

CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK

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# Professional Training and Travel Approval Procedures

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# Professional Training and Travel Approval Procedures

## PURPOSE

It is the goal of the City Manager's Office to provide professional training opportunities for City employees to enhance the employee's professional capabilities. Approval will be considered based upon annual budgetary constraints. The purpose of this training must result in a positive impact upon the employee's ability to fulfill his or her responsibilities in a more productive, cost efficient and effective manner.

## PROCEDURES

There are currently three levels of training opportunities which will be addressed in this document. They are:

Level I. - Training opportunities within the Chicago metropolitan area which have no cost implications to the City other than the affected employee's time, local travel expenses and registration fee. The training opportunities will most often be provided by local professional associations and other local governments.

Level II. - Training opportunities within the Chicago metropolitan area which have cost implications to the City in addition to the employee's affected time, local travel expenses, and registration fee. These costs may include items such as lodging, meals, etc. These training opportunities will most often be provided by local professional associations and other local governments.

Level III. - Training opportunities outside the Chicago metropolitan area which have cost implications to the City for travel expenses, lodging, meals, registration, and other related costs. These training opportunities will most often include opportunities provided by national and international professional associations such as the International City Management Association, American Public Works Association, American Planning Association, American Water Works Association, National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, International Association of Chiefs of Police and the International Fire Chiefs Association, among others.

The approval process for the professional training opportunities outlined above shall be as follows, using the attached Travel and Training Request form:

Level I. - Approval shall be by the appropriate department head based upon budgetary allowances. A written record shall be kept outlining the reason for attendance and benefit to the

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City and the employee. This may be provided for in the Travel and Training Request form, obtained from Finance Department or it may be accomplished by memorandum. A copy shall be provided to the Deputy City Manager's Office and included in the employee's personnel file. Payment shall be requested via the normal procurement and payment procedures.

Level II. and III. - Approval shall be by the appropriate department head and the Deputy City Manager based upon budgetary allowances. The approval shall be secured with the Travel and Training Request form as follows:

- 1) The budget must include funds for the professional training opportunity under consideration.
- 2) The employee must complete, in detail, the Travel and Training Request form available from the Finance Department. A copy of a sample of this form is attached. The form includes an estimate of total cost by category of expense, intended method of payment, and amount to be advanced for each category prior to departure. Required additional materials pertaining to the training requested should be attached. A memorandum may be attached to explain the Travel and Training Request form in more detail as it pertains to the various expense categories.
- 3) When securing cost estimates for the various expense categories, the following criteria shall be followed:
  - a) The most economical travel and lodging types shall be secured. The lowest cost coach airfare and single lodging room shall be the goal. Sharing of ground transportation and lodging is encouraged.
  - b) Using available transportation to and from the training site is encouraged. Rental car use presents liability issues associated with personal and business uses. If a rental car is used, expenses related only to the business portion of its use should be submitted. For example, the cost of ground transportation to and from the airport, and the cost of transportation from a hotel to the conference location would be valid travel related expenses. Any rental car cost above these amounts would be at the employee's expense.
  - c) Meals shall be expensed at the rate of \$40 per diem and should be pro-rated as appropriate. For example, if breakfast and lunch are provided, and dinner is not, per diem rate of \$40 should be pro-rated at 50% and only \$20 should be requested. If lunch and dinner are provided, only 25% or \$10 for breakfast should be requested as "per diem" reimbursement.
  - d) Every effort shall be made to take advantage of all registration discounts. Costs for non-training related activities shall be borne by the employee.
- 4) The Travel and Training Request and appropriate attachments shall be reviewed and approved by the appropriate department head. If all is in order, the appropriate department head shall sign in the upper left-hand corner, and forward to the Deputy City Manager.
- 5) The Travel and Training Request and appropriate attachments shall be reviewed and approved by the Deputy City Manager. If all is in order, the Deputy City Manager shall sign in the upper right-hand corner.

- 6) The Travel and Training Request and appropriate attachments shall be forwarded to the Director of Fiscal and Administrative Services for review and approval of any requested prepayments and advances. The Finance Department shall keep the white copy and forward the yellow copy to the appropriate department. The department head shall be responsible for making sure that the employee receives a copy of the form so that he or she is aware of what has been approved. Please note that no arrangements financially obligating the City in any way shall be made until final approval has been secured. A request shall be considered approved when the employee receives a copy of the Travel and Training Request forbearing all necessary approval signatures. Finance Department should be notified to begin processing prepayment checks.
- 7) Any approved advance shall be provided to the employee immediately before departure and the employee shall sign for receipt of the funds.
- 8) It is City policy, as the Travel and Training Request form provides for in "Financial Advances Required Payable To," that City checks or credit card be used, whenever feasible, for registration, lodging, airfare, etc. and that use of employee's personal check and credit card be limited to those circumstances when it is absolutely necessary.
- 9) Credit cards issued in the City's name have been authorized for a limited number of employees. These cards may be used to facilitate travel and training. Use is limited to only those expenses that have been authorized. NO personal use is allowed.

When the Employee Returns:

- 10) The employee shall complete both sides of the Travel and Training Report. All appropriate receipts must be attached to identify costs as noted. The "per diem" policy does not require the submission of receipts for actual dollars spent on meals. If the employee owes a financial settlement to the City, the appropriate reimbursement should be attached. If further explanation is necessary, a memorandum should be attached.
- 11) The Travel and Training Report and appropriate attachments shall be reviewed by the appropriate department head. If all is in order and the department head is in agreement with all the information as presented, he or she shall sign the form in the upper left-hand corner and forward to the Deputy City Manager.
- 12) The Deputy City Manager shall review the Travel and Training Report and appropriate attachments. If all is in order, the Deputy City Manager shall sign in the upper right-hand corner and forward to the Director of Fiscal and Administrative Services.
- 13) The Director of Fiscal & Administrative Services shall review the Travel and Training Report and sign in the upper right-hand corner if all is in order. If a financial settlement is due to the employee, it shall be processed by the Finance Department. The Finance Department shall be responsible for all final financial record keeping regarding employee training opportunities and associated costs.

Any questions concerning this procedure should be directed to the Deputy City Manager.