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Department of Finance

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TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Elizabeth Comfort, Finance Director
Christa Wolfe, Deputy Director

RE: NEW TRAVEL POLICY

The County's previous travel policy (issued January, 2003) is non-compliant with current IRS tax rules, placing the County's "Accountable Plan" for travel reimbursement at risk. Remaining out of compliance with IRS rules means that travel reimbursement paid by the County would be taxable income to the traveler. Therefore, Finance is recommending the review and adoption of an updated Travel Program.

Finance has worked to update the policy, accompanying manual, and created FAQ's. Together, these documents are intended to serve as the County's official Travel Program. Counsel has reviewed the new policy and the Policy Committee, HR, and the Unions have reviewed all three documents.

The new Travel Program is distinguished from the previous version by the following significant changes:

- Clarification that there is one County travel policy and related guidance
- Clarification on when a traveler is in Travel Status
- Incorporation of travel booking software procedures in partnership with Corporate Travel Management (CTM)
- Updated travel-related definitions and allowances
- Incorporation of updated rules and guidance around mileage reimbursement, specifically including tele-commuting mileage rules
- Incorporation of new PCard rules related to travel
- Per diem payment updates, in alignment with the Federal General Services Administration
- Establishing the County Travel Program as the governing policy on County Travel payments, even when financial assistance rules are more restrictive
- Specify special travel accommodation types (i.e. health or religious)

This policy will require BCC approval, as the previous travel policy was Board approved and it applies to Elected Officials. The roll out of the program will include high level training for EMT, a similar training at the monthly Finance Liaison meeting, and comprehensive Zoom trainings for travelers and travel coordinators. The Finance Department recommends that the training is complete and the program is in place prior to the travel ban being lifted.

We respectfully request that this topic moves forward to a policy session for review of the proposed Travel Program.