

## Meetings and Conference Support Policy

This policy address CVRE support for meetings or conferences sponsored by Minneapolis VAHCS or CVRE personnel. This policy does not address what CVRE will reimburse for individuals travelling to meetings or conferences sponsored by other organizations. Meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars, grand rounds, town halls, symposia, and other similar meetings are 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 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 CVRE's existence, control the extent to which expenditures related to such events are appropriate for CVRE's support. Consequently, for such costs to be considered for by direct payment or reimbursement, CVRE has established the following policy.

- To be eligible for CVRE support, a meeting must have a documented research, education or CVRE business purpose. CVRE 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 CVRE 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 Academic Excellence Council (ACE) or equivalent. Documentation should include an explicit statement of the purpose and how the program will further the VA's education and training mission.
  - For other CVRE business events: A request must include an explicit statement of how the meeting will further CVRE'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 CVRE 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 above is a prerequisite for CVRE support.
- Requests for CVRE support will be reviewed and approved by the individual designated by the board, generally the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee. CVRE 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 CVRE Board may be requested.

- CVRE encourages meeting organizers to obtain pre-approval of CVRE 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 CVRE management is highly recommended.

#### **Additional Factors**

- Only actual, reasonable costs will qualify for reimbursement.
- CVRE does not pay for alcoholic beverages.
- Refreshments may be paid as part of a non-routine research or education meeting if incidental to the meeting. CVRE will not pay for refreshments for regular staff meetings.
- Please note that luncheon or dinner meetings with invited speakers or research collaborators may be an appropriate expense for reimbursement through CVRE. However, such an event should be reviewed prior to the event to make sure it is eligible for reimbursement.

#### **Guest Speaker**

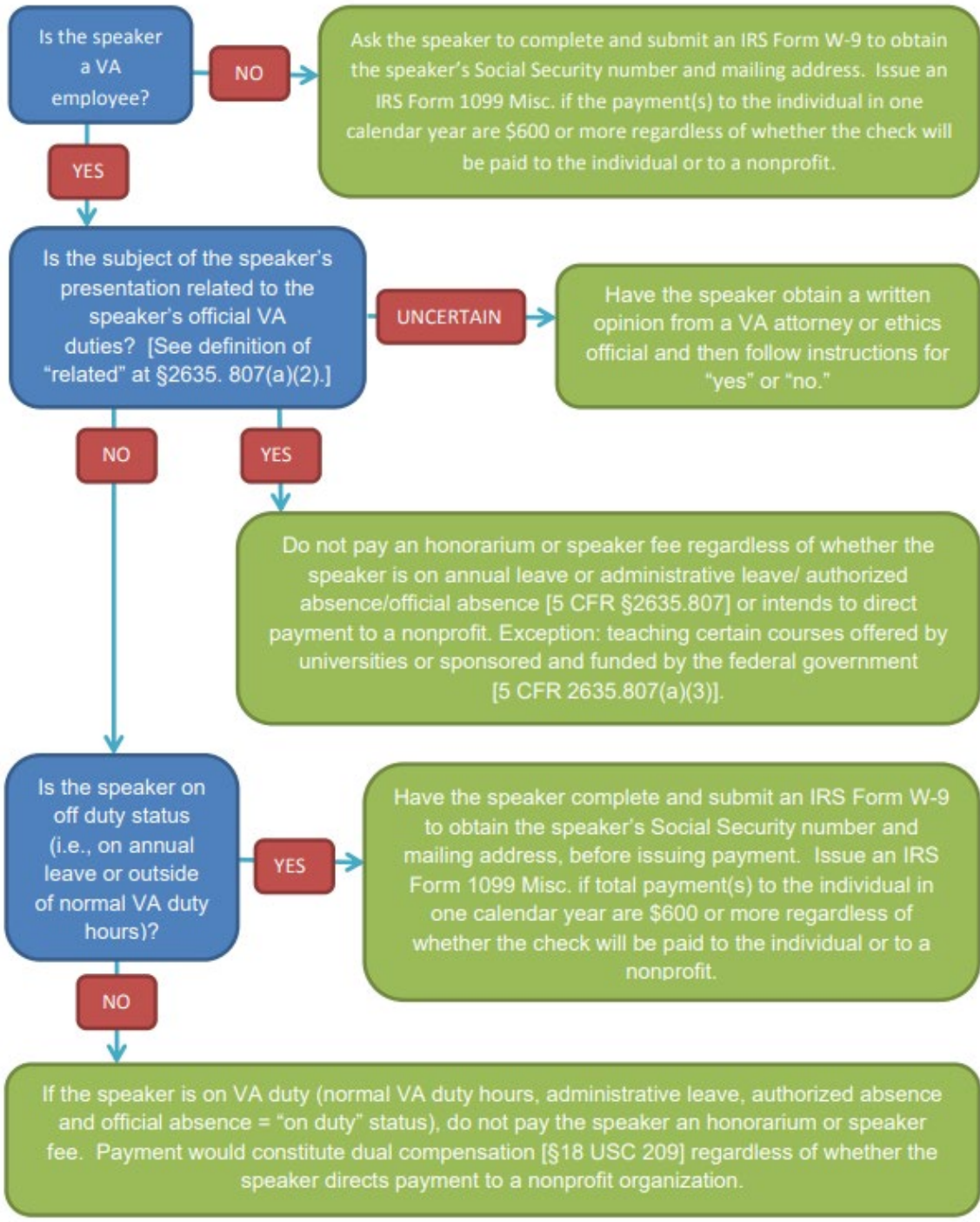
When members are providing honoraria, speaker fees, or travel reimbursement to invited guest lecturers, the following apply:

- Purchase/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 CVRE before an honorarium can be paid.
- If the invited speaker is a non-resident alien CVRE must be advised in advance to determine if an honorarium can be provided.
- CVRE must file IRS 1099 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.

#### **Payment of Honoraria Decision Tree**

VA-affiliated nonprofits such as CVRE are often asked to pay honoraria and speaker fees or to accept donations of honoraria. To assist the nonprofits to work through the sometimes complex issues related to compensation for outside speaking, writing and teaching, NAVREF offers the following decision tree in determining when honoraria and speaker fees may be paid to VA employees without putting the employee at risk of violating federal ethics regulations.

## Payment of Honoraria Decision Tree



CVRE BOARD APPROVED:  
9/20/2022