



BD5-004

Education, Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy

Effective Date:	10/01/2005	Revision Date:	<u>TBD07/01/20</u> 13	Audience:	Everyone
Owner:	Board	Certifier:	Richard Stensrud	Co-Owner (s):	None
Document Links:	Purpose , Policy , Procedure , Definitions , Related Documents , Policy History				

Purpose

This policy is in furtherance of Rule 3309-1-52, and describes general guidelines to be used in selecting and attending “appropriate meetings, sessions, seminars and conferences”, and obtaining reimbursement of expenses.

Policy

As provided in Rule 3309-1-52, members of the Retirement Board and system staff members shall be reimbursed by the system for actual, proper and reasonable expenses incurred for attendance at appropriate meetings, sessions, seminars and conferences. Requests for reimbursement shall be submitted on a form provided by the system and in accordance with system reimbursement procedures.

1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Department directors will provide to the Executive Director amounts to be budgeted for staff "Education and Travel Expense" in the annual SERS Draft Administrative Expense Budget. The Executive Director will determine the amount to be budgeted for "Board Education and Travel Expense" and "Staff Education and Travel Expense" in the annual SERS Draft Administrative Expense Budget presented to the Board for approval. The budgeted amounts should estimate expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year and should consider the following factors:
 - a. Issues facing the system for the coming fiscal year.
 - b. Number of conferences, meetings, etc. to be attended by each Board and staff member.
 - c. Previous year's meeting attendance and expenditures.
 - d. Educational needs of new Board and staff members.
 - e. Inflation factors that might affect costs of lodging, meals, auto rental, airfare, etc.
2. Whenever possible, if a particular meeting is held at a variety of locations, the meeting that is closest to the Board member's hometown, or closest to Columbus, Ohio for a staff member, should be chosen. However, if the Board or staff member is unable to

attend the more proximate meeting due to a schedule conflict, an alternate site may be substituted.

3. Since all Board or staff members will not be attending the same educational meetings and sessions, to derive the maximum benefit from these sessions the attendee will report to the Board or staff, as appropriate, using a Conference/Seminar Evaluation Form. The purpose of the report will be to share knowledge gained.

2. SPECIFIC BOARD CONSIDERATIONS

Board members are permitted to attend up to three out-of-state conferences or meetings per fiscal year. The total cost per Board member to attend such out-of-state conferences or meetings may not exceed \$6,000 in any one fiscal year. Not included within the \$6,000 limit are conference or meeting registration fees. Board members may participate in conferences, seminars or programs for continuing education and represent the system in the organizations to which it belongs. A maximum of three Board members will be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred to attend any one out-of-state conference or meeting.

3. EXPENSES

1. General

- a. Upon return from travel, a Travel Expense Voucher must be completed in order for the Board or staff member to receive payment for expenses.
- b. Any expense greater than \$10, and all charges to the corporate credit card, requires a receipt to be attached to the reimbursement voucher. Where expenses are less than \$10, receipts are requested when normally available for the expense incurred. The airline ticket stub or copy of the e-ticket should accompany the reimbursement voucher.
- c. Telephone calls for system business are reimbursable. Personal telephone calls, for example, to home or family, not to exceed the equivalent of \$7.00 per each travel day are reimbursable. For example, 5 days travel would equal a maximum of \$35 in personal telephone call reimbursement.
- d. The day before and the day after the conference are designated travel days and actual, proper and reasonable expenses incurred on those days are reimbursable. Additionally, where a Board or staff member is able to utilize a special airfare which requires an additional night stay at the destination, the additional day of expenses is reimbursable if the system will incur less overall expense than if the additional day's stay had not occurred. The Board or staff member must submit a statement documenting the actual savings obtained in such case.

2. Lodging

Lodging is reimbursable at the single occupancy rate for a moderately priced room, given the location and circumstances; if available, a government rate should be obtained. When possible, accommodations should be secured at the meeting site if it is a hotel or other lodging.

3. Food and Beverage

- a. The reasonable cost of food and non-alcoholic beverages is reimbursable. Except

in unusual circumstances that must be documented as set forth in subsections i and ii below, the per day reimbursement per Board or staff member for actual food and beverage expenses incurred should not exceed thea maximum allowable U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) per diem rate found at www.gsa.gov of \$60 per day:

- i. Board members shall provide a statement documenting the circumstances to be approved by the Board in open meeting;
 - ii. Staff members shall provide a statement documenting the circumstances to be approved by the department director prior to the travel.
- b. Consumption of items from a hotel room mini refrigerator or bar are discouraged and the cost of alcoholic beverages is not reimbursable. The cost of non-alcoholic items from a mini refrigerator or bar is reimbursable only in unusual circumstances as documented in a statement from the Board or staff member. Where such items are consumed, it is recommended that an itemized receipt be obtained.
4. Transportation
- a. The cost of a rental vehicle is reimbursable where it is a reasonable alternative means of transportation under the circumstances as documented in a statement from the board member, or from a staff member and approved in advance by the staff member's department director.
 - b. Personal auto expenses for destinations in Ohio will be reimbursed at the mileage rate set forth by the Internal Revenue Service.
 - c. Parking fees and toll costs if driving a personal auto, SERS fleet vehicle or rental car will be reimbursed when such expense is required. Gasoline will be reimbursed for an authorized rental car or SERS fleet vehicle.
 - d. In accordance with Ohio Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 91-010, airline frequent flier miles accrued in connection with SERS-paid travel shall not be used for personal travel or benefit.
5. Non-Reimbursable Expenses
- a. Expenses of a personal nature are not reimbursable. These include but are not limited to the following:
 - i. Costs of entertainment expenditures (in-room movies, sports tickets, golf outings, theater tickets, etc)
 - ii. Taxi fare or other transportation to entertainment
 - iii. Personal purchases
 - iv. Valet services (laundry, cleaning, shoe-shines). However, persons on System business for over 5 business days may submit expenses for 1 laundry and 1 dry cleaning per 5 business days.
 - v. Traffic tickets
 - vi. Costs to change flight reservations, once made and approved, if the change is not business related or for an emergency that is subsequently documented and approved by the Board for a Board member or the department director for a staff
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member.

Procedures None

Definitions None

Related Documents and Information

Statutes: 3309.10, 3309.14, 3309.15

Rules: 3309-1-52

Document Links: [Purpose](#), [Policy](#), [Procedure](#), [Definitions](#), [Related Documents](#), [Policy History](#)

Forms: ---

Policy History

Version 1 – October 1, 2005 – Created – Approved by Board

Version 2 – July 1, 2013 – Edited – Approved by Board