FRIO COUNTY TRAVEL POLICY

Approved by Commissioners' Court August 11, 2026

Purpose and authority:

This policy establishes uniform requirements for authorization, payment, reimbursement, documentation, and accountability for travel conducted on official Frio County business. The policy applies to all County employees, elected officials, appointed officials, and department heads whose travel expenses are paid, advanced, or reimbursed from County funds.

Overview:

As adopted by the Commissioners Court, establishes procedures to promote the efficient and effective use of County travel funds. This policy ensures accountability for travel-related expenditures, and establish clear requirements for travel advances, reimbursements, documentation, and responsibilities associated with official County travel. County employees, officials, and department heads are expected to use the most economical and effective means of transportation and lodging available. Whenever practical, alternatives to travel, such as conference calls, video conferencing, webinars, carpooling, and the use of County-owned vehicles, should be utilized. Travel funded by the County must directly benefit Frio County and must be conducted solely for official County business.

Frio County will follow the State of Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, GSA per diem rates and current IRS mileage rates at the time of travel. IRS rules apply to all travel reimbursement. All travel is subject to the availability of adequate budgeted funds. No travel advance will be issued without an available budget.

All travel advances must be reconciled with the County Auditor's Office within three (3) business days after returning from travel. This includes submission of original itemized hotel receipts, parking receipts, certificates of completion, proof of attendance or training hours, and any other required supporting documentation. No additional travel advances will be issued if a previous travel advance remains outstanding.

If an employee, official, or department head is unable to attend a conference, seminar, training session, or other approved travel event, that individual is responsible for all charges incurred as a result of a no-show or a missed cancellation deadline. The individual must notify the County Auditor's Office as soon as it is determined that travel will not occur. Any County-issued checks for meals, mileage, or travel expenses that have not been cashed must be returned to the Auditor's Office for voiding. If the check has already been cashed, the individual must reimburse the County for the full amount received.

Within three (3) business days of returning to work, the individual must submit all required supporting documentation, return any unused travel funds, and remit any applicable reimbursements received from another source. Failure to comply may result in the County Treasurer deducting the amount owed from the individual's next available paycheck. Exceptions may be granted in cases involving the death of an immediate family member or a serious health condition that occurred without advance notice, provided adequate supporting documentation is submitted to the Auditor's Office.

If the trip is fully funded by another government agency, Frio County will not pay for or reimburse any portion of the travel. If any part of the trip is being reimbursed by another agency, the reimbursement must be submitted to the County Auditor as soon as it is received. All reimbursable expenses must be reasonable, necessary, and customary for the travel destination and the type of official County business being conducted.

Mileage will be determined using Google Maps (www.google.com/maps/dir).

Any out-of-state travel must receive prior approval from the Commissioners Court. Out-of-state travel for the purpose of prisoner transport is at the discretion of the Sheriff and does not require prior approval from the Commissioners Court.

Definitions:

For purposes of this policy, official County business means travel that directly benefits Frio County and is authorized for County-related duties, training, meetings, conferences, prisoner or probationer transport, investigative duties, or other approved governmental purposes. Travel advance means County funds issued before travel occurs. Reimbursement means repayment to an eligible individual after travel expenses have been incurred and properly documented. Local travel means travel that is less than 100 miles round trip from the individual's regular place of employment or home, whichever is closer to the destination.

Allowable Travel Expenses:

Frio County employees, officials, or department heads traveling out of county on official County business may request a travel advance or reimbursement by submitting the Travel Expense Form and supporting documentation, including registration information and confirmation, agenda, mileage map, hotel confirmation, and any other required documents, to the County Auditor. Requests without proper documentation will be returned and may result in delay. Advance requests must be submitted by noon on the Wednesday before the applicable Commissioners Court meeting. Checks will be issued in a timely manner after Commissioners Court approval. All travel requests, whether submitted as an advance or reimbursement, must be approved by the county official or department head before submission to the County Auditor.

Travel / Mileage:
Frio County considers any trip that is less than 100 miles round trip from an employee's, official's, or department head's regular place of employment or home, whichever is closer to the travel destination to be local travel. For local travel, which does not require an overnight stay, the County will reimburse eligible expenses such as registration or conference fees, mileage for the use of a personal vehicle, tolls, and parking. However, no per diem or reimbursement for meals will be provided for travel that does not require an overnight stay.

Local travel is defined as travel of less than 100 miles round trip that does not require an overnight stay. For local travel, the County may reimburse eligible expenses such as registration fees, conference fees, mileage for personal vehicle use, tolls, and parking costs. Meal expenses and meal per diem are not reimbursable for local travel that does not include an overnight stay.

Travel that exceeds 100 miles round trip and requires more than one day may be eligible for reimbursement of meal per diem, lodging, parking, tolls, airport parking, and other authorized expenses under this policy. Travel time shall be based on direct travel to and from the approved destination, while allowing for normal traffic conditions and reasonable travel breaks.

If meetings, conferences, seminars, or training sessions are located away from the selected hotel, mileage between the hotel and event location may be reimbursed.

The County may compensate employees for travel time between their departure point and hotel, as well as the return trip home. Employees must provide written documentation of travel time to their elected official or department head to ensure proper recording in TimeClock.

Registration:
Conference registration should be requested in advance to take advantage of early registration discounts and allow the county to pay the fee directly to the sponsor. If prior payment is not feasible, a County issued check made to the sponsor will be sent with the individual travel.

Lodging:
The County encourages the use of clean, comfortable and safe hotels but expects that the employee, the official, or the department head will be frugal in selecting a hotel. Established Rates: GSA per diem lodging rates, Association block rates, Conference rates, or Government rates should be utilized whenever available and the use of discounted conference hotels is encouraged. The use of hotels other than discounted conference hotels should be justified.

Exceptions:

- In the event that rooms at the established rates are unavailable, the individual may secure lodging at any rate that does not exceed the established rates.
- If no hotel rates are available below the established rates, the individual is permitted to secure lodging at the lowest rate obtained from three comparable hotels in the area.

Hotel bookings are the responsibility of the employee, official, or department head, and they are required to secure the room with their personal credit card, including coverage of any incidental charges.

Hotel Payment Options When Checks Are Not Accepted: If a hotel does not accept checks as a form of payment, employees, officials, or department heads must contact the County Auditor before completing the booking in order to obtain the use of the Purchasing Card. Payment may be handled in one of the following ways:

- A County Purchasing Card may be used by an employee, official, or department head to pay for the hotel stay.
- The employee, official, or department head may choose another hotel in the area that accepts checks, provided the booking complies with the established rates.

Before requesting use of the County Purchasing Card for hotel payment, the official or department head must read, sign, and comply with the Frio County Purchasing Card Policies and Procedures. The employee, official or department head must provide the County Auditor with a copy of the hotel confirmation, credit card authorization form, and hotel payment confirmation. The original itemized hotel receipt must be submitted to the County Auditor within three (3) business days after the hotel stay.

Arrival the evening before a morning meeting or training is permitted when same-day travel is not reasonable because of early departure times, extended travel distances, or a substantial risk of delay. Same-day arrival is encouraged when the event begins at 1:00 p.m. or later. Individuals are expected to return home on the day the event concludes unless unsafe conditions, such as severe weather, road closures, vehicle breakdowns, medical emergencies, or excessive driver fatigue, prevent safe travel. The County will not reimburse lodging expenses incurred for any night preceding the night before the event begins or for any night following the night before the event ends.

Meals:
The County has determined that out-of-county meals and associated gratuities should be paid on a per diem basis and receipts to document the cost of meals are not required. Meal tips are included in the per diem rate and should not be reported separately. The per diem allowance will be prorated for partial days based on the time of departure and arrival, adhering to GSA rates.

County law enforcement, juvenile corrections, or correctional departments may incur travel expenses related to the transportation of prisoners or probationers, and investigative duties. These departments are eligible for reimbursement of meal expenses when the transportation of prisoners or probationers to a correctional facility when the transport exceeds 200 miles round trip.

All reimbursement requests must include receipts for eligible meals incurred by law enforcement or correctional personnel. Actual receipts must be submitted to the County Auditor with a Check Request Form or the request for reimbursement will not be honored. Meal reimbursements should not exceed $30.00 per individual; taxes paid on a meal are not reimbursable. Meals or per diem expenses for prisoners or probationers being transported to a correctional facility are not reimbursable under any circumstances.

Transportation:
Travel by air is acceptable whenever air travel is cheaper than traveling by car. Employees, officials, or department heads are encouraged to book flights at least three (3) weeks in advance so as to be able to take advantage of early flight discounts. Travel should be scheduled to allow for the most economical fares available. Individuals should also compare pricing with the State of Texas Purchasing Cooperative for airline pricing.

Airline tickets may be paid for in advance if the individual submits a Check Request Form and has attached an invoice or itinerary. If the individual chooses to purchase the airline ticket out of pocket, Frio County will reimburse at the lowest available airline fare for the most direct airline route. Airline fare receipts will need to be submitted to the County Auditor on a Check Request Form for reimbursement.

Hotel shuttle buses, airport shuttle buses, personal vehicles, taxis, Uber, or Lyft rides (when justified) are acceptable means of transportation when traveling out-of-county on Official County Business, when county owed vehicles are not available and are the most cost-effective option. Taxi, Shuttle Bus Fares, and Uber or Lyft rides are reimbursable, the employee, official, or department head will need to obtain receipts for reimbursements by Frio County for fares relating to County Business.

Employees, officials, or department heads who choose to travel out-of-county on County Business in their personal vehicles must carry adequate liability insurance sufficient to meet applicable financial responsibility laws. The County is not responsible for any damages to the individual's vehicle or for any insurance deductibles. The operation, maintenance, and liability associated with privately owned vehicles remain the sole responsibility of the individual.

Vehicle rentals must be economical, feasible, and limited to situations where public transportation is unavailable or inadequate due to time constraints, where the cost of taxi service is excessive, or where multiple employees are traveling, and a rental is more economical than individual taxi fares. The requesting department must make the reservation prior to departure and obtain any available County discount. Insurance is provided by the County for domestic vehicle rentals; therefore, individuals will not be reimbursed for purchasing additional insurance coverage.

In the event a receipt required for reimbursement is lost, the County Auditor may accept an approved Affidavit of Missing Receipt Form in lieu of the original receipt for expenses incurred on official County business. Approval by the appropriate elected official or department head is required.

Upon returning from travel, all required receipts, affidavit forms, and Check Request Forms must be submitted to the County Auditor for reimbursement processing.

Unallowable Travel Expenses:

Meal per diem is not available for day travel and applies only to travel requiring a justified overnight stay.

Wi-Fi expenses will only be reimbursed when the hotel does not offer a free Wi-Fi option. When Wi-Fi access is purchased, it must be used exclusively for County Business purposes.

Travel expenses for spouses, family, or friends accompanying an employee, official, or department head on official County business are not eligible for reimbursement. Employees who choose to have accompanying individuals must first obtain prior approval from their elected official, appointed official, or department head.

Frio County will not provide advance or reimbursement for the following:

- Alcoholic Beverages
- Dry Cleaning or laundry
- Entertainment Expense
- Health Club Charges
- Limousines or Luxury Rental Cars
- Long Distance Phone Calls from Hotel
- Movie Rentals / Charges
- Hotel incidentals
- Parking Fines
- Tips and gratuities to Taxi / Shuttle Drivers and Porters
- Personal Items
- Room Service
- Room Bar, Water, and Snacks
- Spa Service
- Towing Charges
- Valet parking - Except when hotel confirms they offer no other parking options
- Lost or stolen property
- Traffic Fines
- Personal vehicle repairs

Travel Responsibility:

It will be the responsibility of each county official or department head to utilize budgeted travel funds for official County business. These funds are budgeted for the purpose of allowing officials, department heads, and their employees to attend various association meetings, training seminars, conferences, meetings, educational seminars and required law enforcement travel relating to prisoners and probationers.

If a county employee, official, or department head is found to have not attended their approved conference, training, or seminar, that individual will be required to reimburse Frio County for all expenses the County paid for their attendance.

The employee, official, or department head will also forfeit eligibility for travel advances for all future events and will be limited to reimbursement-only travel.

Any county employee, official, or department head determined to have failed to attend an approved event will be considered in violation of the Frio County Fraud Policy and will be subject to all consequences outlined in that policy.

It will be the responsibility of each county official or department head to ensure the enforcement of this policy. By signing the travel expense report, the county official or department head is certifying that the travel for which reimbursement is being sought was properly authorized and the report and accompanying receipts have been examined, are reasonable and the departmental budget can support these expenses.

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Frio County Travel Policy. I agree to comply with all provisions of this policy and understand that failure to follow the policy may result in denial of reimbursement, repayment of County funds, disciplinary action, and/or other consequences as outlined in applicable County policies.

I further acknowledge that it is my responsibility to seek clarification from my elected official, department head, or the County Auditor if I have any questions regarding the interpretation or application of this policy.

Employee Name: ______________________________

Employee Signature: ____________________________

Date: ______________________________________

Supervisor/Manager Signature (if applicable): ______________

Date: ______________________________________

The above Travel Policy is **APPROVED, PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Commissioners Court of Frio County, Texas, on this 11th day of August, 2026, with the following members of the court voting: 3 **AYE,** 0 **NAY,** with 0 **ABSTAINING,** and 2 **ABSENT.**

HON. ROCHELLE CAMACHO
County Judge

HON. JOE VELA
Commissioner, Precinct No. 1

HON. MARIO MARTINEZ
Commissioner, Precinct No. 2

HON. RAUL CARRIZALES
Commissioner, Precinct No. 3

HON. DANNY CANO
Commissioner, Precinct No.4

ATTEST:

HON. ANNA HERNANDEZ
Frio County Clerk
Ex officio Clerk of the
Frio County Commissioners Court

By: ______________________
(Chief) Deputy Clerk

FILED
At 5:00 o'Clock P M
This 11th day of August 2026
Anna L. Hernandez
Clerk County Court FRIO COUNTY, TX
BY: ______________________ DEPUTY