

# Policy Manual

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## 10. Meeting and Conference Support

Meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars, grand rounds, town halls, symposia, and other similar meetings are all accepted features of conducting research and education. Additionally, certain events, such as retreats and board meetings as well as fundraising and public relations, are necessary for the conduct of business. Meals and refreshments may be considered for support only if they are incidental to the business purpose of such meetings.

### Policy for Support

Various laws and regulations, the federal ethics standards, and the statute that authorizes CARES existence, control the extent to which expenditures related to such events are appropriate for CARES support. Consequently, for such costs to be considered for direct payment or reimbursement by CARES, the following policy has been established.

To be eligible for CARES support, a meeting must have a documented research, education or CARES business purpose. CARES will not support "entertainment" expenses such as social activities, parties, ceremonial occasions or those that provide amusement.

- For a research-related meeting: A request for CARES support must include an explicit statement about the research rationale for the event; that is, its' research related purpose and how it will further VA research. Accompanying documentation should include the program, agenda or topic of discussion, and a roster of attendees. When appropriate, the request should tie the meeting to an approved research project.
- For an educational program not related to research: The education activity itself must first be approved by the facility's Education Committee (EC) or equivalent. Documentation should include an explicit statement of the purpose and how the program will further the VA's education and training mission. Please complete the Education Approval Request form to submit for EC review. For other CARES' business events: A request must include an explicit statement of how the meeting will further CARES's ability to facilitate research and education. Appropriate events include, but are not limited to, retreats, board meetings, annual investigator meetings, as well as fundraising and public relations events. Documentation should include the purpose, agenda, program or topic of discussion, and a roster of attendees.

Factors that CARES will consider when evaluating a meeting for support include:

- Whether at least one speaker makes a research presentation or presents educational instruction.
- Whether there is a non-VA speaker and whether non-VA personnel are among the expected attendees.
- The frequency of similar meetings that may involve the same personnel.
- Irregularly scheduled meetings and those that occur no more than monthly may be eligible for support; weekly meetings will not.

- Whether the meeting involves at least one individual who is being recruited to conduct research or education at the local VA facility—.
- Whether the meeting lasts more than two hours or extends through a normal mealtime.

Regardless of the type of meeting, the documentation required in section 1 above is a prerequisite for CARES support.

Requests for CARES support will be reviewed and approved by the individual designated by the Board, generally the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee. CARES will provide direct payment for reasonable meeting costs, or reimbursement based on submission of original receipts. In the event of disagreement, further review by the Board of Directors may be requested.

CARES encourages meeting organizers to obtain pre-approval of CARES support for meetings. Such approval is not mandatory, but events lacking pre-approval may be denied support or may receive only partial support. For meetings of significant size or cost, prior discussion and authorization by CARES management is highly recommended.

### **Additional Factors**

- Only actual, reasonable costs will qualify for reimbursement.
- Alcohol is generally not reimbursable. Specific exceptions must be approved by the Executive Director in advance.
- Refreshments may be paid as part of a non-routine research or education meeting if incidental to the meeting. CARES will not pay for refreshments for regular staff meetings.
- Lunch or dinner expenses for a meeting with only VA staff cannot be reimbursed.
- Please note that luncheon or dinner meetings with invited speakers or research collaborators may be an appropriate expense for reimbursement through CARES. However, such an event should be reviewed prior to the event to make sure it is eligible for reimbursement.

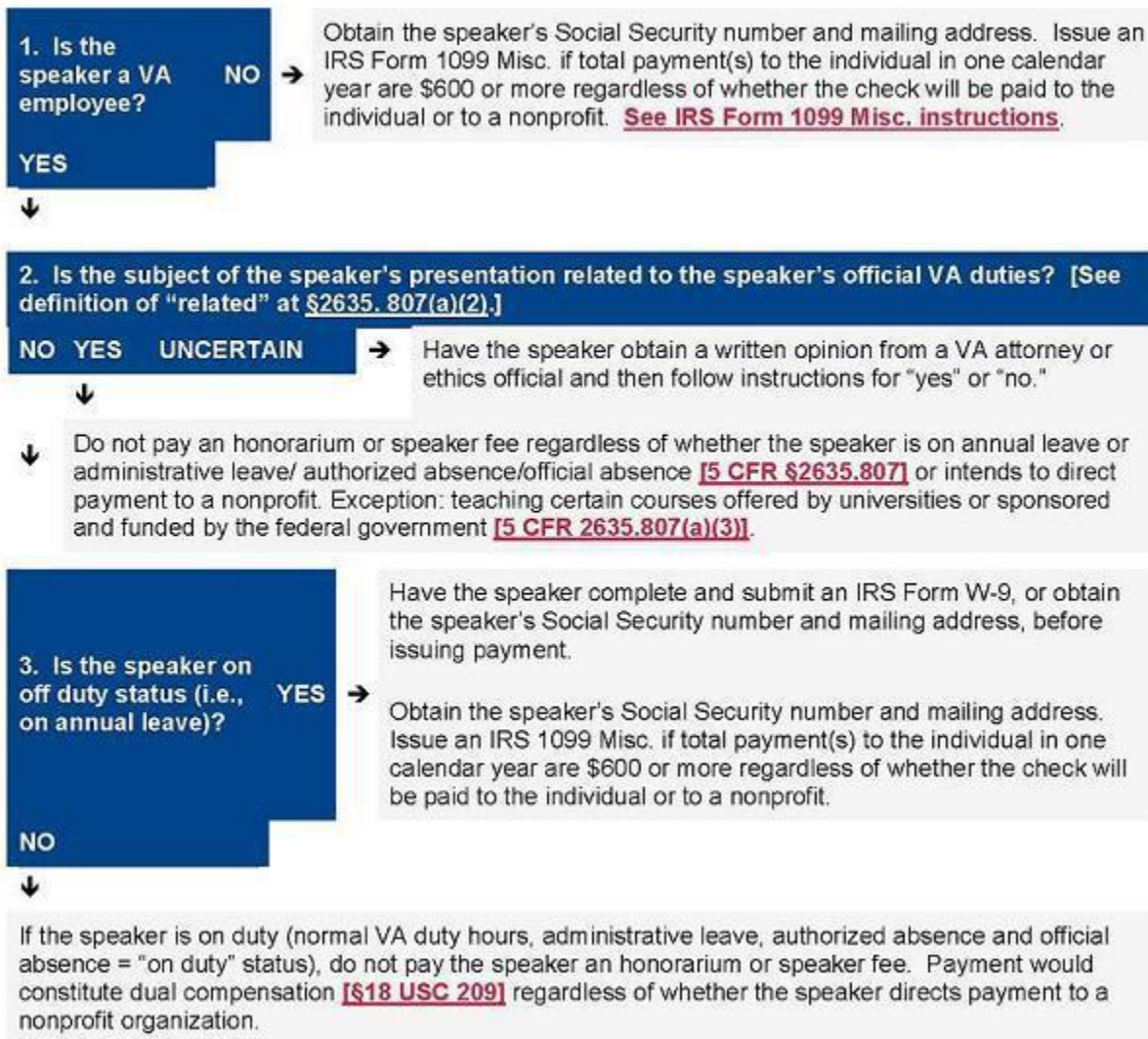
### **Guest Speaker Information**

When members are providing honoraria, speaker fees, or travel reimbursement to invited guest lecturers, the following apply:

- Reimbursement Request Form must include the Social Security or Tax Identification Number and the address of the guest speaker.
- Sufficient credentials should be provided to show the expertise of the speaker as the basis for providing an honorarium. For example, part or the speaker's entire CV.
- If the speaker is a VA employee, the decision tree in the following section must be filled out and provided to CARES before an honorarium can be paid.

- If the invited speaker is a non-resident alien CARES must be advised in advance to determine if an honorarium can be provided.
- CARES must file IRS 1099 Misc forms for speaker fees and honoraria payments totaling \$600 or more in a single tax year.
- The payment of travel expenses associated with this category follows the same policy as for general travel (see Section 8 of this Policy Manual for more information on travel).

**Payment of Honoraria Decision Tree**



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