses final power to appoint an employee to a job, the compensation of which is paid in whole or in part from the public funds of the County.

(b) "County" shall mean Jefferson County, Alabama.

(c) "County Manager" shall mean the chief executive officer of the County as established by Act 2009-662 of the Alabama Legislature, as amended.

(d) "Employee" shall mean an employee or elected official of the County.

2. GENERAL

(a) All travel and/or staff development shall result in a direct benefit to the County. Accordingly, only those employees who direct the activities of others, serve in a management function, work in a profession that requires specific training or those employees identified by the supervising department head and approved by the County Commission as set forth herein shall be authorized to incur expenses for travel and/or staff development. Training seminars attended shall be appropriate to the level of responsibility and job requirements.

(b) Each employee of the County who authorizes, directs or receives travel and/or staff development or who reviews, certifies, or otherwise authorizes payments or reimbursement of travel and/or staff development expenses is expected to exercise due care and to practice economy in all matters. Consistent with such care and economy, no employee of the County shall be required to incur travel and/or staff development expenses related to employment with the County provided such

expenses are approved as set forth herein.

(c) Travel and staff development should always be on a planned basis (recognizing exceptions for County financial, legal, and economic development matters, as well as other urgent matters) utilizing available funds in the County's annual budget as approved by the County Commission. All travel and/or staff development for employees for whatever purpose must be approved by official action of the County Commission at a public meeting thereof. Trips taken without advance County Commission approval may result in the employee not receiving reimbursement from the County for their expenses. In order to receive prior County Commission approval for travel and/or staff development, employees shall complete the applicable BMO Travel Request/ Authorization form (the "Travel Request form") setting forth: (1) the purpose and duration of the trip; (2) the estimated costs of travel, transportation, accommodations, meals, incidental expenses and registration form including fees; (3) any brochure/itinerary providing the starting and ending dates and times, and a detailed listing of conference activities; (4) the reasons for attendance by multiple employees, if applicable, and (5) the identification of all individuals requesting authority to attend at County expense. Completed Travel Request forms shall be submitted to the Budget Management Office ("BMO").

(d) Within 14 days of completing County reimbursed travel and/or staff development, an employee whose Appointing Authority is the County Manager, the County Attorney or the County Commission shall submit a brief written report to such employee's department head with a copy to BMO that summarizes the travel and, in the case of staff development, the specific recommendations for improved County performance and/or operations learned from attending the staff development.

(e) It shall be the policy of the County Commission that the minimum number of employees considered practical or necessary shall attend, at the expense of the County, any such meetings, annual associations and conventions, seminars, specialized training or other staff development. The employees in attendance and performing such travel shall obtain the relevant information from such meeting and submit the information to such employee's immediate supervisor, who shall then distribute the materials to other employees as deemed appropriate.

(f) BMO shall accumulate all travel and/or staff development requests from all areas of the County and shall submit such requests, provided budgeted funds are available, in the form of a

memorandum to the County Commission upon a schedule set by the County Manager. The County Commission shall review the requests and either approve or deny the requests at a public meeting thereof, as the County Commission determines appropriate.

(g) If an elected official of the County is defeated in either a primary election or general election for the office currently held, such elected official, as of the date following such defeat, shall no longer be eligible for travel and/or staff development payments otherwise provided for herein. The foregoing limitation shall also apply to an elected official that does not seek re-election effective as of the date such official fails to qualify for re-election to the office held. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an elected official who would otherwise be ineligible for travel and/or staff development payments pursuant to the foregoing shall be eligible for such payments to the extent necessary to maintain certifications or licenses related to such elected position during the remainder of such elected official's term in office or to travel for County financial, legal and economic development matters and other purposes determined by the County Commission to be in the best interests of the County.

(h) Each department head may authorize without completing any forms or receiving additional approval a request for staff development costing less than \$500.00 where the following conditions set forth below are observed.

- (1) The amount requested is budgeted and available;
- (2) The employee incurs no other costs except the cost of the course to be attended, salary and fuel;
- (3) The County makes no advance;
- (4) The employee obtains a valid receipt for the course;
- (5) The employee's department head signs the receipt; and
- (6) The employee presents the signed receipt at the Treasurer's Office for petty cash reimbursement.

(i) If staff development is attended to maintain a professional certification or to meet a licensure requirement, the attending employee shall provide a copy of the certificate of completion or other similar document evidencing attendance at the staff development course to the employee's immediate supervisor with a copy to BMO.

3. REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

(a) Advances to employees for approved travel and/or staff development may be issued by the Finance Department no sooner than thirty (30) days in advance of the actual travel and/or staff development date(s). In instances where registration fees and travel arrangements are made in excess of 30 days prior to the travel date, the Finance Department is authorized to make direct payments to applicable vendors for approved registration fees, hotel reservations, etc. Upon request, the Finance Department may reimburse employees the cost of tickets for common carrier travel to an approved staff development course prior to the date of travel. Whenever a ticket is purchased but is later unused, and its residual value remains in the name of the employee, the County Manager will take action on each individual circumstance on a case by case basis based on the facts of the situation.

(b) Transportation: The method of travel selected shall result in the greatest economies of costs and time. Unless otherwise approved by the employee's department head, travel by automobile shall utilize County-owned vehicles. The use of tourist, excursion and discount fares is encouraged in all cases. Reasonable transportation costs are reimbursable on an actual cost basis and include:

Receipt required:

1. Common carriers.
2. Rental car.
3. Ground transportation, to and from airport, required to conduct official business.
4. Parking and tolls.

BMO shall determine reimbursable mileage using a computerized mapping program such as Google Maps to measure the travel distance from the employee's starting location (either duty station at the County or home address of record with the County) to the destination location.

Transportation for travel by multiple employees will be authorized for County automobiles based on the number of employees attending during the same time period and each auto shall include up to four employees.

For trips of less than 200 miles one-way, the mode of travel shall be by vehicle unless an alternate mode of travel is specifically authorized by the Commission.

Where an employee plans to use rental vehicles upon arriving at the travel destination, there

must be separate written justification as to why other common ground transportation such as taxi service is inadequate for the anticipated need.

(c) Lodging: Lodging costs, including applicable taxes shall be reimbursed on an actual cost basis and must be supported by a receipt. Lodging does not include tips, movies, room service and cleaning bills. Telephone calls will be reimbursed for calls returned to the County for official business. County issued cell phones should be used where possible for official business. No calls home or for other personal reasons will be reimbursed by the County.

(d) Determination of Per Diem for Meals and Incidentals: If the travel involves same day return to the County, no per diem will be paid. (For example, no per diem will be paid for an employee's trip to Montgomery for a meeting in which the employee returns the same day.) Per diem will be calculated based on the latest possible registration time prior to the first session of the conference, provided an employee shall not be required to begin travel prior to 6AM on the date of a conference. 75% of the daily per diem will be allowed for travel to an event and 75% of the daily per diem allowed for travel from an event.

(e) Registration fees: Registration fee forms for conferences, seminars, or training classes attached to the travel request indicating dates for early registration, etc. will be paid directly to the event sponsor. Registration fees not pre-paid by Finance shall be reimbursed on an actual cost basis and must be supported by a receipt or a copy of the registration form.

(f) Unusual expenses shall be accompanied by a written explanation. Expenses determined by the County Commission to be unreasonable will not be approved.

(g) In some instances, it may be cheaper for an employee to leave or return on Saturday to take advantage of the cheaper airfares which require a Friday or Saturday night stay over. The requesting employee must document the cost savings including lodging and additional per diem costs and submit it with the request for travel.

(h) Within 30 days of an employee's return from travel, the employee must submit a final accounting of travel costs to the Finance Department. The total amount of any employee travel costs not accounted for within 30 days of return will be deducted from an employee's compensation. By the 25th day, the Finance Department will notify the employee and department head that the travel costs have not been accounted for and on the 30th day, the Payroll Manager is authorized to deduct

the total amount of the staff travel costs from the employee's next paycheck.

4. RATES

Where applicable, the Commission hereby adopts the meals and incidental per diem and mileage rates of the Federal Government posted on www.gsa.gov and updated annually.

5. PRIOR POLICY

This Administrative Order formally repeals Administrative Orders 77-2, 84-1, 88-1, 91-1, 91-2, 93-1 and any subsequent amendments thereto. Any other previously adopted policy or resolution of the County Commission is hereby void to the extent it is inconsistent with this Administrative Order.

Adopted by the Jefferson County Commission, this 16th day of July, 2015.

APPROVED BY THE
JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION
DATE: 7-16-15
MINUTE BOOK: 168
PAGE(S): 268 - 270