

Policy Manual

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9. Travel Policy

CARES may support expenses for domestic or foreign travel of authorized individuals to bona fide scientific meetings or for other research or research-related educational purposes. The travel support will be consistent with CARES policies and the stipulations of any relevant funding source(s).

The Executive Director will have final approval on travel reimbursements related to research, educational or training activities.

If the travel reimbursement is for a visiting fellow or scholar, the visa status of the individual must allow such reimbursement. CARES must pre-approve travel for foreign fellows or scientists.

Cash advances are not provided.

The request for reimbursement must be submitted on the CARES Request Reimbursement for Non-Local Registration & Travel form (**Travel Reimbursement Form**). Requests should be submitted within 30 days after travel has been completed.

If another organization is providing partial reimbursement for a trip, the "Reimbursed from another Organization" column on the CARES Request Reimbursement for Non-Local Registration & Travel form must be completed.

Documentation of the meeting dates, location, and topic or theme must be provided. A program guide or brochure (a copy of the cover is sufficient if all the information is indicated); an invitation letter; or other written documentation that includes the dates, location and purpose must be submitted with the reimbursement request form.

Original receipts (other than for meals) are required for all reimbursements. Lost receipt will not exceed \$25.00 and will require approval of the Executive Director.

Registration: Meeting registrations can be pre-paid through CARES directly to the meeting organizer. Alternatively, the registration cost will be reimbursed after the meeting along with other travel expenses. An exception may be made if registration can only be accomplished online by the traveler. Reimbursement can then be made to the individual prior to the meeting date by submitting the CARES Request Reimbursement for Non-Local Registration & Travel form, copy of completed registration and proof of payment.

Transportation: Reimbursement will be based on the most reasonable method of travel to the location, generally coach airfare.

If the traveler chooses to take an indirect route, interrupt the business travel or utilize a mode of travel that requires additional accommodations en route, these expenses will be borne by the traveler.

Travelers will purchase their own tickets, pay for all associated costs, and request reimbursement after travel is completed.

Coach airfare will be reimbursed. Any exceptions require prior approval from the Executive Director or designated authority.

Reimbursement for travel using a privately owned automobile (POV) will not exceed the cost of roundtrip coach airfare or the most reasonable travel method. POV mileage reimbursement expense will be based by the published government rates (www.gsa.gov).

The cost of a rental automobile may be allowable under certain circumstances. For example, if rooms are unavailable at the conference hotel, a shuttle service is not available, or taxi fare is prohibitively expensive.

Rental of an automobile must be pre-approved by the CARES Executive Director prior to travel. Car rental is allowable only as an exception. Specialty vehicles such as convertibles and SUVs are not allowable.

Reimbursement for ground transportation including tolls is limited to travel between the home or place of business and the airport; the airport to meeting site and return.

Parking at the airport will be reimbursed with receipt at the least expensive airport parking rate.

Lodging: Full reimbursement of reasonable hotel expenses including all associated taxes with appropriate documentation will be made. The original itemized hotel bill must be submitted with the reimbursement request.

Meals: Meals will be reimbursed using the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) breakdown based on the federal per diem locality rate to your destination (www.gsa.gov). If meals are provided at the meeting/conference, the traveler must submit information regarding the dates and meal/s provided (i.e., breakfast, lunch, dinner).

Should a member plan to host a special dinner meeting with research collaborators, these costs must comply with the **(Meeting and Conference Support)** policy. Such events should be pre-approved by the Executive Director or designee to ensure that reimbursement will be allowable.

Local Travel (50 Miles One Way or Less)

Travel that begins and ends within the same day (e.g., 7 AM to 7 PM) may include reimbursement for meals and associated travel expenses.

Mileage expenses for private owned automobile (POV) will be reimbursed at the published government rates. (www.gsa.gov)

Travel by other means (i.e., train, bus, taxi) will be reimbursed with receipts.

VA Employee Travel Requirements

If you are a VA employee seeking reimbursement from CARES for travel related to your research or education programs, there are additional procedures you must follow. As a government employee going on domestic or foreign travel, you are responsible for complying with the requirements of your employer. Please be sure to obtain and complete the appropriate **(VA Forms)** prior to travel. A copy of the approval must be submitted with reimbursement documentation.

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