

County of Essex Policy and Procedures Manual

Travel, Meetings, and Conferences – Council, Committees, Agencies and Boards

Policy Number:	2022-003
Policy Type:	Corporate Policy
Approval Authority:	Essex County Council
Office of Responsibility:	Legislative and Community Services
Issuance Date:	2022-05-18
Revised on Date:	2024-10-02
Scheduled Review Date:	2028-10-02
Replaces Policy:	1994-004, 2009-002

1.0 Introduction

The Corporation of the County of Essex (the "**County**") is committed to providing members of County Council ("**Council**") and laypersons appointed by Council to serve as members of Committees, Agencies, and/or Boards of the County ("**Committees**"), with the opportunity to improve their knowledge and keep abreast of changing technologies and attitudes for conducting the business of the County.

2.0 Scope

This Travel, Meetings, and Conferences – Council, Committees, Agencies and Boards Policy (the "**Policy**") applies to all members of Essex County Council, its Committees, Agencies and Boards.

This Policy does not apply to employees of the County.

For the purpose of this Policy, Members of Committees are only those appointees who are laypersons and does not include members of Council.

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3.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a set of guidelines that will ensure the prudent stewardship of public funds by defining eligible expenditures as they relate to registration fees, travel, accommodations, meals, per diems and related expenses ("**Travel Expenses**") for attendance at conferences, conventions, workshops, seminars and other special events ("**Conferences**") attended by members of Council or Committees.

4.0 Responsibility

- 4.1 Members of Council and Committees are responsible for ensuring that they comply with this Policy and only attend Conferences that are on the Approved List of Conferences and for the purpose of advancing the legitimate business of the County, and that by such attendance, said members of Council and Committees will be better capable of carrying out their duties on behalf of the County.
- 4.2 The Warden is responsible for ensuring strict adherence to this Policy.
- 4.3 Administration is responsible for Council and Committee member travel arrangements, including registrations, accommodation, and transportation reservations, as well as calculations of per diems and meal allowances. County credit cards and/or County charge accounts with vendors will be used for payment wherever possible.
- 4.4 Any deviation from this Policy, including attendance at a Conference not on the Approved List of Conferences, requires the Warden's approval, which shall only be considered upon receipt of a written request with sufficient supporting rationale for deviation from the Policy from the member requesting same.
 - 4.4.1 Any deviation from this Policy, shall consider whether approval of the request can be made within the overall existing budget allocated for this purpose.

5.0 Policy

General

- 5.1 This Policy provides for attendance at one Conference per year with Travel Expenses per member of Council not to exceed \$5,000. Up

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to one partner registration fee per annum, not to exceed \$300, can be included within the \$5,000 limit. Any additional costs for attendance at the Conference for the member and/or their partner in excess of the limits provided for in this Section 5.1, shall be the sole responsibility of the member.

- 5.2 This Policy provides for attendance at one Conference per year with Travel Expenses per member of Committee not to exceed \$2,500. Any additional costs for attendance at the Conference for the member in excess of the limits provided for in this Section 5.1, shall be the sole responsibility of the member.
- 5.3 Whenever possible, travel arrangements should be made in advance, to benefit from any discounts offered by service providers and should be billed directly to the County or paid with a County-issued credit card. Administration will make every reasonable effort to take advantage of sales, discounts, and/or promotions offered by a service provider when booking transportation and accommodation for members of Council and Committees.
- 5.4 Administration shall maintain a list of service providers for which the County has a charge account. Where possible, arrangements should be made with these providers and may be charged to the charge account.
- 5.5 Selection of a service provider in order to capitalize on the collection of personal points/rewards programs is strictly prohibited.
- 5.6 Where more than one member of Council/Committee is attending the same event, when reasonable, Administration will endeavor to:
- Coordinate travel arrangements; and
 - Take advantage of group rates.
- 5.7 Pre-paid travel expenses, such as accommodations, meals, conference registration etc., do not require receipts unless specifically requested by Administration.

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- 5.8 Within 30 days of returning from a conference where reimbursement is required for incidental expenses paid by personal means, a separate Travel Expense Form (**Appendix A**, which may be amended from time to time by Administration) from each attendee, shall be submitted along with valid receipts which substantiate the expenses. These incidental expenses may include parking, toll, shuttle or taxi rides, that had not been pre-paid on the Members original Travel Expense Form. These incidental expenses shall be counted within the total annual expense claim for each Member. Travel Expense claims are subject to examination by Administration and/or external auditors and should be completed with due diligence and accuracy.
- 5.9 Reimbursement for expenditures made in a foreign currency through the use of a Canadian credit card shall be made at the prevailing exchange rate utilized by the financial institution and detailed on the receipt provided, as submitted by the member of Council and/or Committee, where practicable. Alternatively, the applicable Bank of Canada exchange rate on the date of the transaction will be used for all other expenditures.
- 5.10 Members shall notify Administration in advance, of any need to cancel any requested travel. Administration shall take measures to notify the service providers immediately upon receiving notice from the Member to avoid cancellation charges. Any penalties or expenses incurred resulting from cancellation will be charged to the Travel Expenses limit of the Member of Council and/or Committee.
- 5.11 Extended travel days must result in no additional cost to the County.

Accommodation

- 5.12 Overnight accommodation will be paid for the duration of the event, including travel time, up to a maximum of 5 days.
- 5.13 Overnight accommodation should be selected on the basis of practical location and reasonable cost, with preference to establishments offering conference related rates or one which provides a Government rate where possible. Accommodation with relatives or friends will not be reimbursed.

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- 5.14 Ancillary charges, including, but not limited to pay-per-view, room service and mini-bar expenses, are the personal responsibility of the traveler and will not be reimbursed.

Transportation

- 5.15 The County will reimburse members of Council/Committees for reasonable Travel Expenses incurred while conducting pre-approved business.
- 5.15.1 The most economical mode of transportation should be used whenever possible.
- 5.15.2 Members of Council/Committees may use their own personal vehicle for business travel purposes, if that is the most economical mode of travel, and approved prior to departure. Mileage shall be reimbursed pursuant to the rate as established from time to time by the Canada Revenue Agency. Mileage related to business travel and/or attendance at a Conference should be submitted prior to departure on a Travel Expense Form (**Appendix A**), using the kilometre estimate provided by Administration.
- 5.15.3 Where Travel Expenses are able to be determined in advance, Administration will complete the applicable Travel Expense Form (**Appendix A**). Administration will make best efforts to make payment in advance of travel, based on the regular Accounts Payable payment cycle, but with payment not being made more than 30 days prior to the event.
- 5.15.4 Loss or damage to a personal vehicle used for attendance on County business or a Conference shall not be the responsibility of the County.
- 5.15.5 Where more than one member of Council is travelling in the same vehicle, only the owner of said vehicle is entitled to reimbursement for mileage expenses.
- 5.15.6 Any costs associated with the maintenance, cleaning/detailing, fuel, vehicular breakdown or damage incurred while driving a personal vehicle will not be reimbursed by the County.

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- 5.15.7 Any traffic violations, including parking tickets, will not be reimbursed by the County.

Out-of-Province Conferences

- 5.16 The County recognizes that periodically there are conferences held outside the Province of Ontario, which members of Council would benefit from attending. On up to two (2) occasions during a member of Council's four-year term, a member of Council may attend an out-of-province conference ("**Out-of-Province Conference**") in lieu of any other conference that year. The \$5,000 total annual expenses limit shall not apply to Out-of-Province conferences, provided that the attendance is on the Approved List of Conferences and is for the purpose of advancing the legitimate business of the County and that by such attendance, said members of Council and Committees will be better capable to carry out their duties on behalf of the County.

Per Diem

- 5.17 The daily travel per diem which members of Council are entitled for attendance at events extending more than 4 hours in duration is \$175.00. The per diem shall be limited to the number of days that the member of Council attends the event, either in person or virtually.

Meals

- 5.18 A Meal allowance will be calculated and paid (except when meals are included as part of the fees paid for a Conference or supplied with an accommodation or transportation) pursuant to the [Meal Allowance rate as established from time to time by the Canada Revenue Agency](#). The Meal Allowance related to attendance at a Conference should be submitted prior to departure on a Travel Expense Form (Appendix A).

- 5.18.1 Receipts to claim a meal allowance are not required. In lieu of receipts, the following guideline shall be applied when claiming a meal allowance:
- a) Breakfast – When the individual is required to leave for a trip before 8:00 AM or is away overnight.

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- b) Lunch – When the individual is required to leave before noon or arrives home after 2:00 PM.
- c) Dinner – When the individual could not arrive home before 7:00 PM or is away overnight.

Other

- 5.19 The expenses of the Warden are not limited in accordance with Section 5.0 of this Policy, but shall be and is limited by the budget as approved by Council.
- 5.20 While representing the County it is expected that Members shall abide by the **Code of Conduct for Council Members, and Members of Local Boards**.
- 5.21 Expenses above are payable only on behalf of the member of Council/Committee, and exclude any charges incurred by, on behalf of, or in relation to a partner of a member of Council/Committee

6.0 Related Documents/Legislation

- [Code of Conduct for Council Members, and Members of Local Boards](#) (being Appendix A to By-law # 2023-48)

7.0 Summary of Amendments

Date	Amendment(s)
2022-05-18	Report 2022-0518-LCS-R10-MB introduced Policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essex County Council approved by Resolution 123-2022.• Replaces Policy 1994-004: Conference-Convention Attendance - Members of Council• Replaces Policy: 2009-002 Purchase of Alcohol with Municipal Funds
2024-02-10	Report 2024-1002-LCS-R31-KH <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amended Meal Allocation to align with CRA Recommended values.• Clarified language in some sections to align with practices.

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- Added [Code of Conduct for Council Members, and Members of Local Boards](#) as reference document.

Appendices

Appendix A: Council Travel Voucher

The Travel Expense form is available on County Connect.

County of Essex **Council Travel Voucher**

Date of Request

Name Department

Date of Function to

Duration of Trip days to nights

Name of Event

Location

Sample Form

REGISTRATION		Prepaid	Not Prepaid		
Member	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
Non-Member	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
Spouse	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
				**\$300 limit per year	
				TOTAL REGISTRATION	\$ -

TRAVEL	Vendor	Conf #	Before Tax	HST	Total
Hotel	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ -
Air	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ -
Train	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ -
Rental Vehicle	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ -
					TOTAL TRAVEL \$ -

MILEAGE	Personal Vehicle Reimbursement - # of km	\$	0.61
			TOTAL TRAVEL \$ -

PER DIEM	Number of days	\$ 175.00
		TOTAL PER DIEM \$ -

MEAL ALLOWANCE	Description	Before Tax	HST	Total
	Breakfast - leave before 8am / away overnight	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ 15.00 \$ -
	Lunch - leave before noon / home after 2pm	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ 20.00 \$ -
	Dinner - home after 7pm / away overnight	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ 40.00 \$ -
				TOTAL MEAL ALLOWANCE \$ -

INCIDENTAL EXPENDITURES	Description	Before Tax	HST	Total
(Receipts required)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ -
				TOTAL INCIDENTAL EXPENDITURES \$ -

PREPAYMENTS	Description	Pmt Method	Amount (enter as positive)
(includes other deductions such as personal portion of expenditures)	Prepaid Registration	<input type="text"/>	\$ -
			TOTAL PREPAYMENTS \$ -

TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT		\$ -
<p>OFFICE USE ONLY:</p> <p>Vendor ID <input type="text"/></p> <p>Account Number <input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Prepared by <input type="text"/></p> <p>Approved by <input type="text"/></p>	<p>NOTES</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px;"></div>	