

Travel Policy

CVRE's mission is to further medical science by promoting research and education. Accordingly, funds donated to and accepted by CVRE may be used to reimburse travel expenses associated with furthering research or education relevant activities.

Acceptable travel

Travel to meetings of clinical specialty societies, research societies, national and international general clinical groups (e.g., AMA, WHO), the recognized or stated primary goals of which are to further medical knowledge, research, public health and/or education is acceptable when the proposed travel has a demonstrable research or education relevance.

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

Relevance

The traveler must submit adequate information or documentation to justify a primary research, education, or business purpose for the travel, such as a program guide, brochure, invitation letter or other written documentation which includes dates, location and purpose. For travel funded from a sponsored award the travel must be allowable by the sponsor.

Advances

No cash advances or reimbursements of transportation tickets will be made prior to the date of the actual travel. All travel expenses must be paid by the traveler and will be promptly reimbursed upon completion of the approved travel.

The only exception to this policy is for meeting registration fees which may be requested in advance and paid directly by CVRE to the organization sponsoring the meeting.

Leave Status

VA-paid employees traveling on CVRE funds should normally be on VA travel status to receive reimbursement for travel expenses. VA-paid employees are strongly encouraged to seek guidance from their supervisor on applicable VA travel rules and regulations. If leave for personal reasons is combined with VA travel, CVRE will not pay lodging, car rental or per diem for expenses incurred during the personal annual leave portion of the travel.

Prior Approval of Travel

Prior approval for travel is required with the submission of the Prior Approval for Travel form.

VA imposes special requirements for foreign travel for VA-paid employees. VA-paid employees are responsible for complying with these requirements.

Acknowledgement of Institutional Affiliation

CVRE was established to facilitate VA research and education. Therefore, implicit in the commitment of funding for travel is the expectation that the traveler's VA affiliation be identified appropriately in conference brochures, attendee rosters, identification badges or published meeting materials.

Local Travel

Local travel is travel within a 50-mile radius of MVAHCS. Mileage reimbursement for such travel will be paid as described in the section entitled "Use of Private Automobile." Per diem allowances for breakfast and dinner do not apply to local

travel. Expenses incurred in association with local travel, e.g., a meal at a seminar or meeting, may be permissible. In such cases, receipts are required, and the meeting or seminar must be a full day's duration.

Transportation

All travel must utilize the most commonly accepted mode of transportation over the most usually traveled route. If, for personal convenience or preference, an indirect route is traveled or travel by a direct route is interrupted, any resulting expense will be borne by the traveler. Additionally, any resulting excess travel time must be charged to the appropriate leave.

Air Travel

Coach airfares shall be used. Any exceptions require prior approval from the Executive Director or designated Authority. Except in approved circumstances, airline reservations must be made at least seven days in advance of travel to secure the most advantageous rate. In compliance with government requirements, travel funded by government grants or contracts must use U.S. airlines to the maximum extent possible. This requirement must not be influenced by factors of cost, convenience or personal travel preference. CVRE will not reimburse the traveler for the use of upgrade certificates, or memberships in airline flight clubs. The cost of flight insurance or canceling and rebooking flights may be allowable if such cost was necessary for legitimate business reasons, illness or other compelling circumstances. The traveler is responsible for canceling reservations that will not be used. Charges or forfeited refunds from failure to cancel in a timely manner will not be reimbursed.

Use of Private Automobile

Reimbursement for use of a private automobile will be made at the prevailing federal mileage reimbursement rate (www.gsa.gov) plus applicable tolls and reasonable parking.

1. CVRE will not pay for an individual's University of Minnesota parking permits unless there is a direct relationship to a project.
2. Employees are required to transport themselves from their residence to work and return at their own expense.
3. When an employee uses their private automobile to travel to an alternate work location, they may be reimbursed for local travel when the distance to the alternate site exceeds the distance between their residence and their primary work location.
 - a. If the primary work location is the employees' residence, reimbursable mileage is calculated as the distance between their residence and the alternate location.
4. Reimbursement for use of a private automobile will not exceed the cost of roundtrip coach airfare.

Ground Transportation

Ground transportation reimbursement covers travel to and from the departure city and the destination city where the business conferences or meetings are held. Documentation of the location and business purpose of the conferences or meetings are required. Excessive transportation costs will not be reimbursed if the traveler elected to forego reasonable means of transportation.

Rental Cars

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

Hotel/Accommodation Charges

Travelers will be reimbursed for reasonable standard hotel room costs as determined by the meeting site and prevailing hotel rates. Reimbursement will be made for reasonable laundry and dry-cleaning costs if the hotel stay exceeds five nights. No reimbursement will be made for expenses incurred if the traveler elects to stay with friends or relatives.

Per Diem/Maximum Expenses

Meals will be reimbursed using the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) per diem established by U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for the destination city. The per diem rate for foreign travel will be that set by the U.S. State Department. Per diem for the first and last day of the trip is reimbursed at 75% of the M&IE rate applicable for the city visited. It is the traveler's responsibility to deduct partial per diem if participating in meals provided by a conference. See the Meals and Incidental Expense breakdown at the GSA website (www.gsa.gov).

Baggage

Baggage includes both the traveler's personal property and any VA or CVRE property. Excess baggage charges may be allowed if justified by an explanation of the circumstances and provision of a legible receipt for such charges.

Phone Charges

Business related long-distance telephone calls are permitted but should be kept to a minimum. Charges for computer connections for purposes of reading e-mail are also permitted but should be used judiciously. Personal long-distance telephone calls are usually limited to one per day and should be reasonable. Excessive connection charges will not be reimbursed.

Foreign Visas

The cost of obtaining a foreign visa for entry into a country to attend a meeting is permissible and may be reimbursed.

Foreign Travel

Foreign travel is defined as travel to any destination outside the United States. See section above regarding use of U.S. airlines if funded by government sources. Additional requirements pertain to foreign travel for VA-paid employees. VA-paid employees are responsible for complying with these requirements.

Registration Fees

Registration fees may be paid by CVRE in advance of travel. This may be accomplished using a Purchase/Reimbursement Request Form from the traveler for payment to the educational entity or to the traveler for fees paid.

Legible Receipts

Legible itemized original invoices or receipts (not a credit card receipt) documenting proof of payment are required for each item for which the traveler requests reimbursement.

Should a traveler 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.

Claims for reimbursement should be submitted within 30 days of completion of travel. The claim must be submitted using the Travel Reimbursement Form and be accompanied by required documentation, including legible itemized original receipts, proof of payment and justification as discussed elsewhere in this policy. IRS regulations require that travelers adequately account for expenses within a reasonable period after the expenses were paid or incurred. Claims submitted more than 30 days after travel is completed must include a justification for late submission and may be denied. If CVRE accepts the traveler's justification for late submission and does not deny reimbursement, CVRE must report the reimbursement as taxable income to the traveler unless a business justification that causes the delay in submission is provided. Therefore, it is critical that requests for travel reimbursement are submitted as expeditiously as possible.

The request will be reviewed for allowability of costs. In determining reimbursement for these claims, a test of reasonableness will be applied. A check for approved expenses including an explanation for denied costs will be returned to the traveler.

Appeals of denied expenses or requests for exceptions to the CVRE Travel Policy must be approved by an officer of the CVRE Board.

**CVRE BOARD APPROVED:
9/20/2022**