

**CITY OF MONROE
RESOLUTION NO. 2025-005**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
MONROE, WASHINGTON, REPEALING THE CITY'S
EXISTING FINANCE POLICY TITLED "TRAVEL STATUS
POLICY NO. 2024-002," AND ADOPTING THE TRAVEL
STATUS POLICY NO. 2025-005

WHEREAS, the City Council understands that the City's administrative and finance policies need to incorporate the most recent Internal Revenue Service, General Services Administration, and State Auditor's Office guidance; and

WHEREAS, per guidance from the State Auditors' Office, the City Council is responsible for establishing the rules and regulations for reimbursement of any official travel by City employees and officials and, by extension work-related expenses; and

WHEREAS, the City of Monroe's existing finance policy that provides standards and procedures for incurring travel expenses titled "Travel Status Policy No. 2024-002" needs to be updated; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the authorization and reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by all City representatives when they are on City business, including those involving overnight stays;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MONROE, WASHINGTON, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Repealer. The City's Travel Status Policy No. 2024-002 is hereby repealed in its entirety.

Section 2. Adoption of Policy 2025-005. TRAVEL STATUS POLICY 2025-005 establishing procedures related to travel and meal expenses and travel reimbursement for City employees and officials, is hereby adopted in the form and content provided in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference as if set forth in full.

Section 3. Effective Date. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Monroe, at its regular meeting thereof,
and APPROVED by the Mayor this 25th day of March 2025.

Resolution No. 2025-005
Approved: 03/25/2025
Effective: 03/25/2025

CITY OF MONROE, WASHINGTON:

ATTEST:


Jodi Wycoff (Apr 1, 2025 13:24 PDT)

Jodi Wycoff, City Clerk


Geoffrey Thomas (Apr 1, 2025 13:15 PDT)

Geoffrey Thomas, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Zach Lell (Apr 1, 2025 10:21 PDT)

J. Zachary Lell, City Attorney

CITY OF MONROE

TRAVEL STATUS POLICY

POLICY SUBJECT: Travel Status, Meals, Travel Reimbursement

REFERENCE NUMBER (CODE): Resolution 2025-005 (Replaces 2003-017, 2024-002)

CHAPTER: Financial Management

LEVEL OF POLICY: Administrative

DEVELOPED BY: Zach Humphreys, Executive Assistant
Becky Hasart, Finance Director

AMENDEDED BY: Deborah Knight, City Administrator

_____ Mayor _____ City Administrator

SUBMITTED TO COUNCIL:

_____ N/A _____ Yes Resolution # 2025-005 Date 03/25/2025

RECEIVED:

_____	Police	_____	Human Resources
_____	Clerk	_____	Engineering
_____	Finance	_____	Public Works
_____	Community Dev.	_____	City Attorney
_____	Risk Management	_____	Parks and Recreation

*Definitions and acronyms referenced in these Policies are integral and apply throughout the document.

I understand that it is my responsibility to read this policy and to consult my supervisor if I have any questions. I understand the statements contained in this policy are guidelines and summaries of what is or is not allowed while a representative of the City is in travel status. They do not bind the City of Monroe. I further understand that the City of Monroe reserves the right to change, revoke, or make exceptions to this policy at any time and at its sole discretion. This document should not be construed or relied upon by anyone as a legal document, covenant, or contract of any kind. I understand that the policies, procedures, and practices described in this policy shall apply to all representatives of the City of Monroe except where otherwise noted herein or unless they conflict with provisions of any binding collective bargaining agreement, civil service rule, or law.

Name

Date

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This policy has been established for representatives of the City incurring necessary expenses while in travel status to conduct City business. Representatives of the City are accountable for preserving and guarding the community's resources and making sure that the City's limited resources are expended in a manner that maximizes public benefit.

2.0 STANDARDS

Individual representatives of the City of Monroe have the responsibility of becoming knowledgeable about appropriate expenditures and documentation requirements set by the City of Monroe. Care must be taken to avoid unnecessary or excessive expenditures and those not directly related to the conduct of City business. In addition, as directions are made regarding business-related travel expenditures, representatives of the City are required to adhere to the following standards:

- 2.1 **State Law** – The travel expenditure must be consistent with state law.
- 2.2 **Federal Requirements** – If federal funds are used for travel related to a federally funded program, expenses must meet the Federal Uniform Purchasing Guidelines.
- 2.3 **Authorization** – The travel expenditure must be authorized as outlined by this policy.
- 2.4 **Public Purpose** – The travel expenditure must be related to a City of Monroe public purpose consistent with State Audit requirements
- 2.5 **Documentation** – There must be thorough, **original (no copies) itemized** documentation (as required by the Internal Revenue Code) of the travel expenditure. This can be in the form of a vendor's invoice (where appropriate), or a vendor's receipt in the case of pre-paid expenses. Lack of an original itemized receipt may make the expense reimbursement subject to federal tax withholding.
- 2.6 The Finance Department is responsible for providing forms, accompanied by instructions, for their implementation in accordance with this policy.

3.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 3.1 To provide guidance to representatives of the City for the authorization and reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by City representatives when they are on City business.
- 3.2 To meet the requirements of RCW 42.24.090, the department director, or their designee, must pre-approve all estimated travel (including transportation, meals, and lodging) and training costs via a City of Monroe Training Request Form.
- 3.3 The Mayor or their designee's approval is required for requests over \$2,500 for in-state travel and approval is required for all out-of-state travel or training regardless of cost.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Airfare – Reasonable Travel Time – flight itineraries with no more than one layover, unless agreed upon mutually

Ancillary Lodging Charges – those lodging charges that are exclusive of the room rate and applicable taxes.

City Business – activities, tasks, arrangements, meetings, events, and other such gatherings that serve the purposes and objectives of the City of Monroe and its customers.

Credit Card – term is interchangeable with P-card/Purchase card

GSA – General Services Administration, a federal agency that sets per diem rates found at www.gsa.gov

Incidental Expenses – The cost of services related to travel such as laundry, tips given to porters or bellhops, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and business telephone or fax expenses.

IRC – Internal Revenue Code, the code that requires original receipts for reimbursements and requires reimbursement to be made within 30 days of the event. Lack of original receipt and/or failure to meet the 30-day timeline may subject the reimbursement to federal tax withholding.

IRS – Internal Revenue Service

Mayor – Elected administrative head of the City. References to the Mayor may also mean their designee

Non-Travel Status – City business or training that does not qualify for travel status or meal reimbursement because it is less than 30 miles or more from their point of origin (City Hall or home, whichever is closer to the destination) and/or does not require an overnight stay. It is the responsibility of representatives of the City of Monroe to read the City of Monroe's Non-Travel Status Policy.

P-Card – A business charge card that employees use to buy things on behalf of the City of Monroe.

Per Diem – The per diem allowance (also referred to as subsistence allowance) is a daily payment instead of reimbursement for actual expenses for meals and incidental expenses. The per diem allowance is separate from lodging, transportation expenses, and other miscellaneous expenses. The per diem allowance covers all charges and services, including any service charges where applicable. For the City of Monroe, per diem does not include lodging.

RCW – Revised Code of Washington

Representatives of the City or City Representatives – Includes authorized City elected and appointed officials, City consultants/contractors (when appropriate), City employees, and City volunteers.

Taxi/Taxi fare – the term is interchangeable with Uber and other similar services.

Training – When a representative of the City travels to attend courses or professional meetings that may involve scientific or professional societies, municipal, state federal, or international organizations.

Travel Expenses – Allowable business travel expenses when necessary, and directly related to conducting business for the City of Monroe.

Travel Status – the official status of a representative of the City when the representative is away from both the official residence and the official station, exclusive of commuting between the traveler’s official station and official residence, on city-related business. To qualify as travel, the representative must obtain approval from the department director, submit a Training Request Form, travel a distance of 30 miles or more from their point of origin (City Hall or home, whichever is closer to the destination), and stay overnight. Exceptions to the 30-mile distance requirement must be approved by the Mayor.

WCIA – Washington Cities Insurance Authority

5.0 REIMBURSABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES

The City will pay for allowable business travel expenses when necessary, and directly related to conducting business for the City of Monroe including:

5.1 **Transportation** –travel status transportation expenses may include air, metro, bus, shuttle, taxi fares, ride-share service, mileage expenses or cost of operating a rental vehicle, tolls, and parking fees.

5.1.1 **Airfare** – upon receipt of an approved Training Request Form, a department will purchase tickets at the lowest applicable airfare for the round-trip between the closest airports to the business destinations and consider reasonable travel times. Variances will require the Mayor’s approval.

5.1.1.1 Whenever feasible, the purchase of airfare should be made in advance of the departure date in order to obtain the best rates.

5.1.1.2 The City shall cover the cost of only one (1) round-trip ticket for each training or back-to-back training attended.

5.1.1.3 If a representative of the City is asked by the City to alter their travel schedule in order to save money on the round-trip airfare, all meal and lodging expenses (at the business destination) associated with the prolonged stay are reimbursable, provided the expenses do not exceed the amount of the airfare savings. Expenses that are in excess of the savings defined above will not be reimbursed to the representative. Such an alteration must be agreed upon mutually. In such cases, the representative’s per diem allowance will also be adjusted to reflect the extended stay duration. The per diem will cover meal and incidental expenses during the prolonged period, ensuring that the representative is appropriately supported during the altered travel schedule. Such an alteration must be agreed upon mutually.

5.1.1.4 If a representative of the City makes their own flight arrangements for business-related travel, they will be reimbursed for the cost of their flights upon their return to work based on the lower of:

- a. actual out-of-pocket cost paid for the airline tickets or alternate means of transportation substantiated by original (no copies) itemized receipts and a copy of the travel itinerary or other document showing the amount paid, or
- b. the lowest applicable airfare available for their time of travel, as verified by the finance department.

5.1.1.5 The City will only reimburse base airfare (lowest fare class or less) and will not reimburse any upgrades including travel insurance. Representatives of the City must print off the base airfare day of purchase and print a summary of the upgrades added to the base airfare charges to submit with their Expense Reimbursement Form (see 7.1).

5.1.1.6 Should a representative of the City make their own flight arrangements for business-related travel and the trip is canceled for City business reasons; the representative will be reimbursed for the cost of airline tickets they purchased, excluding any and all upgrades, purchases that would be considered upgrades, or travel insurances purchased, substantiated by original (no copies) itemized receipts and a copy of the travel itinerary.

5.1.2 **Vehicle**

5.1.2.1 If using a City vehicle, the City representative shall have successfully completed a driver's background check that is on file with Human Resources.

5.1.2.2 **City Vehicles** – If a representative of the City is in travel status, a City vehicle should be used if available.

- a. When using a City vehicle, it is the responsibility of a representative to check the gas gauge and use the fueling station located on the municipal campus if needed before departure.
- b. City Vehicles that are **not** eligible to be left at an airport while a representative travels for City-related business include those assigned to respond to requests for services. Examples of this include but are not limited to police patrol vehicles, public works and parks trucks, and vehicles used for inspections or code enforcement. City vehicles that are not assigned to respond to requests for services (pool vehicles) are eligible for this use.
- c. While in travel status and when using a City vehicle, a representative who is issued a City credit Card should use it to pay for gas.
- d. If a representative has not been issued a City credit card and the representative is using a City vehicle, the representative may be reimbursed for gas for the City vehicle (see 7.1 and 7.2) upon presentation of an original gas receipt.
- e. If a representative of the City is issued a pool car or an allowance for gas to use their personal vehicle, a representative may use a City vehicle for

travel when they are using it for City business or to transport other city staff or other approved passengers.

- 5.1.2.3 **Use of Personal Vehicle** – If a representative of the City is on approved travel status and a City vehicle is not available, a representative, with written approval from the department director or appropriate authority, may utilize a personal vehicle and claim mileage reimbursement:
- a. At the IRS “standard mileage rate” in effect at the time of travel. Because this rate takes into account the cost of gasoline, reimbursement for actual gas expenses will not be allowed.
 - b. For round-trip mileage from the point of origin (City Hall or home, whichever is closer to the business destination) to the business destination.
 - c. If a representative is on travel status and uses their personal vehicle and does not have written approval from their department director or appropriate authority, the representative may not claim mileage reimbursement.
- 5.1.2.4 **Auto Liability Insurance** – All representatives of the City utilizing their personal vehicle for official travel purposes are responsible for maintaining auto liability insurance coverage for bodily injury and property damage. Representatives of the City may be asked to obtain a special endorsement for business use prior to utilizing a personal vehicle for business purposes. In the event of an accident or claim involving a personal vehicle used for official purposes, the representative’s auto liability insurance policy will be considered the primary insurance coverage.
- 5.1.2.5 **Rental Vehicle** – The City may choose to pay for a rental vehicle when a representative of the City is on approved travel status. Representatives on travel status do not need to purchase additional insurance for rental vehicles. While using the rental vehicle for City business, a representative of the City is covered by the City’s auto liability insurance. The City will not reimburse a representative of the City for additional insurance purchased for a rental vehicle.
- 5.1.2.6 **Drug, Alcohol, Vape, and Smoke-Free** – Use of a City vehicle, personal vehicle, or rental vehicle any time after the consumption of alcohol or drugs, or after taking prescription medication that affects driving ability is strictly prohibited. Smoking and/or vaping of any kind in City vehicles is strictly prohibited.
- 5.1.2.7 **Accidents** – All accidents that occur while a representative of the City is in travel status must be reported to the representative’s supervisor or to the City Administrator if a person is an elected or appointed official. An accident report must be completed and forwarded to the City’s risk manager.

5.1.3 **Other Transportation** – while a representative of the City is on travel status, all business-related metro, bus, shuttle, ride-share services, and taxi fare expenses may be reimbursed upon return to work substantiated by original (no copies) itemized receipts (see 7.1 and 7.2).

5.2 **Meals and Incidentals while on Travel Status**– upon receipt of an approved Training Request Form, the Finance Department (Accounts Payable) will issue a representative of the City a per diem as the method of reimbursing meals and incidentals for representatives who are on travel status. Per diem will be issued no more than two weeks from the first day of travel.

5.2.1 **Per Diem** – is a method of reimbursing representatives for business expenses while on travel status. Per diem rates include the cost of tax and gratuity. Accounts Payable needs three days’ notice to issue a per diem check. Exceptions may be made both with the department director’s (or appropriate authority) and Finance Director’s approval.

5.2.1.1 The use of City credit cards for meals and incidentals is not allowed while in travel status. Exceptions must be made in advance with approval from the Mayor and the Finance Director.

5.2.1.2 The City will not accept any receipts for meals or incidental expenses while a representative is on travel status. Exceptions may be made with approval of a department director and articulated in the Training Request Form (see 7.3).

5.2.1.3 If a representative does not attend the training or the training is canceled, and per diem was provided prior to travel, the per diem must be reimbursed to the City within thirty (30) days of issuance of the per diem.

5.2.2 **Per Diem Rates** – representatives on travel status shall be provided, in advance, a per diem for meal expenses at the per diem rate as established by the Office of the General Service Administration (GSA). The most current per diem rates can be found at the following website: <https://www.gsa.gov>.

5.2.3 **Partial Day Travel** – For the first and last day of travel a representative who is on travel status will receive 75% of the total per diem. In cases where the City requires travel to begin prior to 7:00 AM and end after 7:00 PM on the first and last day of travel due to business needs, travel will be considered a full day of travel for per-diem purposes.

5.2.4 **Meals Included with Training Registration** – If a meal is provided as part of the registration cost, a representative on travel status will have their per diem reduced for included meals as shown below:

Meal	Percent Reduction
Breakfast	23%
Lunch	25%
Dinner	46%
Incidentals	6%

5.2.5 For the annual City Legislative Action Days Conference (hosted by the Association of Washington Cities), dinners with the City’s legislative representatives will be treated as a meeting expense versus a travel status expense (see INCURRING EXPENSES WHILE CONDUCTING CITY BUSINESS POLICY Section 2.5.1). The original itemized receipt must be obtained and submitted by the City representative paying with their City credit card. City representatives in attendance at this dinner will have their per diem adjusted as if the meal was included with the training registration (see section 5.2.4).

5.3 **Lodging** – For representatives of the City on travel status, the City will reimburse lodging expenses at actual cost when the travel destination is 30 miles or 45 minutes from City Hall or the closest point of origin to the business destination, as evidenced by an original receipt.

The City of Monroe does not offer per diem allowances for lodging, but the City will cover reasonable lodging expenses. Using the General Services Administration’s (GSA) Federal Per Diem for lodging as a guide, the City will define reasonable lodging expenses at the exact or approximate (within ten percent) GSA Federal Per Diem rate for the final destination.

5.3.1 If the City Representative chooses to stay at a different facility than those identified by the event, the City will reimburse the entirety of the final cost of the stay, exclusive of **ancillary lodging charges**, up to ten percent above the GSA Federal Per Diem rate.

5.3.2 If a City Representative chooses to stay at a different facility than those identified by the event and the final cost of the stay, exclusive of ancillary lodging charges, is more than the ten percent maximum threshold identified in 5.3.1, then the City will only reimburse the City representative’s lodging expenses, exclusive of ancillary lodging charges, for ten percent more than the GSA Federal Per Diem Rate.

5.3.3 If a City Representative chooses to stay at the facilities identified by the event, then the City will cover the full cost of the stay, exclusive of ancillary lodging charges.

5.3.4 Lodging arrangements should ideally be made three weeks in advance of departure.

*Definitions and acronyms referenced in these Policies are integral and apply throughout the document.

5.3.5 **Non-Reimbursable charges** – the City will not reimburse any ancillary lodging charges such as costs associated with consuming items from the in-room mini-bar (i.e. snacks, beverages, or alcohol), room service charges for meals or drinks ordered and delivered to a representative’s room, costs for using the hotel’s spa facilities, fitness center, or other recreational amenities, or any other such products or services provided by a hotel or lodging facility. The City will not reimburse a hotel breakfast or any other meal if it is charged (see 5.2.2). Additionally, the City will not reimburse any and all charges for extra occupants in a hotel room (i.e. spouse/partner, family member, or friend) (see exceptions in 5.3.6).

5.3.6 **Spouses** – In the event that a representative takes their spouse or partner to a training, the City will reimburse the representative for the single room rate only.

5.3.7 **Allowable Incidental Expenses** – The exhaustive list of allowable incidental expenses for hotels and lodging are:

5.3.7.1 **Phone Call** – If a representative is not issued a City cell phone and if a hotel has a policy regarding phone charges, one telephone call home (up to 10 minutes in length) is allowed per trip away from home for more than a 24-hour duration. For extended trips, one call home will be considered reimbursable every 2 days. Phone charges will not be reimbursed if the representative has been issued a City cell phone or if the representative forgot their city cell phone.

5.3.7.2 **Printer** – If required while on travel and if there are no other possible free and cost-effective alternatives and if a hotel charges a fee for using their printer, the City will reimburse printing expenses that are business-related.

5.4 **Training Expenses** – Registration fees or tuition for training, including the expenses for required educational materials will be paid for by the City of Monroe. Registration for any training will ideally be arranged by the staff from the City of Monroe in advance of travel. Any materials paid for by the City become the property of the City of Monroe.

5.5 Per the IRC, expenses claimed more than thirty (30) days after the travel may be subject to federal tax withholding.

6.0 NON-REIMBURSABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES

The City of Monroe will not reimburse the representative of the City for disallowed travel expenses, including but not limited to the following examples:

- 6.1 Liquor
- 6.2 Theft, loss, or damage to personal property
- 6.3 Expenses of a spouse, family, or other persons not authorized to receive reimbursement under this policy
- 6.4 Airline and any other trip insurance

- 6.5 Medical or hospital expenses not covered by medical benefits or worker's compensation
- 6.6 Fines for parking violations
- 6.7 Personal telephone calls (see 5.3.4.1 for exceptions)
- 6.8 Personal entertainment and transportation
- 6.9 Personal care services (i.e. laundry, valet service, radio, and television rental)
- 6.10 Personal travel schedule in connection with the business trip
- 6.11 Any meal expenses when in travel status (except as described in Section 5.2.5)
- 6.12 Any ancillary lodging charges (see 5.3.2)

Additionally, the City will not reimburse expenses that fall outside the scope of authorized business travel.

7.0 TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT FORM

- 7.1 A representative of the City, while on travel status, should use their City-issued credit card for authorized travel and training expenses. If a representative of the City has not been issued a City credit card, upon return to work, a representative may submit an Expense Reimbursement Form with attached original (no copies) itemized receipts or original invoices within 30 days of returning to work.
- 7.2 Travel expenses eligible for City credit card use include:
 - 7.1.1 Lodging costs except in cases of approved exceptions as described in Section 5.5
 - 7.1.2 Training registration costs (see 5.4)
 - 7.1.3 Business-related transportation i.e., Uber, taxi, metro, bus (see 5.1.3)
 - 7.1.4 Gas for City Vehicles (see 5.1.2.1)
- 7.3 Per-diem is issued to a representative of the City's private account. City credit cards shall not be used to pay for meals unless an exception has been approved per this policy.

8.0 CREDIT CARDS

- 8.1 Representatives of the City with City-issued Purchase Cards shall adhere to the Procurement Policy and Credit Card policy along with this policy.
- 8.2 **Lost or Stolen Credit Cards** – If a representative of the City has their City credit card lost or stolen, they are responsible for notifying the Finance Department as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours, or the representative of the City will be personally responsible for charges not authorized. In addition, the representative's director or proper authority should be notified as soon as possible.

9.0 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

Expense Reimbursement Form (will be linked)*

Federal Uniform Purchasing Guidelines ([link](#))*

Incurring Expenses While Conducting City Business Policy (will be linked)*

Procurement Policy (will be linked)*

Procurement Card policy (will be linked)*

Travel/Training Request Form (will be linked)*

* links to the referenced documents are available [here](#).

Res 2025-005 Travel Policy No. 2025-005

Final Audit Report

2025-04-01

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