

TRAVEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GENERAL GUIDELINES

It is NASBLA policy to strictly comply with the travel requirements of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars. This policy will relate to employees, Executive Board officers and directors, contractors, contract instructors and volunteers of NASBLA (hereinafter referred to as "travelers") for domestic travel as well as any possible foreign travel in the performance of service to the association. It is NASBLA policy that travelers use the least expensive means of travel that is consistent with the appropriate and effective use of their time and the resources of the association.

While this policy is intended to be comprehensive, it is impossible to anticipate every situation encountered by a traveler. Consequently, travelers are expected to apply the guidelines in this policy on a conservative basis, and where the policy is silent to exercise good business judgment. The traveler should be aware of NASBLA's right to review claims and should therefore maintain sufficient records to validate expenses incurred.

Because of the time and expense involved, travel should be undertaken only when personal contact is necessary to conduct the required business and when no other form of communication can be substituted, or when collective subject matter expertise cannot be as effectively achieved. Persons to whom this policy applies should therefore give due consideration to alternatives, including the use of conference calls.

Should the trip be necessary, it is the traveler's responsibility to keep the costs associated with the trip to a reasonable minimum. For example, NASBLA travelers are expected to coordinate business trips within the same locality whenever possible to reduce unnecessary expenses such as car rentals. If travel arrangements are made through a travel agency, the traveler will not receive reimbursement for travel agency service fees (such as the fee to procure an airline ticket) without written authorization from the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Nominal online service fees are authorized.

Employees, officers, Executive Board members, contract instructors and volunteers on business travel are official representatives of NASBLA and it is expected that their public behavior will, at all times, project an image that is a credit to the association.

Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by NASBLA travelers and that are directly attributable to conducting official NASBLA business while on travel status. Travel costs are allowable subject to the following when they are directly attributable to specific work under an award or are incurred in the normal course of administration of NASBLA.

- Costs may be charged on an actual basis with a per diem for meals. The per diem rate followed will be that issued by the Federal government.
- NASBLA will not charge airfare costs in excess of the customary standard, coach, or equivalent airfare offered during normal business hours except when the customary standard fare would require circuitous routing, require travel during unreasonable hours, excessively prolong travel, result in increased cost that would offset transportation savings, not be reasonably adequate for the physical or medical needs of the traveler, or not be reasonably available to meet mission requirements.

STATUTORY PROVISIONS RELATING TO TRAVEL

Certain statutes that apply to all federal funds contain provisions relating to travel that should be considered by recipient travel systems. Other program-specific statutes may also contain restrictions dealing with use of program funds for travel.

CREDIT CARDS

NASBLA may provide organization credit cards to certain eligible travelers covered under this policy for any necessary travel expenses, and it reserves the right to place limitations on the use of the credit card. If a NASBLA organization credit card has not been issued, NASBLA travelers shall use their own personal, corporate, or agency-issued credit cards for travel expenses.

REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursement for travel expenses will normally be based upon actual expenses with the exception of meals. Meals will be reimbursed on a per diem basis. The per diem rate used will be that currently in effect for federal government employees as posted by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). Reimbursement for the use of personal vehicles will be based upon the mileage rate established by the U.S. General Services Administration Services Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Mileage Reimbursement Rate in effect at the time of the travel. Receipts will be required for all expenses in excess of twenty-five dollars (\$25). Reimbursement for miscellaneous expenses such as tips for luggage handlers, rental of baggage carts and tips for other services will be based upon those considered reasonable and customary. All reimbursements will be consistent whether charged to the federal government or to internal NASBLA activities.

DEFINITIONS

Allowable Cost: Any cost that meets the following criteria:

- Reasonable;
- Allocable;
- Allowable per the terms of the Office of Management and Budget Circulars.

Local Travel: All business-related travel within 50 miles of a normal work site is considered local travel.

Non-Local Travel: All business-related travel more than 50 miles of a normal work site is considered non-local travel.

Unallowable Costs: Any cost that, under the provision of any pertinent law, regulation, or OMB Circular cannot be reimbursed.

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

To be eligible for reimbursement, a traveler's costs must be reasonable, allocable and allowable, in accordance with any pertinent laws and regulations. While it is difficult to spell out every individual type of reimbursable expense, the general criteria are:

- Reasonableness of the expense; and
- Business purpose (i.e., it must have been incurred in connection with NASBLA's business).

Acceptable expenses include, but are not limited to, lodging, air transportation, ground transportation or car rentals, mileage to and from the airport, and business-related internet expense. Long-distance mileage will only be paid up to an equivalent airfare expense for the same distance.

EXPENSE REPORT

An expense report must be submitted by the traveler within ten (10) workdays after the completion of the travel. Only allowable expenses may be reimbursed on a NASBLA expense report form. All required receipts for reimbursed expenses must be attached to the expense report form. The traveler and the project manager must sign the travel expense report form.

Travel Expenses: NASBLA travelers may engage in local or non-local business travel and/or in a mix of business and personal travel. The following paragraphs define how each type of allowable travel will be reimbursed.

Local Area Business Travel: If local mileage is reimbursed, the following policy applies:

- Local travel from home to a location other than the normal work site is only reimbursable to the extent that the mileage traveled is greater than the mileage from home to the normal work site. In this case, reimbursement is allowed for the mileage traveled that exceeds the mileage from home to the normal work site.
- Unless otherwise provided, NASBLA employees engaged in local travel (regardless of the number of hours) are not entitled to reimbursement for meals.

Non-Local Area Business Travel: If non-local mileage is reimbursed, the following policy applies:

- NASBLA shall reimburse travelers required to travel during the performance of their service to NASBLA for reasonable costs incurred or as allowed under the terms on the expense report form. See Travel Authorization Form in Appendix.
- Reimbursement for meal expenses will apply for any travel over 50 miles with overnight or longer stay.

When a personal vehicle is used in lieu of a commercial airline for the convenience of the traveler (with prior authorization), NASBLA shall reimburse the traveler for mileage and tolls, or the equivalent airfare, whichever is less. When personal vehicle use has been requested for the convenience of NASBLA, reimbursement may exceed the equivalent airfare with approval.

Mix of Business and Personal Travel: In cases of travel where time is also taken for vacation or personal business, expenses are allowed only for the days on which NASBLA business is conducted. For the sake of clarity, travelers must attach documentation explaining the mix of business/personal/vacation time (i.e., which days were which) and showing that no increased cost was passed to NASBLA because personal/vacation time was taken. Travel arrangements and additional costs related to personal travel are the responsibility of the traveler.

Receipt Requirements: Travelers are encouraged to attach receipts for all travel related expenditures regardless of dollar value. Receipts for all items claimed over \$25.00 must be attached to the expense report in order to be reimbursed. Receipts for lodging, car rental, and airfare must be attached even if they are for amounts less than \$25.00. If a NASBLA organization credit card is used by the traveler to pay for travel-related expenses, receipts for authorized credit card purchases will be submitted with the monthly itemized credit card statement.

TRAVEL ADVANCES

- Travel advances will be approved on a case-by-case basis by those individuals authorized to approve official travel for NASBLA. The request for advance of funds must be submitted no sooner than 10 workdays and no later than three (3) workdays before the travel. Travel advances will be limited to 80 percent of the authorized expenses.
- Travelers receiving travel advances will be required to repay any funds that are in excess of actual expenses. Repayment will be made within 10 workdays after being notified of the overpayment.
- If the traveler fails to repay excess travel funds with the above time limit, recoupment efforts will be taken.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND REIMBURSEMENT TIMING

- Travelers are required to submit expense reports within 10 days of travel completion.
- Reimbursements for travel expenses will be made within 30 days of expense report submission.

AIR TRAVEL

Air travel represents a significant portion of NASBLA's overall travel expense. The following guidelines are to help minimize air travel costs.

Airfare Purchase: All airline reservations and ticket purchases will be made by using the traveler's personal credit card/funds or a corporate/agency-issued credit card, unless another form of payment has been authorized. Any airfare exceeding \$950 shall require the prior-approval of the NASBLA Chief Financial Officer.

Airfare Change Fees: Non-refundable tickets are to be used for the ticketed flight. In the event the traveler's itinerary changes for business purposes prior to departure and a change fee is charged, the fee will be reimbursed.

Many airlines charge a fee for same day changes due to the travelers wanting to leave earlier or later than the scheduled flight. NASBLA will not reimburse a change fee when the change is for the convenience of the traveler. Change fees will only be reimbursed with authorization that the change was required to benefit NASBLA.

Advance Purchases: Flights should be booked as far in advance as possible to obtain advance purchase prices on tickets. Most airlines have increased fares when booking airfare less than 14 days prior to departure. Travelers may be reimbursed airfare purchased with personal credit card/funds prior to travel by submitting a request for reimbursement with a copy of the payment document.

Airport Parking: Travelers are encouraged to economize on airport parking where practicable. Cost saving measures should include parking in longer-term or satellite parking lots for trips of short to intermediate length and finding alternate means of transportation (taxis, shuttles, etc.) to the airport for longer trips. All parking expenditures should be itemized on the expense report form. Expenditures over \$25.00 must be evidenced by receipts.

Choice of Airline: When making reservations travelers should accept the lowest fare in the market place without regard to the airline providing the service. Travelers are required by this policy and 49 U.S.C. 40118, commonly referred to as the "Fly America Act," to use U.S. air carrier service for all air travel and cargo transportation services funded by the U.S. government.

Departure/Arrival Times: For purposes of obtaining the best fare possible, the traveler should be as flexible as possible regarding flight times. The traveler should make every attempt to take advantage of reduced rates afforded by low cost (economy) itineraries when making flight reservations to achieve effective use of the traveler's time and the lowest overall travel cost for the trip being booked.

Class of Service: Economy class (or the basic least expensive unrestricted accommodations) should be used by all travelers (NOTE: This class of accommodations may extend to commercial airline branded “economy-plus,” “economy-premium” and “economy-elite” type labels for classes of airfare depending on the specific characteristics of those fares. Travelers should weigh the full cost of economy fares including baggage fees, seat assignments, etc. Business and first-class fares are not authorized for reimbursement.

Unused Tickets: Unused non-refundable tickets should be applied to future tickets. Although tickets may be “non-refundable,” they are re-useable and can be exchanged for a ticket on your next trip with the same carrier. Travelers are reminded of their responsibility to reschedule non-refundable tickets in order not to lose the value of the scheduled airfare when a trip is canceled.

Overseas Travel: Any overseas travel must be approved in advance. Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico are not considered overseas travel locations.

Frequent Flyer Credits: The receipt of frequent flyer credits or ability to use credits for upgrades should not be a consideration in choosing an airline. Travelers may use credits to upgrade travel tickets without approval. The source of the upgrade must be identified on the expense report form (i.e., frequent flyer, free per airline, etc.)

GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Ride Share, Taxis, Courtesy Vans: Wherever possible, travelers are encouraged to rely on taxicabs, ridesharing services, metro/subways, or hotel courtesy vans for transportation to and from airports. For transportation between locations, travelers should weigh the expense of using taxicabs, ridesharing services or metro/subways against the cost of renting a car and choose the most economical method of transportation. Fares or other charges over \$25.00 must be evidenced by receipts, although submitting receipts for claims of lesser amounts is encouraged.

Rental Cars: When selecting rental vehicles, travelers should select the lowest cost rental vehicles that meet travel requirements. Travelers should obtain a receipt for reimbursement of gas purchases. It is acceptable to receive free upgrades from car rental agencies when offered to compensate for unavailability of reserved model.

Personal Vehicle: NASBLA will reimburse travelers who are authorized to use their personal or agency vehicles on official travel at the rate specified. This allowance is meant to help cover the operating costs of the vehicle.

Tolls and parking charges will also be reimbursed (for both personal and rented vehicles). Travelers are responsible for all other expenses incurred while driving their personal vehicles, including the required insurance coverage, fuel, moving traffic violations and parking tickets.

Travelers traveling from their home to a location other than their normal place of business will be reimbursed only for mileage in excess of the miles they normally commute to work. Travelers will not be reimbursed for mileage commuting to their normal work location.

Insurance during Use of Personal Vehicle: NASBLA will not compensate travelers using their personal vehicle for any physical automobile damage or for any amount, which may be deductible from the traveler's collision insurance coverage. The provisions of the traveler's automobile insurance coverage will apply.

Mileage Reimbursement Rates: The mileage reimbursement rate for personal vehicles used while on business for NASBLA is the current U.S. General Services Administration Services Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Mileage Reimbursement Rate. This allowance is reimbursement for automobile operating expenses including fuel, oil, maintenance, repairs, and adequate insurance coverage. Tolls and parking expenses are separately reimbursed at the actual rate. Traffic and parking violations are not reimbursed.

MEALS

Reimbursement for per diem expenses (meals) for **outbound and return travel days** shall be based on the respective departure times (for outbound travel days) and arrival times (for return travel days). Under normal circumstances during typical business hours (8:00 am to 6:00 pm), the allocation of per diem travel expenses shall be reimbursed based on the following customary itineraries:

- breakfast, lunch and dinner expenses will be reimbursed for outbound travel **beginning before 8:00 am** or return travel **concluding after 6:00 pm** (all local times).
- lunch and dinner expenses ONLY will be reimbursed for outbound travel days **beginning after 8:00 am but before 12:00 pm (noon)**,
- breakfast and lunch expenses ONLY will be reimbursed for return travel days **concluding after 12:00 noon but prior to 6:00 pm**,
- dinner expenses ONLY will be reimbursed for outbound travel days **beginning after 12:00 noon**, and
- breakfast expenses ONLY will be reimbursed for return travel days concluding **before 12:00 noon**.

For authorized business travel that necessarily falls outside of normal circumstances or typical business hours, per diem expenses may still be reimbursed on a prorated basis with prior approval from the Chief Financial Officer or respective project manager.

Meals: No meal entitlement is earned when on local travel except for those provided by the association.

Prepaid Meals: Prepaid meals are those that are provided at no cost to the traveler or meals provided in the cost of a registration fee. Travelers are expected to indicate on the travel voucher if a prepaid meal applies.

MISCELLANEOUS

Reasonable charges for communications made for business purposes will be reimbursed. Receipts for those charges must be attached to the expense report unless included on the hotel statement. Internet charges are not reimbursable without prior approval.

Laundry: Personal laundry and cleaning and pressing of clothing will not be reimbursed.

Tips: Reasonable tips for baggage handling are allowable.

Registration Fees: Reasonable charges for registration fees are allowable.

ACCIDENT REPORTING

For the protection of the individual and the association, a traveler involved in an automobile accident (occurring in a corporate-owned, rented, or personal vehicle) while on NASBLA business, must do the following:

- Answer questions of law enforcement representatives, cooperating fully, giving factual – not speculative – information.
- Notify supervisor.
- Notify NASBLA if there are any personal injuries to a NASBLA traveler.
- Notify NASBLA by contacting the Chief Financial Officer immediately regardless of the extent of damage or lack of injury.