Title: Administrative Policy Business Related Travel	**Policy No.** Part 5, Staff Policies Chapter 1, Rules Section 5
	Effective Date September 20, 2011
Policy Custodian Finance and Information Technology	**Adoption/Revision Date** September 20, 2011

Adopting Resolution(s): CC11-349

References (Statutes /Resos/Policies): 30-2-102(3), 30-11-107(1)(t), C.R.S.; CC04-348, CC08-170, CC09-451; Colo Const. Art XXIX, Section 3, Independent Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion 08-02;

Purpose: To authorize the payment of and reimbursement of the reasonable and necessary travel expenses for business-related travel.

Policy: Business Related Travel

A. Authorization

1. Employee travel must first be approved according to the following:

    a. In-State Travel: Requires the approval of a supervisor one level higher or above.

    b. Out-of-State Travel: Requires the approval of a Division Director or above.

2. Reasonable and Necessary Costs

    a. The County will pay/reimburse only reasonable and necessary County business-related travel expenses.

    b. The County will not pay or reimburse employees for purchases of alcohol.

    c. To the extent possible, expenses such as conference registrations, parking, and incidentals not covered by per diem shall be charged on a county Procurement card or Travel Card.

    d. To the extent possible, the County's tax exempt status should be used to avoid paying state and local sales tax for business related travel expenses.

3. If the travel requires an overnight stay:

    a. County employees, other than elected officials, are required to use a per diem for meals and incidentals rather than receive reimbursement for actual expenses.

    b. Per diem for meals and incidentals shall be issued based on the Federal per diem rates.

    c. Exceptions to the use of per diem or the rates require the approval of the County Administrator or Elected Official.

4. If the travel does not require an overnight stay:
   Reimbursement of meals associated with travel that did not require the employee to stay overnight shall not be reimbursed by the County, as it would be considered taxable income per IRS regulations. (See the Food and Beverage Expenditures Policy for reimbursement of business related meals)

5. Employees who fail to abide by this Policy may be denied reimbursement.

6. The Purchasing Director, with coordination with the appropriate Elected Official, Department or Division Director is authorized to develop procedures to implement the policy.

B. County's Travel Program

1. The County shall participate in the Colorado State Travel Management Program (STMP). The STMP is a system developed by the State of Colorado to reduce travel costs, obtain travel protection and insurance benefits, and provide for better tracking of employee travel. Only those STMP elements that the County finds beneficial shall be used.

2. The Purchasing Division, with the agreement of the appropriate Elected Official or Division or Department Director, shall issue a county credit card (Travel Card) that provides employees with travel protection and insurance.

3. The County-designated travel agency or online booking tool and Travel Card are the County preferred methods for booking the items listed below. Exceptions may occur, which should be reported immediately to the Travel Manager or Purchasing Division Director.

   a. Lodging

   b. Air or Train Fare

   c. Rental Cars

C. Meals and Incidentals

1. Elected Officials
   Elected Officials must submit receipts for actual and necessary business expenses for reimbursement by the County.

2. Per Diem for employees other than Elected Officials

   a. Receipts are not required for the meals and incidentals purchased with a per diem.

   b. Certain incidentals are not required to be paid for with a per diem. These incidental expenses include:

      (1) Parking

      (2) Bus fares, subway/light rail fares, and taxi fares, including taxi driver tips.

      (3) The cost of cleaning or laundry made necessary by travel.

      (4) Telephone calls home (limit to one call per day unless more are necessary due to extenuating circumstances).

(5) Charges for telephone calls or facsimiles to the office or elsewhere for County business.

(6) Copying of business documents and similar items.

(7) On-line access for business purposes.

3. Receipts

a. Receipts are required for expenses not covered by a per diem. If a receipt is not available, the employee must provide a written explanation for the expense and obtain approval.

b. Employees must submit receipts and file expense reports as soon as possible after expense was incurred, but no later than 14 calendar days after completion of each trip. Employees who do not file their expense report within the required time may not be reimbursed.

D. Vehicle Travel

1. Parking
The County shall pay parking costs while on business related travel.

2. If a private or County vehicle is used, refer to the Driving on County Business Policy for applicable reimbursement policies.

3. The County-designated travel agency or online booking tool and Travel Card are the County preferred methods for booking rental cars. Exceptions may occur, which should be reported immediately to the Travel Manager or Purchasing Division Director.

E. Air Travel

1. The County-designated travel agency or online booking tool and Travel Card are the County preferred methods for booking air travel. Exceptions may occur, which should be reported immediately to the Travel Manager or Purchasing Division Director.

2. The County-designated travel agency or designated online booking tool shall confirm tickets based on the lowest logical airfare as determined by the following criteria:

a. County-preferred and alternate air carriers

b. Connecting flights that result in significant cost savings and add no more than 2 hours travel time

c. A flight within two (2) hours of intended departure or arrival time

d. Maximum use of non-refundable tickets when applicable

3. If the lowest logical airfare is not accepted, the employee must obtain approval from their Department Director or above. Purchasing shall review all non-compliance reports provided through the County-designated travel agency and notify appropriate Department or Division Directors or Elected Officials.

4. Business and first Class is not permitted and will not be reimbursed unless otherwise approved by the Department Director or Elected Official.

5. Tickets should be purchased at least 14 calendar days prior to departure date when possible. Justification must be provided and approved by the Division Director if tickets are purchased within 7 days of departure.

6. Unused, lost or stolen tickets must be reported to the County-designated travel agency.

7. Delays

    a. If an airline delay necessitates an overnight stay that is not paid for by the airline, employees must contact the County-designated travel agency.

    b. If an employee is denied boarding due to overbooking, the free voucher must be applied to the next business travel flight.

8. Baggage

    a. The County will not reimburse the employee for personal items lost while traveling on business.

    b. County will pay for one checked bag. Exceptions will be made for those employees traveling with heavy or bulky materials or equipment, County records or property, or relocating a child.

F. Train Travel

1. The County shall pay only the amount of the fare that does not exceed the cost of mileage or a competitively-priced airfare, whichever is less.

2. The County-designated travel agency or online booking tool and Travel Card are the County preferred methods for booking train travel. Exceptions may occur, which should be reported immediately to the Travel Manager or Purchasing Division Director.

3. Travel shall be in economy or coach class. Business and First Class is not permitted and will not be reimbursed unless approved by Division Director or above.

G. Lodging

1. The County will pay the cost of lodging when an overnight stay is required.

2. The County-designated travel agency or online booking tool and Travel Card are the County preferred methods for booking lodging. Exceptions may occur, which should be reported immediately to the Travel Manager or Purchasing Division Director.

3. When specifically pre-approved, the County will pay for additional lodging beyond that required for County business, but only when necessary to achieve a savings in transportation cost that more than compensates for the cost of additional lodging.

H. Conferences

1. The County will pay/reimburse the cost of registration fees, banquet meals, boxed lunches, or other refreshments associated with the conference event.

2. The County will not pay for the cost of other social activities or events that are offered in conjunction with the conference but are not part of the conference agenda (e.g. sight-seeing trips, tournaments, etc.).

I. Travel Advances

1. Travel advances may be obtained by any Elected Official/employee not possessing a Travel Card or Procurement Card. Appropriate documentation required by Accounting must be completed, approved and submitted three weeks before the scheduled departure date

2. All amounts paid pursuant to an advance must be accounted for with proper documentation. Unexpended travel advance funds and funds for which the traveling employee cannot account must be reimbursed to the County within five (5) business days after returning to the County.

J. Travel Paid By Non-County Entity
Travel Expenses paid by an entity other than the County or a state or local government must comply with the following requirements to be accepted:

1. The travel must be for a government purpose related to the person's official position.

2. The travel arrangements must be appropriate to that purpose.

3. The trip can be no longer than reasonably necessary to accomplish the business which is its purpose. If the trip is extended for personal purposes, the expenses related to the extended trip must be paid by the official or employee not the donor.

4. The County official or employee who will be traveling is not currently, was not in the recent past, and will not in the reasonably foreseeable future, be in a position to take direct official action with respect to the donor.

5. The County official or employee must verify compliance with conditions 1 through 4 above by any of the following means:

   a) written supervisory approval

   b) official public approval by the Board of County Commissioners;

   c) written explanation by the elected official of why he or she believes the travel meets conditions 1 through 4; or

   d) an advisory opinion from the Colorado Independent Ethics Commission.