

League models are thoughtfully developed by our staff for a city's consideration. Models should be customized as appropriate for an individual city's circumstances in consultation with the city's attorney.



This icon marks places where the city must customize the model policy. They offer additional provisions, optional language, or comments for your consideration. The icon, and language you do not wish to include, should be deleted from this model before use. Make other changes, as needed, to customize the model for your city.

Elected Official Out-of-State Travel, LMC Model Policy

Purpose:

The City of _____ recognizes that its elected official may at times receive value from traveling out of the state for workshops, conferences, events and other assignments. This policy sets forth the conditions under which out-of-state travel will be reimbursed by the City.

General Guidelines:

1. The event, workshop, conference or assignment must be approved in advance by the City Council at an open meeting and must include an estimate of the cost of the travel. In evaluating the out-of-state travel request, the Council will consider the following:
 - Whether the elected official will be receiving training on issues relevant to the city or to his or her role as the Mayor or as a council member;
 - Whether the elected official will be meeting and networking with other elected officials from around the country to exchange ideas on topics of relevance to the City or on the official roles of local elected officials.
 - Whether the elected official will be viewing a city facility or function that is similar in nature to one that is currently operating at, or under consideration by the City where the purpose for the trip is to study the facility or function to bring back ideas for the consideration of the full council.
 - Whether the elected official has been specifically assigned by the Council to visit another city for the purpose of establishing a goodwill relationship such as a “sister-city” relationship (see Note below).
 - Whether the elected official has been specifically assigned by the Council to testify on behalf of the city at the United States Congress or to otherwise meet with federal officials on behalf of the city.
 - Whether the city has sufficient funding available in the budget to pay the cost of the trip.



(Note: the League recommends use of a resolution or a detailed motion outlining what exactly is being approved).

2. No reimbursements will be made for attendance at events sponsored by or affiliated with political parties.
3. The city may make payments in advance for airfare, lodging and registration if specifically approved by the council. Otherwise all payments will be made as reimbursements to the elected official.
4. The City will reimburse for transportation, lodging, meals, registration, and incidental costs using the same procedures, limitations and guidelines outlined in the city's policy for out-of-state travel by city employees.



(If the city does not currently have a policy for city employees, consider adding the following:

5. *Airfare will be reimbursed at the coach rate.*
6. *Mileage will be reimbursed at the IRS rate. If two or more council members travel together by car, only the driver will receive reimbursement. The city will reimburse for the cost of renting an automobile if necessary to conduct city business.*
7. *Lodging costs are limited to \$____ per night and meal costs are limited to \$____ per day. (If the city sets such limits, it may want to keep in mind the differences in these costs throughout the country – especially coastal cities. Alternative language could be “Lodging and meal costs are limited to those which are reasonable and necessary”).*
8. *Receipts are required for lodging, airfare, and meals and should accompany an expense report form. It is not necessary to have receipts for cabs and tips. The expense report form shall be submitted to the City Clerk (or Finance Department) for payment.*
9. *The city will not reimburse for alcoholic beverages, personal telephone calls, costs associated with the attendance of a family member, rental of luxury vehicles, meal expenses included in the cost of registration, or recreational expenses such as golf or tennis.*



OTHER PROVISIONS THE CITY MAY WANT TO CONSIDER:

- *Limitations on the number of council members who can attend the same event;*
- *Limitations on paying for council members who have announced their intention to resign, not to seek reelection, or who have been defeated in an election (however, there may be some benefit to the city in having newly elected officials who have not yet taken office attend training beforehand);*
- *Requirements for council members to give oral or written reports on the results of the trip at the next Council meeting;*
- *Requirements for the council members to turn over materials received to the city;*
- *The ability for the city to make exceptions to the policy;*
- *The requirement for all frequent flyer miles to accrue to the city;*
- *Requirements to use the most cost-efficient mode of travel available taking into consideration reasonable time constraints; or*
- *The requirement to use a city car when available;*



Note: The State Auditor’s Office has taken the position in at least one city that there was no direct authority to expend public funds for the Sister City Program. See additional guidance from the State auditor here: [Travel Guidance from MN OSA](#)

The statute requiring this policy is found at: [Minn. Stat 471.661](#)