

# County of Mecosta

## Travel and Meals

### Policy

**Amended 8/17/17**

The County of Mecosta, from here on referred to as “County”, will reimburse employees and citizens representing the County on official business for necessary and reasonable expenses. The following limits are guidelines for determining reasonable expenses. Reimbursement for costs in excess of these amounts must be approved by the Board of Commissioners. Travel Expense Forms are available from the Finance Office or on the County website under the “For Employees” tab. Any travel outside a 300 mile radius or out of state travel must be pre-approved by the Board of Commissioners, or the Chairperson of the Board. All other travel must be approved by the respective Elected Official or Department Head. All travel is subject to budget allotments.

#### **Mileage Reimbursement**

Purposes for travel must be identified and result in a benefit to the County.

The use of county provided vehicles is the preferred method of transportation. County vehicles should be used whenever it is reasonably practical.

When traveling from point to point on official county business, an employee will be considered to be “on duty” and will be paid for the travel time. If an employee is “On duty” on a non-work day, the employee will be paid regular wage and will utilize an adjusted schedule approved by the Department Head or County Controller.

Personal vehicle mileage for out of County travel or travel which is required as part of an employee's job duties will be reimbursed at the County approved rate per mile. To be considered for payment, mileage reimbursement requests must be submitted to the Finance Office within 60 days of the date incurred.

Mileage will be factored from the employees normal work location to the destination. The only time that this measure will not be used is if the mileage from an Employee’s personal residence to the destination is shorter than the distance from the normal work location to the destination. An Employee may still leave from their personal residence if the distance is greater, however, the Employee will only be reimbursed for the mileage from the normal work location to the destination. The measure of the mileage for travel will be based on the shortest reasonable route provided by Google Maps. Those turning in mileage that does not match this measure will be allowed to submit a written explanation for this reason.

When traveling to out of county activities, transportation must be shared whenever possible. Economical use of County funds has priority over personal convenience or preference.

Travel by commercial carrier will be reimbursed at the economy round trip fare. Reimbursement for travel by private automobile will not exceed the cost of economy round trip airfare.

Parking fees, public transit, toll costs, and taxi service will be reimbursed. To be considered for payment, reimbursement requests must be submitted to the Finance Office within 60 days of the date incurred.

### **Meal Reimbursement**

Meal reimbursement shall be limited to meals eaten when outside the County on County business. Reimbursement for beverages will be limited to non-alcoholic beverages only. Meal reimbursements are not cumulative from meal to meal or day to day. If a meal is provided by the conference or training through the registration fees, then that meal is not eligible for reimbursement if the provided meal is not taken.

Meal reimbursements must be accompanied by an original, itemized receipt. The receipt must have a date, time stamp, and the name of the establishment printed on it in addition to the list of items purchased. It is strongly recommended that employees ask for a printed copy of their receipt. Should the receipt that is handed in for reimbursement lack any of the requirements listed above, reimbursement shall be left to the discretion of the Controller's Office. Meal reimbursements shall be limited to the following amounts for the specified meals:

Breakfast	<u>\$11.00</u>
Lunch	<u>\$12.00</u>
Dinner	<u>\$23.00</u>

The above amounts include tax and no more than a 20% gratuity to be based on the pre-taxed amount.

When an Elected Official or Department Head holds a staff meeting, the County will not pay for the refreshments or meals at the staff meeting.

### **Lodging Reimbursement**

Actual room charges will be reimbursed. Cost for shared rooms will be at the single rate. Detailed receipts must be submitted with claims. When a spouse attends a conference, reimbursement shall be made for a single accommodation.

Expenses for meals, conference fees, registration, lodging, and other fixed meeting expenses are reimbursable with receipt. An expense voucher must be used and turned into the Finance Office within 30 days of completion of travel to be considered for reimbursement.

Per Diem meal allowances, registration fees, and lodging fees may be requested in advance for conferences and trainings in excess of 4 or more days. Any funds requested in advance must be reconciled and any unused funds returned to the Finance Office within 30 days upon completion of travel. The same criteria applies for funds requested in advance as for reimbursements in relation to receipts. Each department has a credit card for lodging reservations that must be requested through the Elected Official or Department Head.

The preferred method of payment for conference fees, registration, and lodging will be the County credit card whenever it is feasible.