Board of County Commissioners
Leon County, Florida

Policy No. 09-1

Title:	Travel
Date Adopted:	January 15, 2009
Effective Date:	January 15, 2009
Reference:	Ch. 112.061(7)(d), F.S.
Policies Superseded:	Policy No. 73-3, "Expenditure of Appropriated Travel Expense," adopted March 27, 1973; Policy No. 74-, "Travel Allowance," adopted July 26, 1974; Policy No. 77-8, "Travel," adopted June 28, 1977; Policy No. 93-19, "Travel," adopted January 12, 1993; Policy No. 01-09, "Travel," adopted July 31, 2001, amended September 18, 2001; Policy No. 01-10, "Travel," adopted September 25, 2001, revised September 21, 2004

It shall be the policy of the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida, that Policy No. 01-10, adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on September 21, 2004, be superseded and a new Policy entitled "Travel" is hereby adopted, to wit:

SECTION I: AUTHORITY

Florida Statutes, Section 112.061

SECTION II: OBJECTIVE

To establish regulations and procedures for the Leon County Board of County Commissioners, employees and authorized persons where authorized travel is necessary and reimbursement is requested.

SECTION III: DEFINITIONS

Elected Officials - County Commissioners.

Appointed Officials - The County Administrator and County Attorney.

Employees - All other employees of the Leon County Board of County Commissioners.

Authorized Person - A person, other than a public officer or employee, who is authorized to incur travel expenses in the performance of the County's official duties, such as a consultant, a volunteer, or a candidate for an executive or professional position.

SECTION IV: SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

Travel expenses shall be limited to those expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of a public purpose authorized by law to be performed by the Leon County Board of County Commissioners and must be within limitations described herein and in Ch. 112.06, Florida Statutes.

This policy applies to all travel as defined in Section VI for any purpose and for which reimbursement will be claimed by officials, employees, and authorized persons of the Leon County Board of County Commissioners as follows:

1. All such persons are eligible to travel in the conduct of County business or to attend meetings, conferences, conventions, and training sessions for the benefit of the County, at County expense, pursuant to proper authorization prescribed herein.

2. Employees who travel for the purpose of obtaining certifications required for continued employment with Leon County is an allowable expense.

3. Candidates for employment with Leon County, who are eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses for interviews under the Personnel Policy, must receive prior approval for travel (see Section VII) and will be reimbursed in accordance with this policy.

4. Consultant travel which is not covered within the scope of the consultant's contract and which is billed separately to the County on a cost reimbursement basis must receive prior approval and will be reimbursed in accordance with this policy.

5. Members of volunteer boards and committees who travel in the performance of the County's official duties must receive prior approval and will be reimbursed in accordance with this policy.

6. Under no circumstances will an employee be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred for the purpose of taking merit system or job placement examinations for the purpose of applying for jobs, whether written or oral.

This policy does not apply to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) employees providing out of town transport to patients.

SECTION V: EXCEPTIONS

Any exceptions or unusual circumstances not provided for in this policy must be documented and will be subject to review and approval by the appropriate official or designee.

SECTION VI: TYPES OF TRAVEL

A. Class "A" Travel: continuous travel for a period of 24 hours or more out of the County. The travel day for Class "A" travel shall be a calendar day (midnight to midnight).

B. Class "B" Travel: continuous travel of less than 24 hours which involves overnight absences out of the County. The travel day for Class "B" travel shall begin at the same time as the travel period. Class A and Class B Travel shall include any assignment of official business outside of regular office hours and away from regular places of employment when it is considered necessary to stay overnight and for which travel expenses are approved.

C. Class "C" Travel: travel for short or day trips where the traveler is not away from his or her official headquarters overnight.

D. Local Mileage: travel of less than 24 hours in which the traveler is not away from official headquarters overnight and which involves the use of a privately owned vehicle or a County vehicle for official business within Leon and the surrounding counties and for which no meal reimbursements are claimed.

SECTION VII: TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

All travel will be conducted pursuant to authorized annual budget allocations. Prior to incurring any Class A, Class B, or Class C travel expense for which reimbursement or cash advance is requested, a Travel Request form must be approved and authorized by the appropriate authority. Local mileage which is included in the annual budget allocation for travel does not need prior authorization and should be reimbursed in accordance with Section X of this policy. Authority for approval of Class A, Class B, and Class C travel is designated as follows:

Elected Officials:

- Travel of individual County Commissioners and their aides shall be approved in advance, whenever possible, by the Board of County Commissioners via an agenda item at a regularly scheduled Board meeting where the Board adopts the Commissioners' "Travel Schedule." In cases where travel cannot be agendaed for approval prior to the trip, it shall be agendaed within two meetings following the conclusion of the travel.

Appointed Officials:

- Travel of the County Administrator and County Attorney shall be approved by the Chairman of the County Commission, or the Vice-Chairman in the absence of the Chairman.

Employees:

Employees' travel must be approved by their division head, department head and the County Administrator, or their designees, except as specified below. Travel by employees of the County Attorney's Office must be approved by the County Attorney, or his designee.

Candidates for Employment in an Executive or Professional Position:
Travel for candidates for employment in an executive or professional position must be approved by their prospective department head and the County Administrator.

Other Authorized Persons:
1. Consultants and contractors, traveling on a cost reimbursement basis, must have their travel authorized by the department head from whose budget the travel expenses will be paid and the County Administrator.

2. Volunteers and other authorized persons not previously described in this section, traveling for the purpose of performing official duties of the County, must have their travel authorized by the department head from whose budget the travel expenses will be paid and the County Administrator.

3. In the absence of the County Administrator, the department head and/or the division director, the Travel Request form may be approved by their respective designees.

4. Signatures on the Travel Request Form should be obtained in the following order:
   a. Traveler
   b. Supervisor
   c. Division head, if different from supervisor
   d. Department head
   e. County Administrator (except County Attorney).

5. The following guidelines should be used when approving requests for travel:
   a. Funds are available in the budget.
   b. A determination is made that a public purpose is achieved in taking the trip.
   c. The number of persons traveling is the minimum number required to accomplish the purpose of the trip.
   d. The method of travel (e.g., air, vehicle) is specified and the routing and other arrangements are the most economical available and result in the shortest time away or the lowest overall cost consistent with the distance to be traveled and the purpose of the trip.

SECTION VIII: TRAVEL PAYMENT

An authorized Leon County Purchasing Card is the required method of payment for all travel associated expenses (except for meals and unless circumstances dictate that a P-Card cannot be utilized) incurred by officials or employees conducting Leon County business, unless authorization is given by the County Administrator or his designees(s) for alternative method of payment to be utilized.

Purchasing Card

Certain items, such as airline tickets, lodging, car rental or registration fees (if allowed), must be prepaid with a Purchasing Card upon approval of the Travel Request form.

Meals

Purchasing cards are not to be used for the payment of meals. Payment for meals will be advanced to the traveler at the applicable allowance rate after approval of the Travel Authorization Form. Meal allowance funds will be issued through direct deposit to the employee. Travel requests must be submitted within ten (10) working days to ensure funds are available for direct deposit. If a meal allowance is requested after this period, the applicable meal allowance will be provided to the traveler as a reimbursement via the Travel Expense Report.

Travel Advance

If not using an authorized Leon County Purchasing Card, officials and employees may obtain travel advances upon approval of the Travel Request form. The advance amount must be indicated on the Travel Request form and should be submitted to Finance at least ten (10) working days prior to the start of travel. All requests submitted less than ten (10) working days prior to the start of travel will be considered an "emergency" request. Emergency travel advances will only be granted on a case-by-case basis and authorized only if the travel associated payment cannot be made by a Purchasing Card. Advances should not be sought for amounts less than $50.00 unless an explanation of the necessity for the advance is provided. If a Purchasing Card is not used, the traveler should also indicate whether the advance payment check will be picked up by the traveler or whether the check should be mailed directly to the vendor)

Vendor Prepayment

When a vendor needs to be prepaid, it must be clearly indicated on the travel request. The amount to be prepaid, the payee, and the payee's address and vendor number must be indicated on the Travel Request form and should be submitted to Finance ten (10) working days prior to the date that the payment is needed. If the vendor does not have a LC vendor number, a New Vendor Form must be completed and submitted with the travel request

SECTION IX: REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Upon completion of the travel, all travel advances must be settled within ten (10) working days of return from traveling. No advances for additional trips shall be given until all prior advances have been settled. Failure to settle advances promptly may result in disciplinary action.

It is the responsibility of the authorizing division to ensure that the traveler complies with this section of the policy. Exceptions to this section of the policy may be made upon written justification of circumstances which necessitate multiple advances.

Within ten (10) days of completing authorized travel, travelers must file a Travel Expense Report form. The Travel Expense Report should reflect the entire cost of the trip, including all advances and direct payments made. The traveler must sign and date the Travel Expense Report form for completeness and correctness as to the actual travel performed. The completed Travel Expense Report form must then be signed by the appropriate division head and department head or their designee. The form is then forwarded to Finance for final review and processing. If the County is due a return of funds from the advance, a check payable to the County should be attached to the Travel Expense Report with a request from the traveler for a receipt from Finance.

The following describes allowable expenses and the documentation required. In general, where receipts are required, original receipts should be submitted. If an original receipt is not available, an affidavit of the expense explanation must be prepared and included with the Travel Expense Report. Further, a copy of the meeting/conference/convention/training agenda, when one is provided, must be attached to the Travel Expense Report. When one is not provided, this should be indicated on the form.

Any changes or additions to the cost of the travel made after the Travel Request form was approved must be explained on the Travel Expense Report form.

SECTION X: ALLOWABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES

A. Meals and Lodging: Class "A" and Class "B" Travel

1. Travel outside the County/State in order to conduct bona fide County business shall be reimbursed by the following methods for each day of such travel, at the option of the traveler, provided that the same method of reimbursement is used to calculate each day of the travel (i.e., the entire trip will be either based on the per diem rate or based on actual expenses plus meal allowances):

   a. Daily Per Diems: the most current standard federal government (General Services Administration, GSA) per diem rate to include both lodging and meals, or

   b. The actual expenses for lodging at a single occupancy rate, to be substantiated by paid bills. However, if the traveler chooses a form of lodging where a paid bill is not applicable, the standard Continental United States (CONUS) per diem rate will apply. The GSA per diem rate is not applicable unless the traveler chooses lodging in which costs are incurred, and can be substantiated by a paid bill or receipt.

c. Meal expenditures will be reimbursed according to the most current federal government General Services Administration (GSA) per diem meal rates. The GSA provides for differential rates depending upon the location of travel. This approach recognizes the cost differential between various counties, cities and states.

For counties and cities not included in the GSA list, the standard CONUS rate applies and the traveler is ineligible for the daily per diem rate.

d. The following times shall be used to determine when meal reimbursements may be claimed:

- Breakfast: when travel begins prior to 6:00 a.m. and extends beyond 8:00 a.m.
- Lunch: when travel begins prior to noon and extends beyond 2:00 p.m.
- Dinner: when travel begins prior to 6:00 p.m. and extends beyond 8:00 p.m.

2. When claiming the standard CONUS per diem rate for Class "A" or "B" travel including meal reimbursements, the traveler shall be reimbursed one-fourth of the standard CONUS rate of per diem and meal allowances for each quarter, or fraction thereof, of the travel day included within this travel period. No receipts are required. The travel day is divided into the following quarters:

- 12:01 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- 6:01 a.m. to 12:00 noon
- 12:01 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- 6:01 p.m. to 12:00 midnight

3. Under no circumstances may an employee be reimbursed for any meal or lodging included in convention or conference registration fees paid by the County. A continental breakfast provided as part of the conference/convention registration fee is considered breakfast and may not be claimed for reimbursement. An evening reception or other function that serves only hors d'oeuvres are not considered dinner and may be claimed for reimbursement. However, should the conference/convention registration fee include the provision of any lunches or dinners, these meals may not be claimed for reimbursement.

4. When a meal is provided by a hotel, airline, other common carrier, or as a part of a program/event, the traveler is not allowed to claim the meal for reimbursement.

5. Reimbursement for lodging expense is limited to single occupancy or occupancy shared with another County traveler. Cost of lodging shared with a non-official or non-employee (e.g., family members) is limited to the single room rate.

6. When traveling within Florida the authorized Leon County Purchasing Card is required to be used for the payment of lodging expenses. The traveler must also take a copy of the County's tax exempt certificate. No sales tax will be reimbursed for Florida accommodations that should have been tax exempt.

7. When lodging, transportation and/or meals are paid or provided by any federal, state or other local governmental agency, no further expenses will be reimbursed.

   However, if the governmental agency's per diem rate is less than the applicable rate according to the GSA Schedule utilized by Leon County, the employee will be reimbursed for the difference.

B. Class "C" Travel

A traveler shall not be reimbursed on a per diem basis for Class "C" travel, but shall receive subsistence as follows:

1. Breakfast: 20% rounded to the nearest dollar of the GSA meal allowance - when travel begins before 6:00 a.m. and extends beyond 8:00 a.m.
2. Lunch: 30% rounded to the nearest dollar of the GSA meal allowance when travel begins before 12:00 noon and extends beyond 2:00 p.m.
3. Dinner: 50% rounded to the nearest dollar of the GSA meal allowance - when travel begins before 6:00 p.m. and extends beyond 8:00 p.m., or when travel occurs during night time hours due to special assignment.

C. Transportation

All travel must be by a usually traveled route. If a person travels by an indirect route for his/her own convenience, any extra costs shall be borne by the traveler and reimbursement for expenses shall be based only on such charges as would have been incurred by a usually traveled route. No person shall be reimbursed for transportation from home to office, office to home, or to or from the point of travel departure.

1. Air - Coach fare, by the route and/or rate best suited for the interest of the County, is allowed and must be documented by a paid receipt. Should a traveler select a different route and/or rate, for their own benefit, reimbursement will be limited to the Coach fare, by the route and/or rate, determined by what is in the best interest of the County. Reimbursement of first class air fare is specifically limited to trips under emergency conditions when coach accommodations are not available. In those instances where an electronic airline ticket was purchased, documentation should include a copy of the traveler's itinerary, identifying the purchase of the airline ticket, or a separate paid receipt for the airline ticket.

2. County-Owned Vehicles - When available, County-owned vehicles should be used for travel. Receipts for expenses must be presented. A Purchasing Card shall be used for fuel purchases in a County-owned vehicle when on authorized travel.

3. Private Vehicle - Use of a private car for travel is authorized when approved on the Travel Request form. A traveler using his/her privately owned vehicle will be reimbursed at the most current IRS rate in effect on the date(s) of travel. All mileage shall be shown from point of origin to point of destination, and included with the travel request form. When possible, mileage should be computed and reimbursed on the basis of the current map of the Florida Department of Transportation for in-state travel. Alternate methods of computing mileage, such as the use of an Internet website, may be authorized on the Travel Request form if supported by appropriate documentation. Road and bridge tolls may be claimed in addition to mileage upon presentation of receipts. Vicinity mileage necessary for the conduct of official business is allowable but must be listed separately on the reimbursement request and the purpose explained.

4. Train or Bus - Travelers must use the most economical accommodations on short trips, not involving overnight travel. On longer trips, travelers are entitled to comfortable single accommodations. However, in no case will reimbursement exceed the rate of Coach fare for air travel to the destination.

5. Taxi, Limousine, Public Transportation, Parking and Car Rental - The actual costs incurred for normal use of taxi, limousine, public transportation and parking are reimbursable. Receipts are not required for reimbursement of parking, taxi, limousine and public transportation costs that are less than $20.00 per traveler per trip. "Per trip" shall be the trip authorized in the Travel Request form - not each ride in public transportation. When these items cumulatively exceed $20.00 during the duration of the travel, receipts are required to document the full amount. In those cases where receipts are not available (i.e., mass transit tokens) reimbursement may still be sought with an explanation of the circumstances via a memorandum attached to the Travel Expense Report.

   Car rental expense is reimbursable but only when prior approval is obtained on the Travel Request form and a receipt is attached. However, a County - approved traveler should not purchase collision-damage waivers when renting a car, as the County's self-insured program is adequate to cover claims. The purchase of "Personal Accident Insurance" by a traveler is also non-reimbursable as employees on authorized business are covered under Workman's Compensation. The state contract for car rental providers should be used whenever possible. Expenses incurred for collision-damage waivers or personal accident insurance will not be reimbursed unless prior approval of an exception is granted. A Purchasing Card may be used for fuel purchases in a County-owned or rental vehicle when on authorized travel.

D. Telephone and Fax
Only the cost of business calls and faxes with a stated business purpose are reimbursable. "Collect" calls to County offices are acceptable when required.

E. Registration Fees
Fees for registration, including meals and other programmed events sponsored by the conference or convention organization, should be prepaid wherever possible. Optional fees for recreation and/or entertainment activities associated with a conference or convention are not reimbursable. Fees for non-County officials or non-County employees (e.g., family members) to participate in activities are not reimbursable.

F. Miscellaneous
Any other necessary expense, not otherwise provided for but incurred for the benefit of the County, must appear together and be identified on the Travel Expense Report form. Other miscellaneous gratuities for the hotel, taxis, the airport, porters, etc. should be identified here. The amount should be reasonable and, whenever possible, the traveler should obtain and attach receipts to the expense report to substantiate miscellaneous expenditures.

SECTION XI: LOCAL MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursement for local mileage or Class "C" travel millage involving the use of the employee's vehicle shall be submitted on the Local Mileage Reimbursement form and shall specify:

- the date of the travel,
- the origin,
- the destination,
- the number of miles traveled,
- the purpose of the travel, and
- the amount requested for reimbursement.

If the expenses being requested for reimbursement pertain to use of a privately owned vehicle, the reimbursement amount is calculated by multiplying the number of miles traveled by the most current IRS mileage allowance. No receipts are required.

If the expenses being requested for reimbursement pertain to use of a County vehicle, receipts for actual expenses for fuel or tolls must be attached.

The Local Mileage Reimbursement form shall be submitted monthly. The Local Mileage Reimbursement Form must be signed by the employee requesting the reimbursement and the appropriate department head or his designee.

SECTION XII: TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TRAVEL

In accordance with Florida Statute 125.0104, the Tourist Development department is authorized to provide, arrange, and make expenditures for transportation, lodging, meals, and other reasonable and necessary items and services in connection with the performance of promotional and other duties. Entertainment expenses shall be authorized only when meeting with travel writers, tour brokers, or other persons connected with the tourist industry. All travel and entertainment-related expenditures in excess of $10.00 shall be substantiated by paid bills and justification shall be provided on the Travel Expense Report form.

The actual reasonable and necessary costs of travel, meals, lodging and incidental expenses of officers, employees and other authorized persons when meeting with travel writers, tour brokers, or other persons connected with the tourist industry and while attending or traveling in connection with travel or trade shows shall be reimbursed.

With the exception of provisions concerning rates of payment, the provisions of this policy and F.S. 112.061 are applicable.

SECTION XIII: MEAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR REQUIRED LOCAL MEETINGS

Divisions will not be required to follow the Class "C" Travel Section (Section X, B) as outlined in this policy when expenses are incurred for meals surrounding an intra-county meeting that a County employee is required to attend. Reimbursement for meals in compliance with this Policy will be authorized by an employee's supervisor. Actual reimbursements may not exceed General Services Administration (GSA) per diem meal rates for the Tallahassee area.