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Mayor Emanuel Announces New City Employee Mileage Reimbursement and Local Transportation Policy to Increase Efficiency and Accountability

New policy outlines specific regulations for travel reimbursement, requires employees use public transportation for local travel and will save taxpayers \$1 million

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced the City of Chicago will adopt new mileage and local travel reimbursement policies with specifically defined criteria that will save approximately \$1 million in 2012. For the first time, the City will have a clearly defined, enforceable policy that encourages employees to use public transportation.

“As public servants we must be diligent and responsible stewards of taxpayer money,” said Mayor Emanuel. “I commend the Comptroller for his swift and thorough review of the city’s mileage reimbursement and travel policies to increase accountability and efficiency across city government and save taxpayers money.”

The policy was crafted after Mayor Emanuel ordered City Comptroller Amer Ahmad to conduct a thorough review of past mileage and travel practices to increase accountability and efficiency across City government and protect taxpayer money. In his report to the Mayor, the Comptroller identified several systemic weaknesses including, unsupported or limited support for reimbursements, inadequate management review and follow up, unclear monitoring and audit controls, and questionable or inconsistent usage of other local transportation modes.

Ahmad found instances of employees being reimbursed for car washes, transportation to jury duty, parking tickets, excessive parking costs and even late fees on personal credit cards. One of the most significant additions to the policy is the requirement for the use of public transportation. The Comptroller formally states that the preferred method of travel for employees once they have begun their work day is the CTA. If this is not feasible due to location, timing, or security reasons employees will have to provide reasoning on reimbursement forms. Ahmad anticipates saving nearly \$1 million with these reforms. The enforcement of a daily minimum for mileage reimbursement will save approximately half a million dollars. The remaining \$500,000 will be saved through increased use of Public Transportation, no fuel reimbursements, and new controls to eliminate abuse.



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The new policy also requires the following:

- Stronger documentation for reimbursement, including the submission of a map to show how many miles the employee traveled.
- More detailed reimbursement forms that include beginning and ending odometer readings listing all locations visited.
- Establishing a daily minimum and maximum, and a monthly maximum that is allowable for reimbursement. The use of personal vehicles is strongly discouraged.
- Increased transparency requiring City Departments and Sister Agencies upload their individual mileage and travel reimbursement information to the City of Chicago website on a monthly basis, starting with an initial year-to-date upload at the time of adoption of the new policy.

“Across the board we found inconsistency in the policies and enforcement in our Departments and Sister Agencies,” said Ahmad. “This new policy provides the necessary structure to ensure that City travel is efficient and above all an appropriate use of city resources.”

Earlier this year Ahmad conducted a detailed review of all City expenditures and reimbursements that cut the number of City credit cards from 500 to approximately 8.

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