



BENTON COUNTY

Relocation Expense Policy

May 2025

In recognition of some of the challenges in recruiting candidates to fill some professional level County positions, this policy provides authorization for Elected Officials and Department Heads to reimburse relocation expenses for candidates filling non-bargaining, exempt positions. This policy may be modified and/or rescinded by the Board of County Commissioners at any time without prior notification. In the event the policy is rescinded, any outstanding commitments in writing in the form of accepted offer letters prior to the date of rescinding will be honored by the County.

This policy will be administered by the Human Resources (HR) Department, in partnership with elected officials, department heads, and the Benton County Auditor's Office.

- I. Eligibility. To be eligible for reimbursement under this Policy, all of the following criteria must be met:
 - a. The employee must be a new full-time, exempt, non-bargaining employee who relocates their household as a direct result of accepting employment with Benton County.
 - b. The employee must be relocating from their prior place of residence which is at least 50 miles, via the most direct route, from the Benton County Justice Center campus.
 - c. The employee must be offered employment after the effective date of this Policy.
 - d. The offer of relocation reimbursement must be reflected in the job offer letter.
 - e. The elected official or department head must have the reimbursement funds available in their approved office/department budget. Supplements to budgets will not be approved later in the budget period to cover overages due to reimbursement expenditures.
 - i. If the Elected Official or Department Head does not have the funds available in their approved budget, the Elected Official or Department Head must request a budget supplement from the Board of County Commissioners, which may be approved at the Board's sole discretion, prior to any offer of relocation reimbursement under this policy.
 - f. The employee must execute a Relocation Reimbursement Agreement, with a copy provided to the HR Department, on or before their first day of Benton County employment.

- II. Benefit.

Employees are eligible for reimbursement of up to \$5,000 in moving expenses directly related to relocating the employee's household.

III. Retention.

- a. The employee must remain employed on a regular, full-time basis with Benton County for a minimum of two years following the date of hire. Leaves of absence without pay will not count toward this requirement.
- b. If the employee leaves employment with Benton County prior to one year after the employee's start date, exclusive of any leaves of absence without pay, 100% of funds received under this Policy will be repaid to the County via payroll deduction on the employee's final payroll check, or multiple payroll checks following notice of separation, if necessary. In the event the final payroll checks are insufficient to recover the amount, the employee shall remit the amount due to HR within 30 days of separation of employment.
- c. If the employee leaves employment with Benton County more than one year after the employee's start date, exclusive of any leaves of absence without pay, but prior to two years after that date, 75% of the funds received under this Policy will be repaid to the County via payroll deduction on the employee's final paycheck. In the event the final paycheck is insufficient to recover the amount, the employee shall remit the amount due to HR within 30 days of separation of employment.
- d. An employee is obligated to repay all or a part of the funds received under this policy, as outlined above, regardless of the reason for the separation of employment.
- e. Repayment of all or part of the reimbursement may be waived, upon written request to the Board of County Commissioners, at its discretion, if employment is separated for reasons beyond the employee's control.

IV. Qualifying Expenses.

The following expenses qualify for reimbursement under this policy. All expenses must be submitted to the employee's elected official/department head or designee on the Benton County Relocation Expense Reimbursement Form and accompanied by receipts.

- a. Moving of household goods and personal items.
 - i. Cost of packing and unpacking household goods and personal items.
 - ii. Cost of moving household goods and personal items.
 - iii. Cost of moving insurance for moving household goods and personal items.
- b. Travel expenses
 - i. One-way economy airfare for the employee via the most direct route.
 - ii. Mileage to drive one automobile via the most direct route.
 1. Mileage reimbursement is calculated at the at the currently approved Washington State Office of Financial Management rate (www.ofm.wa.gov).
 - iii. For each 500 miles traveled, the employee will receive reimbursement for lodging.
 1. Lodging reimbursement is limited to the maximum US General Services Administration (GSA) approved rate (www.gsa.gov) in that location.
 - iv. Actual costs for meals for the employee may be reimbursed up to the maximum GSA per diem approved rate (www.gsa.gov) for the city/state the meal is consumed in.

V. Other Terms.

- a. A detailed receipt is required for all expenses submitted for reimbursement.
 - i. All receipts must detail the name of the establishment, date and time of purchase, itemized description of the purchase, the amount of tax, the amount of tip, the amount of any other fees, and the total amount expensed.
 - ii. Failure to provide a detailed receipt for any expense will result in the reimbursement being denied.
- b. Reimbursement will be paid within two payroll cycles following the submission of all receipts.
 - i. Qualifying relocation reimbursements will be reported as taxable income to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Benton County will withhold federal income tax, social security, and Medicare deductions.
 - ii. All applicable taxes are the sole responsibility of the employee.
- c. This Policy does not alter the "At-Will" employment relationship.
 - i. Employment with Benton County is at-will which means that either Benton County or the employee can terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice.
 - ii. This Policy does not constitute an employment contract for a particular term or otherwise affect the employee's at-will employment status.

VI. Repealer.

As of the date of adoption of this Relocation Expense Policy by the Board of County Commissioners, any and all relocation expense policies are hereby repealed and superseded by this Policy.