



# Board of Lucas County Commissioners

**TITLE: TRAVEL POLICY**

**POLICY NUMBER: 9F**

**RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2025-934**

**SUPERSEDES POLICY: 9E**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: December 9, 2025**

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## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this regulation is to define pursuant to section 325.20 of the Ohio Revised Code, authorized and reimbursable expenses incurred in travel while on County business and to control the authorization and reimbursement for such expenses. Officials or County employees who are required to travel on County business, should be reimbursed for expenses incurred in accordance with provisions of this regulation. Employees who travel on behalf of Lucas County are expected to use good judgement and to make related expenditures in a prudent manner. This policy does not apply to routine business, and training expenses incurred under the Furtherance of Justice and Pursuit and Transportation of Prisoners funds.

## II. DEFINITION

**ROUTINE BUSINESS EXPENSES:** Those expenses incurred by an official or County employee in the administration of a particular program or activity, or which occur in the performance of job-related duties and do not include overnight lodging. Examples of routine business expenses are mileage, parking, etc.

**TRAINING EXPENSES:** Those expenditures incurred by an official or County employee to participate in educational and/or staff development programs separate from a conference or convention which do not include overnight lodging. Examples of training expenses are registration fees, meals, mileage, parking, etc.

**TRAVEL EXPENSES:** Those expenses incurred by an elected official or County employee in (1) traveling out of the area on County business, requiring overnight lodging; or (2) attending a conference or convention of a job-related professional association. Examples of travel expenses are registration fees, airfare, hotel lodging, meals, mileage, taxis, car rental, parking, etc.

## III. APPROVAL OF EXPENSES

Prior to incurring any expenses for routine business, training, and travel the employee must complete an approved Lucas County Request for Training form. The completed form must be approved by the respective department head (as designated by the appointing authority), in accordance with departmental policies and procedures. Department head expenses, under these categories, require the approval of the respective elected officials or their designated representative. The designated representative for Departments under the Commissioners' Office is the County Administrator.

Travel expenses relating to attendance at a convention where voting or decisions will be made, or association meeting must be submitted to the Board

of Commissioners for approval prior to actual travel in accordance with Ohio Revised Code 325.20. This approval by the Board of County Commissioners is required in addition to the proper authorization required by an individual appointing authority and/or department head.

All out-of-state travel by county commissioners, agencies, departments, and employees must be approved by resolution by the Board of County Commissioners.

All routine business, training, and travel expenses must be approved, as required above, prior to incurring the expense. The County retains the right to refuse reimbursement of any expense incurred without prior approval. The only exceptions are in cases in which an emergency arises and there is insufficient time for prior approval.

Convention activities which are provided as part of the convention registration fee are acceptable; however, for those social and/or entertainment events for which an extra fee is charged, the fee may not be charged to the County unless there is a direct connection to County business.

The County will not advance travel funds for people who are going to be reimbursed by a third party: i.e., you are invited to be a speaker before an organization who has agreed to pay your travel expenses. Note: funds advanced for travel are deducted from your travel code. In the event of reimbursements, the money is deposited in the general fund. The Auditor has no way of tracking the reimbursements to make sure they are paid.

#### IV. RECEIPTS

Receipts are required for the following:

- \* Transportation Costs (except privately owned vehicles)
- \* Lodging/Parking
- \* Meals – itemized receipt required
- \* Registration Costs
- \* Business Telephone Calls (must verify calls with a receipt)
- \* Personal Internet Access, if required for job and due to security concerns, you cannot use the complimentary access. You must provide documentation towards the necessity of this.
- \* Miscellaneous Costs (such as conference books, tolls, parking, etc.)

#### V. TRANSPORTATION

The method and class of travel selected shall be that which is in the best interest of the County. Employees should try to use the least expensive form of transportation for travel to and from airports, train stations, lodging, conference centers, etc.

Eligible for Reimbursement:

- \* The actual cost of coach airfare that was not paid by the County
- \* Charges for up to 2 checked bags

- \* Trip insurance with prior approval
- \* Public Transit
- \* Taxi or Livery service, including tip at the usual and customary rate, not to exceed 20%
- \* Car Rental (*choice should be Company authorized by County Rental Car Policy: Enterprise/National*)
- \* Actual expense, not to exceed the lowest available rate for a compact or medium-sized vehicle dependent on need (per State Contract)
- \* Mileage, if the use of a private vehicle is authorized prior to travel. Air, train and bus transportation expenses are limited to coach fare. When travel of less than 125 miles, round trip, is authorized and a County vehicle or rental car is not used for transportation, the use of a private vehicle shall be reimbursed at the prevailing Internal Revenue Service's (**IRS**) mileage reimbursement rate. This mileage rate shall be considered as the total reimbursement for all operating expenses incurred in the use of a privately-owned vehicle on authorized County business including gasoline, maintenance, insurance, etc. The point of departure in regard to mileage charges is the office for all non-overnight travel and can be either the individual's residence or office, whichever is factually correct, for overnight travel. The County's mileage reimbursement rate will automatically adjust with the approved IRS rate, as updated in the IRS Bulletin. Use of a private vehicle for the convenience of the user on trips exceeding 125 miles, round trip, may be reimbursed in an amount not to exceed the coach air fare cost.

## 1. Mileage

Approved mileage shall be reimbursed for use of personal vehicle while on approved County business. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted in accordance with procedure below in order to receive reimbursement.

Lucas County employees traveling on public business may use a rental car (see section 3 below) when the estimated round-trip mileage is greater than 125 miles and there are no county vehicles available for use.

A signed Mileage Reimbursement form should be completed and submitted when requesting reimbursement of actual mileage expenses or mileage should be entered in Oracle line by line.

When a County vehicle is used for authorized travel, and expenditures for gas, oil and/or emergency repairs are necessary, receipts must be submitted in order to receive reimbursement. The use of gasoline credit cards for approved travel will be available through those departments that have one.

- Record all mileage-related expenses each month, incurred while performing official duties, on an Employee's Mileage Reimbursement Form.
- Attach appropriate receipts, including Request for Travel/Training approved form (unless travel is part of your daily routine)
- Submit an Employee Expense Report in Oracle with the completed form
- Department heads approve or reject through Oracle.

## 2. Airfare

Lowest Available Airfare Purchase--Airfare costs in excess of the lowest available commercial discount airfare, Federal Government contract airfare or customary standard (coach or equivalent) airfare, are unallowable except when such accommodations would: require circuitous routing; require travel during unreasonable hours; excessively prolong travel; greatly increase the duration of the flight; result in increased costs that would offset transportation savings; or offer accommodations not reasonably adequate for the medical needs of the traveler.

## 3. Car Rental

County owned vehicles or fleet/pool vehicles are available and encouraged for use to travel for County business. Approval of use of such vehicles will be based on the discretion of the department head. If it is determined that a fleet/pool vehicle is unavailable for use, the most economical means of transportation should be used when traveling on County business.

Lucas County employees traveling on public business may use a rental car when the estimated round-trip mileage is greater than 125 miles and there are no county vehicles available for use. All drivers must have a valid driver's license, be an authorized county driver and have completed Risk Management's Defensive Driving course within the last five years.

When use of a rental car is approved, the employee should use the Company authorized in the County Rental Car Policy, unless an emergency or the company is not available. Employees should not pay any expenses for rental cars used by the company authorized in the County Rental Car Policy. Expenses claimed for rental cars (by a company other than the one authorized in the Rental Car Policy) must be supported by a copy of the rental agreement and invoice. Rental car authorization is at the discretion of department heads; however, whenever feasible maximum use of compact rental cars is encouraged. At no time will a rental car above a medium sized model maybe approved if there are not enough passengers to warrant. Employees may upgrade to a larger vehicle but will not be reimbursed for the difference between the approved and upgraded vehicles.

Lucas County employees requesting the use of a rental car shall follow the procedures below to ensure timely and accurate rental reservations and proper reimbursement.

- Lucas County has contracted with Enterprise for all local car rental services. Reservations can be made at [www.enterprise.com](http://www.enterprise.com) or by calling 1-800-RENT-A-CAR.
- Upon approval of the rental, the reservation will be made by designated staff members with access to the proper billing codes. Contact Support Services if you need the billing code.
- A standard/mid-sized car shall be rented unless three or more employees are traveling and a larger vehicle is needed. The department head must approve the rental of any vehicle larger than standard/mid-sized.
- Collision damage waiver and supplemental liability protection shall be declined. Insurance coverage is included in the car rental rate. The County's insurance policy will serve as secondary coverage.
- If a rental car is needed prior to an Enterprise location opening of 7:30 am or 8:00 am, it can be picked up a day in advance for a \$25 fee. At the time of reservation, the QUICKSTART program should be referenced.
- Once the reservation has been made, the employee will be provided with a confirmation number.
- There are several Enterprise locations in the Toledo Area to pick up reserved vehicles. If desired, Enterprise will provide a shuttle pick-up service from an employee's home or office. If pick-up service is required, the employee shall call the selected Enterprise location at least 24 hours in advance to make arrangements.
- A valid driver's license and a confirmation number are required to pick up the vehicle. The employee will not need to provide a personal credit card to complete the transaction.
- If multiple county employees are traveling together, all employees can be added as additional drivers and must be listed on the rental agreement. Non-county employees may not drive a vehicle rented by Lucas County.
- Additional insurance, GPS charges, vehicle upgrades, tickets, or fines will not be reimbursed.
- If a rental vehicle is to be picked up from an airport for travel outside of Lucas County, National Car Rental shall be used. Reservations can be made at [www.nationalcar.com](http://www.nationalcar.com) or 1-800-CAR-RENT. The vehicle shall be picked up at the destination airport.
- If an employee is flying to a destination and will require transportation from the airport to their destination of stay, available shuttle/bus/train services shall be used if it is the least expensive form of transportation.
- The County only pays transportation expenses for those costs related to travel from airport to location of stay, location of stay to location of

training/seminar/meeting. Personal use of a rental car is not authorized for coverage by the County during the duration of the training.

- The rental car shall be returned on time and with a full tank of gas. The employee shall pay for the fuel, then request reimbursement from the County with a receipt.

In case of an accident:

- Call 9-1-1 for all injury and/or property damage accidents or contact local law enforcement, if necessary.
- Exchange information with the other driver, obtain witness statements and take pictures.
- Contact the department head or supervisor, who will notify Risk Management.
- Contact Enterprise at 1-800-RENT-A-CAR or call the local dealer you picked the car up from.

## VI. LODGING

Expenses will be allowed for adequate lodging when accompanied by a properly executed receipt. Hotel or motel accommodations are limited to medium priced rooms as established by the department head. When an elected official or County employee is accompanied by a member of his/her family, reimbursement shall be made based on the single room rate, which shall be indicated on the lodging receipt.

Employees should request the government rate when making lodging reservations. Lucas County is sales tax-exempt in the State of Ohio. Lucas County may pay occupancy tax.

For out-of-state lodging, the employee should make every attempt to have state sales tax removed. Lucas County may pay occupancy tax.

Tax exemption forms are available from Support Services which include the County's tax-exempt number.

## VII. MEALS

Expenses for meals consumed by the employee while traveling are reimbursable for authorized travel on County business. All requests for reimbursement must include properly executed, itemized receipts and an approved Request for Training/Travel form and Request for Reimbursement form. The maximum meal reimbursement is \$100.00 per day. The meal reimbursement rate of \$100 per day includes a maximum 20% tip per meal.

Missing receipts for meals will be reimbursed at the gsa.gov individual meal rate for the location of travel with the notarized affidavit. The daily maximum meal reimbursement rate of \$100.00 cannot be rolled over into another travel

day or combined with another travel day.

Tips for meals will be reimbursed at the usual and customary rate, not to exceed 20%. The daily \$100.00 reimbursable amount includes taxes (if applicable) and tips in the rate, so employees will not be reimbursed separately for those items, should they exceed the approved meal expense amount. In order to receive reimbursement, employees must provide an itemized receipt with proof of payment documenting the meal cost and both approved Request for Training/Travel form and Request for Reimbursement form.

## VIII. REGISTRATION

Registration fees for seminars, conventions, etc. are reimbursable, may be charged to the PCard or Travel Card or may be billed directly to the County.

If registration is paid for with the PCard, Travel Card or employee reimbursement, the approved Request for Travel/Training form and Request for Reimbursement form must be attached when submitting expense report.

## IX. TYPICAL EXPENSES NOT REIMBURSABLE

- \* Laundry and Dry Cleaning
- \* Cosmetic Needs
- \* Private Vehicle Repairs
- \* Alcoholic Beverages
- \* Personal Telephone Calls/Internet Access
- \* Expenses by Non-County Employees
- \* Car rental for personal use

All expenses for approved travel are subject to review.

## X. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Upon completion of routine business, training, or travel in which reimbursable expenses were incurred, employees will indicate the actual expenses incurred on the Request for Reimbursement form and keep a copy of receipts with this form according to department records retention schedule.

Requests for reimbursement of expenses should be submitted into the Oracle system only after travel has concluded. The Request for Travel form, Request for Reimbursement Form and itemized receipts must be uploaded in Oracle for reimbursement.

## XI. BUDGETARY LIMITATIONS

All routine business, training, and travel expenses provided for in this policy are subject to departmental appropriations and budgetary limitations. It is the department head's responsibility to program and manage travel funds for the department.

## XII. EXTENDING A MULTI-DAY TRIP

If air or other travel fares can be reduced by extending a multi-day trip to include additional day(s) at the beginning and/or end of a trip and the extension results in a cost savings to the County, the employee may elect to extend his/her multi-day trip.

## XIII. COMBINING COUNTY TRAVEL WITH VACATION

Employees may extend approved travel at the beginning and/or end for his/her own pleasure as long as such extension does not result in additional expense to the County.

## XIV. FREQUENT FLYER BENEFITS

On August 4, 2025, the Ohio Ethics Commission approved Formal Advisory Opinion 2025-02, which permits public officials and employees to use frequent flyer miles or other reward points earned during official travel for personal use, provided the miles or points were earned under the same conditions available to the general public and at no additional cost to their public agency.

This applies to any similar reward programs (e.g., hotel, car rental, or travel credit rewards). Departments should ensure that any such programs do not incur additional fees or charges to the County.

## XV. ACCCOMPANIED TRAVEL

When an employee travels on County business pursuant to the provisions of this policy, and is accompanied by a non-County employee, all additional expenses (food, lodging, transportation, etc.) must be paid by the employee. When lodging expenses are involved, the employee must pay any additional lodging costs above the single occupancy rate.

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John Borell

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Signature of Prosecutor's Office

12/10/2025

Date

Signed by:

Gavin W. Zell

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Signature of County Administrator

12/12/2025

Date