

## **The State Bar of California**

### **2021 Travel and Business-Related Expense Policy: Volunteers and Contractors**

The State Bar greatly appreciates the service of its many volunteers, and is able to reimburse reasonable, documented travel expenses incurred for State Bar business, pursuant to this policy. We do have a limited travel budget, so if your employer or other source is able to cover the cost of your travel expenses, that will allow us to stretch our budget and devote additional resources to the important work of the State Bar.

#### **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy document sets forth the standards and procedures used to identify and reimburse legitimate travel and business-related expenses incurred while conducting necessary, authorized business of the State Bar.

#### **II. SCOPE**

This policy covers all nonemployees, including but not limited to, the Board of Trustees, committee members, speakers, invited guests, other volunteers, and contractors, who incur or seek reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while conducting State Bar business. Authorization from the executive director or chief administrative officer is required to make exceptions to these policies.

#### **III. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- A. This document addresses the most common scenarios and issues for travel and business-related expenses, but it is not necessarily exhaustive. For any scenario or issue not specifically addressed, the Office of General Services or Office of Finance will interpret and apply this policy and any other applicable State Bar policies. In addition to the specific policy guidelines described here, travel and other business-related expenses must be reasonable, as compared to other similar travelers' expenses or other historical travel benchmarks. General Services and the Office of Finance reserve the right to reduce or deny a request for reimbursement or payment for any expense that is deemed either not in compliance with policy or otherwise unreasonable.
- B. Travelers should travel economically, taking into account both monetary and time costs.
- C. Each traveler is responsible for their own expenses and should not pay, or seek reimbursement, for the expenses of other employees, volunteers, or contractors. There will be no reimbursement for the expenses of a spouse, guest, or pet who accompanies a traveler on State Bar business.
- D. An individual is on "Travel Status" when, in the course of conducting business for the State Bar, they travel to a destination that is at least 30 miles away from their primary workplace. Absent specified exceptions described in this policy, airfare, lodging, and meal per diem

expenses can only be incurred when an individual is on Travel Status. Other travel-related expenses, and selected communication and miscellaneous expenses, may be allowable whether or not the 30-mile requirement for Travel Status has been met, as described herein.

- E. Business-related travel for any out of state destination requires express prior written approval from the executive director or the chief administrative officer. Additionally, Government Code section 11139.8 prohibits state-funded or state-sponsored travel to states with discriminatory laws. The following states are currently subject to the ban on state-funded and state-sponsored travel: Alabama, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia. The California Attorney General's Office maintains a current list of prohibited states [here](#). [This section updated 7/1/2021.]
- F. Requests for reimbursement should be made after the actual travel has occurred and include all out-of-pocket expenses, regardless of when tickets were purchased or transactions occurred.
- G. Volunteers may incur expenses for their own travel in accordance with the Volunteer/Contractor Travel Policy. Volunteers are not allowed to make other purchases or render or engage services for the State Bar. All purchases or services must be initiated by State Bar employees through the Office of General Services, Procurement Unit.
- H. The State Bar participates in the California Statewide Travel Program managed exclusively by the TravelStore. Employees and volunteers can make air, car rental and hotel reservations by calling 877-454-8785 or using the TravelStore's "Concur" online reservation system. Travelers must set up a travel profile with the TravelStore before using the system; Meeting & Travel staff in the Office of General Services have provided instructions for setting up a travel profile to designated Office and committee liaisons; travelers should contact their designated liaison for assistance setting up a travel profile. Travelers are not required to book through the TravelStore; direct bookings and bookings through other travel agencies are permitted, but booking fees in excess of those charged by the TravelStore (\$7 for online booking, \$12 for live agent assistance, \$16 for after-hours live agent assistance) will not be reimbursed. Under some circumstances, as noted below, comparison rates from the TravelStore or Southwest Airlines site must be provided for reservations booked by other means or with other airlines.

#### IV. REPORTING GUIDELINES

##### A. EXPENSE REPORT

1. **Policy Compliance:** Expense reports are reviewed for accuracy, completeness and policy compliance by the Office of General Services, Procurement Unit, before they are sent to the Office of Finance for processing and payment. General Services and the Office of Finance reserve the right to reduce or deny a request for reimbursement for any expense that is deemed either not in compliance with policy or otherwise unreasonable.

2. **Responsibilities:** It is the responsibility of travelers to submit to their State Bar liaison a completed, legible Expense Report with supporting documentation for approval. Any additional explanation or justification memos required must be initialed by the traveler's liaison, unless noted otherwise. It is the responsibility of approvers to ensure that Expense Reports submitted for approval are complete and accurate, comply with this policy, and are timely forwarded to Procurement.
3. **Expense Reporting:** The [Expense Report](#) form (example: see Appendix A) is used to reimburse individuals for out-of-pocket travel expenses while conducting business for the State Bar. Reimbursement payable to a firm or company rather than an individual requires a Check Request form with supporting documentation, to be completed by the State Bar liaison. Independent Contractors with allowances for travel expense reimbursements should follow the terms of their specific contracts.
4. **Travel Dates:** Travelers can use the Expense Report for a maximum of two trips conducted within any seven consecutive calendar days. If a single trip goes over seven consecutive calendar days, a separate Expense Report is required.
5. **Expense Report Receipts:** Original issued receipts for expenses other than per diem meals should be attached to the Expense Report. Where receipts for ground and public transportation are not provided by the carrier, or contain no itemized trip detail, expenses are reimbursable if the amount claimed is deemed reasonable as compared to other similar travelers' expenses. Reimbursement for any items claimed under "Other Claims" will not be approved without a supporting itemized receipt. Receipts for air, rail, lodging and car rental expenses must contain itemized pricing and reflect appropriate travel detail (e.g., departure/arrival times, travel dates and location, service class, upgrades, additional fees, etc.). Statement summaries and nonitemized credit card receipts are not acceptable substitutes for receipts but can serve as additional, supporting documentation for original receipts that naturally lack the required detail. If booking through third party vendors such as Travelocity, Orbitz, etc., and no receipt is provided by the vendor, the traveler should include booking confirmations with equivalent detail. Electronically issued receipts for online purchases are considered original issued receipts. To substantiate a claim for reimbursement, receipts for lodging and transportation must be in the name of the traveler.
6. **Deadlines:** The deadline for submitting an Expense Report to State Bar liaison is 30 calendar days from the end of the week the trip concludes. Late Expense Reports may be rejected. Incomplete, incorrect, or illegible reports may be returned to the requestor for correction or held for a second level review which may result in delay or nonreimbursement of a specific item.
7. **Signature:** All Expense Reports must be signed by the traveler seeking reimbursement. Facsimile signatures, digital signatures and digital scans are acceptable, a typed "/s/" is not. Approval signatures by State Bar liaisons must be original and not delegated via signature stamp.

8. **Revisions:** All revisions to an Expense Report must be initialed by the person making the revision. Any revisions necessary to correct or add to a previously submitted Expense Report must be clearly labeled as “revised” at the top of the form.
9. **Credits:** Previously paid credits issued for canceled air flights can be used to reduce the cost of other future airfare for State Bar business (unused tickets appear on the traveler’s TravelStore profile and should be used towards future travel prior to expiration). However, gift certificates, vouchers, coupons, points, or other promotional “credits” should not be used to purchase or be used to increase traveler reimbursements.
10. Gifts, tokens of appreciation, and other nontravel-related or nonbusiness-related expenses are not reimbursed under this policy.
11. Travelers must use the current 2021 electronic [Expense Report](#) form to ensure policy compliance. Nonstandard forms or forms from prior years will not be accepted.

## **B. PURCHASING CARD REPORTING**

1. Purchasing Cards are not issued to volunteers.

## **V. ALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

### **A. TRANSPORTATION**

#### **1. Personal Automobile**

- a. Travelers required to use a personal automobile to conduct State Bar business will be reimbursed for mileage at the Internal Revenue Service approved rate (noted in Appendix B) as follows:
  - i. Reimbursable mileage is incurred when a traveler leaves the location of their workplace on State Bar business and returns to that same location.
  - ii. Reimbursable mileage is incurred when a traveler does not report to their primary workplace during the workday because of State Bar business.
  - iii. Reimbursable mileage is incurred while conducting State Bar business while on the way to or from home or the primary workplace. Reimbursement will be for that mileage in excess of normal commute round trip mileage between home and the primary workplace.
  - iv. A printout from Google Maps or comparable source should be included with the Expense Report to substantiate mileage claimed.

- v. Travelers who elect to drive rather than fly to conduct State Bar business will not be reimbursed in excess of the cost of the most economical form of transportation. Travelers must attach to Expense Reports dated documentation from the TravelStore site or the Southwest Airlines site to substantiate comparable travel expense (lodging, airfare, rental car). Procurement reserves the right to adjust any requested amount that is not deemed reasonable as compared to other similar travelers' expenses, or other historical travel benchmarks. Mileage in excess of what comparable airfare would have cost is not reimbursable. Exceptions may be permitted when travelers are required to drive in order to economically deliver materials that would otherwise be shipped at additional cost, or special medical accommodations are required. Fuel that is put into a private vehicle is not reimbursable and cannot be charged to a Pcard. The mileage rate is intended to reimburse fuel costs, maintenance and other depreciation for private auto use.
- vi. Damage to personal autos while being used on State Bar business is not covered.

## **2. Car Rental**

- a. Rental cars may be used to conduct State Bar business when necessary and economically practical compared to other modes of transportation. All associated rental costs should be considered and compared to the equivalent taxi or other ground services available, including the taxes, surcharges, fuel expense, hotel parking and highway tolls. Approvers are responsible for verifying that modes of ground transportation used to attend offsite meetings are consistent for their group and that any deviations or special circumstances are noted.
- b. As a general rule, rental cars should be limited to economy models, including sub-compact and compact size. Exceptions may be permitted when travelers are required to drive a larger vehicle in order to economically deliver materials, to accommodate a physical limitation, or when multiple travelers are driving together and need the additional space for passengers, luggage and other meeting materials. Exceptions may also be permitted for a 4-wheel-drive vehicle to provide safe transportation during inclement weather.
- c. The State Bar carries insurance that covers travelers (both employees and volunteers) when renting a vehicle while on State Bar business. Thus, travelers should not elect to carry the additional collision and liability coverage offered by rental agencies when traveling on State Bar business. Any additional insurance elections will be deemed a personal expense and will not be reimbursed.
- d. Personal and business purposes should not be combined on a single rental car reservation. In the event of sequential business and personal travel, a car used for business purposes should be returned at the conclusion of business, and a personal rental then initiated.

- e. Cars should be returned with a full tank of gas; pre-paid tank options should be incurred only when the employee is sure that they will exhaust close to a full tank of gas.
- f. Fuel costs incurred for rental cars while on State Bar business are reimbursable, and may also be charged to a Pcard. Fuel should be charged to the same Pcard account that was used to reserve the automobile rental. Compliance with the rental car agency agreement is the responsibility of the traveler who signs the rental agreement. Please be aware of provisions in the rental agreement that prohibit any other person from driving the car.
- g. In the event of an accident, follow these steps:
  - Attend to any medical issues.
  - Report to appropriate law enforcement agencies immediately.
  - Consult the rental contract and follow its instructions.
  - Promptly submit an accident report to the State Bar's Risk Management Unit.

### **3. Air Travel**

- a. Reimbursement for air travel will be limited to the cost of a refundable coach/economy fare, subject to the further restrictions below, plus the cost of checking up to two pieces of luggage per traveler, if required. Lower cost nonrefundable fares should be purchased if it is practical to do so. First Class, Business Class or Southwest Business Select fares are not permitted; if purchased, the difference between the economy and higher class fare will be considered a personal expense and will not be reimbursed. The cost of airline memberships, preferential seating, preboarding or any other accommodation upgrade will be considered a personal expense and will not be reimbursed. Charges incurred from a change of flight schedule for personal convenience are not reimbursable, but may be permitted for business purposes or other extenuating circumstances if the reason accompanies the Expense Report.
- b. Southwest Airlines is the preferred airline of the State Bar of California. Southwest offers no change or cancelation fees and allows two pieces of checked-in luggage free of charge. Employees must choose Southwest unless the route requested is not serviced by the airline. Exceptions for special circumstances must be approved in advance by the Office of General Services.
- c. Travelers may book air travel using the TravelStore, another travel agency or directly through the airline. For round-trip flights over \$550 (inclusive of taxes and fees) on routes not serviced by Southwest Airlines, travelers may book tickets directly with other airlines or another travel agency only if the fare is equal to or less than the fare available from the TravelStore. In such a case, the comparison fare from the TravelStore's site must be attached to the Expense Report or Pcard statement. On

routes serviced by Southwest Airlines, travelers may book on a different airline only if the rate is equal to or less than the rate available from Southwest. In such a case, the comparison rate from Southwest must be attached to the Expense Report.

- d. Travelers who incur excessively high fares due to a personal choice to use an airline other than Southwest, or to use a nonstandard route when a more reasonable route exists, will be reimbursed only for the portion of the fare equal to the comparable Southwest fare and/or the fare for the more reasonable route.

#### **4. Rail Service**

- a. Coach rail service may be used when necessary and economically practical compared to air and/or ground transportation. Reimbursement will be made based on the most economical, reservable service class available. Preferential or other luxury upgrades are not reimbursable. Note that on Amtrak, all reservable seats are called "business class" and are permitted.

#### **5. Shuttle/Taxi/Car Service/Rideshare Service**

- a. Shuttles, taxis, car services and rideshare services required to conduct State Bar business are allowable expenses.
- b. Tipping is optional, but should not exceed 15 percent except in the case of an extremely low fare value.
- c. Airport trips may be covered by a fixed flat fee, and the metered fare or flat fee fare can be selected by the traveler at the payment point, whichever is more economical. Reimbursements should be capped at the fixed flat rate plus gratuity if less than the metered fare. (In Los Angeles, the taxi rate between LAX and downtown, including the Bar's office at 845 South Figueroa, is a flat fare, plus a surcharge for trips originating at LAX; travelers should not pay the metered fare between LAX and the LA office.)
- d. Travelers may also use rideshare options such as Uber and Lyft, as these services may be cheaper than traditional taxis. Any premium service offered (i.e. Uber Black or Uber SUV) will be considered a town car equivalent and subject to the limitations below. If tipping is included in the fare, any additional tipping is not permitted. If tipping is not included in the fare, it is permitted consistent with section (b) above.
- e. A higher-cost limousine, town car, or black-car service is not reimbursable unless a less-expensive service is unavailable.
- f. Employees traveling to the same destination are encouraged to share ground transportation whenever it is practical to do so.

## **6. Transit, Tolls, Parking, and Fines**

- a. Public transit fares, bridge tolls and parking fees incurred by travelers on State Bar business are allowable expenses.
- b. Airport parking reimbursement will be limited to the onsite economy or daily rates available. Short-term, hourly or premium parking expenses are not allowable.
- c. Parking tickets and traffic fines incurred by travelers will not be reimbursed.

## **B. LODGING**

1. When lodging away from home is required to conduct State Bar business, reimbursement for lodging expenses will be made for the actual cost of a standard single accommodation hotel room, up to the maximum authorized lodging rate (Appendix B) or the contracted group rate pre-negotiated by State Bar staff for specific group meetings.
2. Individuals engaged as speakers for State Bar programs may be reimbursed for the actual cost of a standard single accommodation hotel room per their individual contract terms, if applicable.
3. When the State Bar has not contracted for a block of hotel rooms for a group meeting or event, individual lodging accommodations can be reserved through the TravelStore, or directly with a hotel. If you need assistance, please call your group's liaison. If booking directly, travelers should always check to see if government rates or other discounted rates are available.
4. When the State Bar has contracted for a block of hotel rooms for a group meeting or event, attendees of that meeting or event must stay at the contracted hotel to ensure that State Bar meets its contracted minimum number of rooms and does not incur fees for unused rooms. Travelers who choose, as a matter of personal preference, to stay at a different hotel, will not be reimbursed for lodging costs, and will be required to make their own reservations without the assistance of State Bar Meeting & Travel staff.
5. Lodging must be provided by either (i) a commercial establishment in the travel accommodation industry (e.g., hotel, motel, executive leased apartments), or (ii) a short-term rental through a centralized online platform (such as Airbnb) whereby the rental is advertised, payment for the rental is securely processed, and an itemized receipt is provided. No reimbursement will be made for informal stays at personal residences or other barter or in-kind arrangements.
6. Lodging expenses in excess of the current authorized lodging rates will not be reimbursed unless a prior contracted group rate has been negotiated with the hotel, or unless expressly authorized for some other business purpose. This must be confirmed by the submission of a [Hotel Authorization](#) form listing the room rate, taxes and dates of



stay, with approval from either the traveler's office director or the manager responsible for negotiating the contracted group rate for the event.

7. If an Expense Report is submitted without the necessary Hotel Authorization and the lodging rate is in excess of the authorized rate, the Expense Report will be returned to the traveler for correction, or reimbursement will be made for only the authorized maximum hotel rate.
8. The maximum authorized lodging rate is exclusive of tax, i.e., reimbursement will be made up to the maximum rate, plus tax. Note, however, that in some cities, including San Francisco and Los Angeles, employees of government agencies are exempt from the Transient Occupancy Tax on hotel stays. Upon check-in travelers should inform the hotel that they are government employee and fill out an exemption form. Exemption forms are also available from General Services. Hotels will usually ask to see a government-issued identification card. Some hotels also ask for "travel orders" or a travel authorization letter from the agency; these letters can be provided by General Services.
9. For lodging through Airbnb or similar platforms, the maximum authorized lodging rate is exclusive of tax but is **inclusive** of cleaning fees or other service fees.
10. The State Bar covers the cost of the hotel room and necessary business-related telephone calls, parking, nonpremium internet charges and business center expenses. These expenses should be itemized on the Expense Report and not included with the lodging rate. Travelers should use their own wireless devices wherever feasible if more economical than using the hotels' services.
11. Room service, minibar charges, in-room movies and other in-room self-service items, and gratuities for such items as luggage assistance, valet service or housekeeping service, are not reimbursable expenses. Travelers, may, however, claim a \$5.00 Incidentals Per Diem to cover the cost of minor personal incidental expenses incurred while on Travel Status.
12. Any charges resulting from failure to cancel lodging reservations are not the responsibility of the State Bar unless the reason for failure to cancel in time is related to State Bar business or due to an unavoidable personal emergency.
13. For individuals not on Travel Status, lodging may be reimbursed only if there is a specific business need for the hotel stay, such as staffing the Bar exam or an offsite meeting at the hotel.

## **C. MEALS**

### **1. Per Diem Reimbursed Meals for Individuals**

- a. Pcards may not be used for any individual meals.
- b. Per diem meal costs will be reimbursed at the authorized per diem meal rate (Appendix B).
- c. Per diem meal costs will be reimbursed based on the following travel status guidelines:
  - Breakfast: Traveling before 7:00 a.m.
  - Lunch: Traveling at 12:30 p.m.
  - Dinner: Traveling after 7:00 p.m.
- d. The meal per diem may not be claimed when a meal is otherwise provided (e.g. a State Bar catered lunch, conference meals, etc.).
- e. Tips for restaurant service are considered to be part of the per diem rate and are not reimbursable beyond the per diem rate.
- f. For individuals not on Travel Status, meal costs may be reimbursed at the authorized per diem meal rate if the meal was work-related and in conditions beyond the individual's control. Examples include required attendance at an offsite meeting or staffing the Bar Exam.

### **2. Catered Meals for Onsite Meetings & Events**

- a. Refreshments and/or meals may be catered at State Bar expense at State Bar onsite meetings and events provided that the attendees are not exclusively State Bar employees and the subject matter of the event is not routine internal State Bar business or staff meetings.
- b. The cost of catering for onsite meetings and events may not exceed the authorized onsite catering rates, which are the same as individual per diem rates in most cases (Appendix B). Onsite catering must be arranged through the Meeting & Travel staff in the Office of General Services to ensure compliance with policies related to cost, insurance and building access.

### **3. Alcoholic Beverages**

Alcoholic beverages and corkage fees are not reimbursable expenses.

## **D. COMMUNICATIONS AND BUSINESS CENTER EXPENSES**

Reimbursement is provided for reasonable expenses incurred in making business-related telephone calls and limited calls to the individual's home resulting from the requirements of business; and for expenses such as offsite photocopying, faxing or hotel business center charges. These expenses are reimbursable whether or not Travel Status requirements are met.

## **VI. EXPENSE ADVANCES**

- A. Volunteers and contractors are not eligible for travel advances.

## **VII. OFFSITE MEETINGS AND WEEKEND/EVENING MEETINGS**

- A. Meetings and events should be held onsite at the State Bar's offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles, in order to avoid the cost of offsite meeting room rental fees and, in particular, hotel catering, which is usually significantly more expensive than onsite catering. Meetings should only be held offsite if there is a significant business need to use another venue. Factors to be considered include: (1) the availability of State Bar conference center space; (2) the size of the meeting; (3) unique logistical requirements of the meeting; (4) the cost of offsite meeting space and catering; and (5) the proximity of the proposed offsite location to economical transportation and lodging options. Except as specified in (B) and (C) below, meetings anticipated in offsite venues require written documentation of the business need for an offsite venue, and approval of the executive director or chief administrative officer, before the meetings are scheduled and before any outside venues are secured. The Office of General Services will coordinate between the requesting office and the executive director or chief administrative officer to document the business need for and approval of an offsite venue.
- B. A documented business need and advance approval of the executive director or chief administrative officer is not required for Bar Exam testing sites, or for offsite events held in conjunction with law schools or similar organizations where there is no cost for use of the offsite venue.
- C. Contracts for offsite meeting venues must be initiated by the Office of General Services. This requirement does not apply to the Office of Admissions for Bar exam testing sites; subject to the provisions above, Admissions may initiate Bar Exam site contracts per their established procedures.
- D. Offsite catering costs may require separate approval even if approval for an offsite venue is initially granted by the executive director or chief administrative officer.
- E. Onsite meetings should be scheduled for business hours whenever possible, to avoid extra charges that may be incurred to provide building services or staff services on evenings and weekends.

The State Bar of California  
**EXPENSE REPORT**

● STAFF ○ OTHER

**APPENDIX A**

Due to Procurement LA within 60 days of travel.

TRAVELER NAME			TRAVEL WEEK OF
WORK ADDRESS			
DEPARTMENT		EXT	
<i>Any other lodging or airfare not shown provided directly by the State Bar?</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> Lodging	<input type="checkbox"/> Airfare

TRIP 1 PURPOSE		TRIP 2 PURPOSE	
LOCATION FROM		LOCATION FROM	
TRAVEL TO		TRAVEL TO	
RETURN TO		RETURN TO	

Enter amounts paid by traveler. Indicate all other travel payments by entering DB for direct bill or PC for Pcard charges. Circle any missing receipts.

Travel Expense	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	
LODGING								LODGING & INCIDENTALS
INCIDENTALS								
TAXI / SHUTTLE / RIDESHARE 1								TRANSPORT
TAXI / SHUTTLE / RIDESHARE 2								
PUBLIC TRANSIT (BUS/RAIL)								
PARKING (HOTEL/LOT/METER)								
TOLLS (BRIDGE)								
OTHER <i>select from list if needed</i>								
AIR TRAVEL								
AUTO (PERSONAL) <small>miles / 56¢</small>								MEALS
AUTO (RENTAL)								
AUTO (RENTAL GASOLINE)								
BREAKFAST (travel before 7:00a)								
LUNCH (travel at 12:30p)								
DINNER (travel after 7:00p)								

**Notes**

*Explain any missing receipts circled above.*

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**Other Claims**

*Volunteers are not authorized to make purchases or render / engage services for the State Bar.*

DATE	Description of claim (only enter items not accounted for above, will add to total).	AMOUNT

[Employee Travel Policy](#)

[Volunteer Travel Policy](#)

TOTAL MISC:

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**Accounting Distribution**

**Reimbursement Totals**

		TOTAL EXPENSE	
		LESS CASH ADVANCE	
		BALANCE DUE REQUESTOR	
		BALANCE DUE STATE BAR <i>(Check Attached)</i>	
Requestor's Signature: <i>(Print Name &amp; Sign)</i>	Date:	Authorized Signature: <i>(Print Name &amp; Sign)</i>	Date:

For reimbursement, submit to Procurement LA with approval signature and original receipts. Hold all PC receipts for Purchasing Card statement. Keep a copy for your records.

# EXPENSE REPORTING INSTRUCTIONS

**DUE:** The deadline for submitting an Expense Report form ("ER") to Finance is 60 calendar days after the traveler incurs the expense (last travel day in week). Incomplete, incorrect, or illegible report will be returned to the requestor for correction, which may result in delay or non-reimbursement of a specific item.

**RECEIPTS:** This ER is intended reimburse individuals for out-of-pocket travel expenses while conducting business for the State Bar. To substantiate a reimbursement request, receipts for lodging or car rentals must be in the name of the traveler. Issued receipts for travel expenditures for any amount should be attached to the ER, except when receipts for public transportation, tolls and/or incidentals are not provided by vendor. Do not include any extra receipts paid by Pcard or not itemized on the form.

**PURPOSE OF TRIP:** List the specific meeting(s) or event(s) attended or hosted. Indicate individual travel legs by listing travel from, travel to, and return to by location. Non-roundtrips with multiple legs can utilize both trip sections for additional locations.

**TRAVEL DATES:** This ER can be used for up to two trips conducted within 7 consecutive days. If a single trip goes over 7 calendar days, please submit an additional form. The Monday date will be used for audit purposes.

**SPECIFIC TRAVEL EXPENSE:** List the reimbursable cost of each activity on the appropriate line and under the date on which it was incurred. **The Travel and Business-Related Expense Policy contains specific per diem rates, reimbursement caps and other restrictions. The State Bar will not reimburse amounts in excess of these limits.**

**Lodging:** List total expense per night, including all taxes and excluding any personal expenses. If lodging billed to a master State Bar bill account enter "DB" to designate lodging provided, or "PC" if billed to Pcard and not requesting cash reimbursement.

**Incidentals:** List additional miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses incurred during travel, including all non-ground transport tipping, copying and incidental meeting supplies.

**Taxi / Van / Rail / Bus (local transportation):** List any fares levied plus gratuities for appropriate method of transportation. Indicate all that apply for entered amount(s). Circle any amounts not supported by receipt and explain below.

**Tolls / Parking:** List any bridge or road toll, parking meter expense or separate parking garage charges. Indicate all that apply for entered amount(s). Circle any amounts not supported by receipt and explain below.

**Air Travel:** List total fare of round trip or all business-appropriate travel legs. If airfare was billed to a master State Bar account enter "DB" to designate airfare provided, or "PC" if billed to Pcard and not requesting cash reimbursement. Do not request reimbursement for any additional accommodation upgrades for early-boarding or business class service.

**Auto (Personal):** Enter the number of actual miles driven on each travel-day. Round to nearest full mile. E-form will auto-calculate personal mileage reimbursement amount.

**Auto (Rental):** Enter the total cost incurred for automobile rental. If gasoline was purchased separately, list below separately. Consult travel policy for insurance information and specific limitations to auto rental reimbursement.

**PURCHASING CARD / DIRECT BILLING CHARGES:** If a State Bar Pcard was used, enter the abbreviation "PC" rather than the dollar amount in the appropriate space. Do not attach any documentation for these charges to your ER, but retain all invoices and receipts and attach to the corresponding period's Pcard statement. For expenses charged directly to the State Bar other than via Pcard (e.g., hotel rooms billed to master account, air travel booked through the State Bar's travel agency) enter a "DB" to indicate the direct billing.

**NOTES:** Note all missing/receipts not available by travel date for reconciliation or any other special explanations regarding method of travel utilized.

**ACCOUNT DISTRIBUTION:** List the business unit, account and the total amount to be charged for all items listed on the ER. The account and totals will default based on the staff/volunteer form selection at top. These fields can be overridden if charges need to be reallocated otherwise. Accounting distribution to be completed by State Bar staff.

**TOTAL EXPENSE:** The total amount for which you are seeking reimbursement will calculate automatically from the Travel Expense and Miscellaneous Expense sections.

**LESS CASH ADVANCE:** List any advances made directly to you for the trip or activity. Do not include any amounts paid by the State Bar on your behalf (e.g., hotel direct billing, conference registrations). Amount shown in will be deducted from the total reimbursement requested. Do not deduct any Pcard reimbursements on this form. See Travel Advance Policy & Procedures for additional detail.

**BALANCE DUE:** The total amount you will be reimbursed.

**BALANCE DUE STATE BAR:** If your advance exceeds the total travel expense, attach a check payable to the State Bar of California for the amount you owe. Reflect amount as a negative number (e.g., <\$14.25>).

**SIGNATURES:** Print name, sign, date and forward form to your supervising authority for approval. Incomplete, incorrect or illegible forms will be returned.

## TRAVEL AND BUSINESS-RELATED EXPENSE POLICY

# **AUTHORIZED RATES**

Effective January 1, 2021

### **LODGING:**

(excluding all taxes)

#### Northern California

San Francisco	\$250.00
Alameda, San Mateo, Santa Clara	\$140.00
Marin	\$110.00
Napa, Sacramento	\$95.00

#### Southern California

Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura	\$120.00
City of Santa Monica	\$150.00
San Diego, Monterey	\$125.00
Riverside	\$95.00

All Other Counties \$90.00

### **EMPLOYEE / VOLUNTEER TRAVEL MEALS:**

Breakfast	\$7.00
Lunch	\$11.00
Dinner	\$23.00

### **MILEAGE:**

The mileage reimbursement rate is 56¢ per mile driven. The mileage reimbursement rate will be adjusted to mirror the reimbursement rate established by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service for business related reimbursement. These rates are imbedded in the formulas of the online Expense Report and will calculate the correct rate based on the travel dates provided.

## Appendix B

### Authorized Travel and Catering Rates (Effective January 1, 2021)

#### Mileage Reimbursement

Effective January 1, 2021, the personal auto mileage reimbursement rate is \$0.56 per mile driven. The mileage reimbursement rate will be adjusted to mirror the reimbursement rate established by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service for business-related reimbursement. These rates are imbedded in the formulas of the online Expense Report and will be adjusted on the effective date of any rate change.

#### Lodging Reimbursement (excluding all taxes)

The lodging reimbursement rate will be adjusted to mirror the reimbursement rate established by the State of California Department of Human Resources.

County	Reimbursement Rate
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA	
San Francisco	\$250
Alameda, San Mateo, Santa Clara	\$140
Marin	\$110
Napa, Sacramento	\$95
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA	
Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura	\$120 (excluding City of Santa Monica)
City of Santa Monica	\$150
San Diego, Monterey	\$125
Riverside	\$95
ALL OTHER COUNTIES	\$90

#### Incidental Expense Per Diem

Incidentals: \$5.00

#### Individual Employee Travel Meal Per Diem

Breakfast: \$7.00  
Lunch: \$11.00  
Dinner: \$23.00

#### Maximum Onsite Catering Cost Per Meal

Breakfast \$7.00\*  
Lunch \$11.00  
Dinner \$23.00

\*Catering for breakfast is permitted only for meetings beginning before 9:00 a.m.



Date: January 2, 2021  
To: All State Bar Staff  
From: Steve Mazer, Chief Administrative Officer  
Subject: Administrative Advisory No. 21-01 Travel and Business-Related Expense Policy

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## I. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy document sets forth the standards and procedures used to identify and reimburse legitimate travel and business-related expenses incurred while conducting necessary, authorized business of the State Bar.<sup>1</sup>

## II. SCOPE

This policy covers all employees who make Purchasing Card (Pcard) purchases, request checks, request a travel advance, and/or seek reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while conducting State Bar business. Nonemployee volunteers such as the Board of Trustees, committee members, speakers and invited guests, and contractors engaged by the State Bar, are governed by the Volunteer/Contractor Travel Policy, which can be found [here](#). Authorization from the executive director or chief administrative officer is required to make exceptions to these policies.

## III. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. This document addresses the most common scenarios and issues for travel and business-related expenses, but it is not necessarily exhaustive. For any scenario or issue not specifically addressed, the Office of General Services or Office of Finance will interpret and apply this policy and any other applicable State Bar policies. In addition to the specific policy guidelines described here, travel and other business-related expenses

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<sup>1</sup> Should this Travel and Business-Related Expense Policy differ from the reimbursement provisions contained in a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) or in Rules and Regulations that are applicable to State Bar employees, the MOU or other Rules and Regulations shall govern, except that the rates established for lodging, meal reimbursement and mileage in this Travel and Business-Related Expense Policy will apply to State Bar employees where such amounts are greater than those provided in the MOU or other rules and regulations.



- must be reasonable, as compared to other similar travelers' expenses or other historical travel benchmarks. General Services and Finance reserve the right to reduce or deny a request for reimbursement or payment for any expense that is deemed either not in compliance with policy or otherwise unreasonable.
- B. Travelers should travel economically, taking into account both monetary and time costs.
  - C. Each traveler is responsible for their own expenses and should not pay, or seek reimbursement, for the expenses of other employees, volunteers or contractors. There will be no reimbursement for the expenses of a spouse, guest or pet who accompanies a traveler on State Bar business.
  - D. An individual is on "Travel Status" when, in the course of conducting business for the State Bar, they travel to a destination that is at least 30 miles away from their primary workplace. Absent specified exceptions described in this policy, airfare, lodging, and meal per diem expenses can only be incurred when an individual is on Travel Status. Other travel-related expenses, and selected communication and miscellaneous expenses, may be allowable whether or not the 30-mile requirement for Travel Status has been met, as described herein.
  - E. Business-related travel for any out of state destination requires express prior written approval from the executive director or the chief administrative officer. Additionally, Government Code section 11139.8 prohibits state-funded or state-sponsored travel to states with discriminatory laws. The following states are currently subject to the ban on state-funded and state-sponsored travel: Alabama, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia. The California Attorney General's Office maintains a current list of prohibited states [here](#). [This section updated 7/1/2021.]
  - F. Requests for reimbursement should be made after the actual travel has occurred and include all out-of-pocket expenses, regardless of when tickets were purchased, or transactions occurred.
  - G. Pcard expenses incurred, and claims for payment or reimbursement submitted, must be truthful and accurate, and include only allowable expenses. Intentional misrepresentation on a Pcard Expense Report, payment request or reimbursement claim shall be subject to disciplinary action and to those consequences permitted by law.
  - H. Volunteers may incur expenses for their own travel in accordance with the Volunteer/Contractor Travel Policy. Volunteers are not allowed to make other purchases or render or engage services for the State Bar. All purchases or services must be initiated by State Bar employees through the Office of General Services, Procurement Unit.

- I. The State Bar participates in the California Statewide Travel Program, managed exclusively by the TravelStore. Employees and volunteers can make air, car rental and hotel reservations by calling 877-454-8785 or using the TravelStore's "Concur" online reservation system. Travelers must set up a travel profile with the TravelStore before using the system; Meeting & Travel staff in the Office of General Services have provided instructions for setting up a travel profile to designated Office and committee liaisons; travelers should contact their designated liaison for assistance setting up a travel profile. Travelers are not required to book through the TravelStore; direct bookings and bookings through other travel agencies are permitted, but booking fees in excess of those charged by the TravelStore (\$7 for online booking, \$12 for live agent assistance, \$16 for after-hours live agent assistance) will not be reimbursed. Under some circumstances, as noted below, comparison rates from the TravelStore or Southwest Airlines site must be provided for reservations booked by other means or with other airlines.

#### IV. REPORTING GUIDELINES

##### A. EXPENSE REPORT

1. **Policy Compliance:** Expense reports are reviewed for accuracy, completeness and policy compliance by the Office of General Services, Procurement Unit, before they are sent to the Office of Finance for processing and payment. General Services and Finance reserve the right to reduce or deny a request for reimbursement for any expense that is deemed either not in compliance with policy or otherwise unreasonable.
2. **Responsibilities:** It is the responsibility of travelers to submit to their approver a completed Expense Report with supporting documentation for approval. Approvers must be in the traveler's direct reporting hierarchy within their area.<sup>2</sup> Any additional explanation or justification memos required must be approved by the traveler's executive manager, unless noted otherwise. It is the responsibility of approvers to ensure that Expense Reports submitted for approval are complete and accurate, comply with this policy, and are timely forwarded to Procurement.
3. **Expense Reporting:** The Expense Report (found in the Expenses module in Oracle Fusion) is used to reimburse individuals for out-of-pocket travel expenses while conducting business for the State Bar. Reimbursement payable to a firm or company rather than an individual requires a [Check Request](#) form with supporting

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<sup>2</sup> The executive director's Expense Report and Pcard Statements must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees chair. The chair may forward unresolved concerns directly to the Audit Committee chair as warranted, who may consult with the chair and executive director about the matter or refer it to the Audit Committee for resolution.

documentation. Independent contractors with allowances for travel expense reimbursements should follow the terms of their specific contracts.

4. **Travel Dates:** Travelers can use the Expense Report for a maximum of two trips conducted within any seven consecutive calendar days. If a single trip goes over seven consecutive calendar days, a separate Expense Report is required.
5. **Expense Report Receipts:** Original issued receipts for expenses other than per diem meals should be attached to the Expense Report. Where receipts for ground and public transportation are not provided by the carrier, or contain no itemized trip detail, expenses are reimbursable if the amount claimed is deemed reasonable as compared to other similar travelers' expenses. Reimbursement for any items claimed under "Other Claims" will not be approved without a supporting itemized receipt. Receipts for air, rail, lodging and car rental expenses must contain itemized pricing and reflect appropriate travel detail (e.g., departure/arrival times, travel dates and location, service class, upgrades, additional fees, etc.). Statement summaries and nonitemized credit card receipts are not acceptable substitutes for receipts but can serve as additional, supporting documentation for original receipts that naturally lack the required detail. If booking through third party vendors such as Travelocity, Orbitz, etc., and no receipt is provided by the vendor, the traveler should include booking confirmations with equivalent detail. Electronically issued receipts for online purchases are considered original issued receipts. To substantiate a claim for reimbursement, receipts for lodging and transportation must be in the name of the traveler.
6. **Deadlines:** The deadline for submitting an Expense Report to Procurement is 60 calendar days from the end of the week the trip concludes. Late Expense Reports may be rejected. Incomplete, incorrect, or illegible reports may be returned to the requestor for correction, or held for a second level review, which may result in delay or non-reimbursement of a specific item.
7. **Credits:** Previously paid credits issued for canceled air flights can be used to reduce the cost of other future airfare for State Bar business (unused tickets appear on the traveler's TravelStore profile and should be used towards future travel prior to expiration). However, gift certificates, vouchers, coupons, points, or other promotional "credits" should not be used to purchase airfare or be used to increase traveler reimbursements.
8. Gifts, tokens of appreciation and other nontravel-related or nonbusiness-related expenses are not reimbursed under this policy.
9. Travelers must use an Expense Report (found in the Expenses module in Oracle Fusion) to ensure policy compliance.

## **B. PURCHASING CARD REPORTING**

1. Purchasing Cards (Pcards) may be used by employees for travel expenses and for the purchase of other goods and services in accordance with the State Bar's procurement policies. Pcards are not issued to volunteers.
2. Pcard transactions must be reviewed and reconciled in Oracle Fusion. Please go to the Expenses module and submit an Expense Report (Pcard template) during the designated review period at the end of each billing cycle. Original issued receipts must be attached to each transaction. An explanation memo with manager approval must be included to document any missing receipts. Receipts must contain itemized pricing and, for travel-related expenses, must reflect appropriate travel detail (e.g., departure/arrival times, travel dates and locations, service class, upgrades, additional fees, etc.). Statement summaries and nonitemized credit card receipts are not acceptable substitutes. Electronically issued receipts for online purchases are considered original issued receipts. Failure to review and reconcile Pcard statements during the designated review period at the end of each billing cycle, and/or failure to provide receipts, may result in the loss of Pcard privileges.
3. Pcard Expense Reports must be verified for accuracy and properly approved by the responsible approver, during the designated approval period at the end of each billing cycle.
4. Pcard Expense Reports and receipts are audited by Procurement. Procurement will report any audit issues to cardholders, office directors and the chief administrative officer for resolution. Failure to resolve open audit issues in a timely manner, or to comply with all Pcard policies and procedures, may result in the loss of Pcard privileges.

## **V. ALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

### **A. TRANSPORTATION**

#### **1. Personal Automobile**

- a. Travelers required to use a personal automobile to conduct State Bar business will be reimbursed for mileage at the Internal Revenue Service approved rate (noted in Appendix A) as follows:
  - i. Reimbursable mileage is incurred when a traveler leaves the location of their workplace on State Bar business and returns to that same location.

- ii. Reimbursable mileage is incurred when a traveler does not report to their primary workplace during the workday, but instead reports to a different location to conduct State Bar business.
- iii. Reimbursable mileage is incurred while conducting State Bar business while on the way to or from home or the primary workplace. Reimbursement will be for that mileage in excess of normal commute round trip mileage between home and the primary workplace.
- iv. A printout from Google Maps or comparable source should be included with the Expense Report to substantiate mileage claimed.
- v. Travelers who elect to drive rather than fly to conduct State Bar business will not be reimbursed in excess of the cost of the most economical form of transportation. Travelers must attach to Expense Reports dated documentation from the TravelStore site or the Southwest Airlines site to substantiate comparable travel expense (lodging, airfare, rental car). Procurement reserves the right to adjust any requested amount that is not deemed reasonable as compared to other similar travelers' expenses, or other historical travel benchmarks. Mileage in excess of what comparable airfare would have cost is not reimbursable. Exceptions may be permitted when travelers are required to drive in order to economically deliver materials that would otherwise be shipped at additional cost, or special medical accommodations are required. Fuel that is put into a private vehicle is not reimbursable and cannot be charged to a Pcard. The mileage rate is intended to reimburse fuel costs, maintenance and other depreciation for private auto use.
- vi. Damage to personal autos while being used on State Bar business is not covered.

## **2. Car Rental**

- a. Rental cars may be used to conduct State Bar business when necessary and economically practical compared to other modes of transportation. All associated rental costs should be considered and compared to the equivalent taxi or other ground services available, including the taxes, surcharges, fuel expense, hotel parking and highway tolls. Approvers are responsible for verifying that modes of ground transportation used to attend offsite meetings are consistent for their group and that any deviations or special circumstances are noted.
- b. As a general rule, rental cars should be limited to economy models, including compact size. Exceptions may be permitted when travelers are required to drive

a larger vehicle in order to economically deliver materials, to accommodate a physical limitation, or when multiple travelers are driving together and need the additional space for passengers, luggage and other meeting materials. Exceptions may also be permitted for a 4-wheel-drive vehicle to provide safe transportation during inclement weather.

- c. The California Statewide Travel Program has a master contract with Enterprise and National; depending on location and dates of travel, the California contract rates are sometimes cheaper than standard rates or rates offered by other car rental agencies. Where Enterprise and National are available and cheaper than other agencies, travelers should book with these agencies via the TravelStore. To obtain the state Account Number to use for Enterprise or National reservations, please contact Meeting & Travel staff in the Office of General Services.
- d. The State Bar carries insurance that covers travelers (both employees and volunteers) when renting a vehicle while on State Bar business. Thus, travelers should not elect to carry the additional collision and liability coverage offered by rental agencies when traveling on State Bar business. Any additional insurance elections will be deemed a personal expense and will not be reimbursed.
- e. Personal and business purposes should not be combined on a single rental car reservation. In the event of sequential business and personal travel, a car used for business purposes should be returned at the conclusion of business, and a personal rental then initiated.
- f. Cars should be returned with a full tank of gas; pre-paid tank options should be incurred only when the employee is sure that they will exhaust close to a full tank of gas.
- g. Fuel costs incurred for rental cars while on State Bar business are reimbursable and may also be charged to a Pcard. Fuel should be charged to the same Pcard account that was used to reserve the automobile rental. Compliance with the rental car agency agreement is the responsibility of the traveler who signs the rental agreement. Please be aware of provisions in the rental agreement that prohibit any other person from driving the car.
- h. In the event of an accident, follow these steps:
  - Attend to any medical issues.
  - Report to appropriate law enforcement agencies immediately.
  - Consult the rental contract and follow its instructions.
  - Promptly submit an accident report to the Office of General Services.

### **3. Air Travel**

- a. Reimbursement for air travel will be limited to the cost of a refundable coach/economy fare, subject to the further restrictions below, plus the cost of checking up to two pieces of luggage per traveler, if required. Lower cost nonrefundable fares should be purchased if it is practical to do so. First Class, Business Class or Southwest Business Select fares are not permitted; if purchased, the difference between the economy and higher-class fare will be considered a personal expense and will not be reimbursed. The cost of airline memberships, preferential seating, preboarding or any other accommodation upgrade will be considered a personal expense and will not be reimbursed. Charges incurred from a change of flight schedule for personal convenience are not reimbursable but may be permitted for business purposes or other extenuating circumstances if the reason accompanies the Expense Report.
- b. Southwest Airlines is the preferred airline of the State Bar of California. Southwest offers no change or cancelation fees and allows two pieces of checked-in luggage free of charge. Employees must choose Southwest unless the route requested is not serviced by the airline. Exceptions for special circumstances must be approved in advance by the Office of General Services.
- c. Travelers may book air travel using the TravelStore, another travel agency or directly through the airline. For round-trip flights over \$550.00 (inclusive of taxes and fees) on routes not serviced by Southwest Airlines, travelers may book tickets directly with other airlines or another travel agency only if the fare is equal to or less than the fare available from the TravelStore. In such a case, the comparison fare from the TravelStore's site must be attached to the Expense Report or Pcard statement. On routes serviced by Southwest Airlines, travelers may book on a different airline only if the rate is equal to or less than the rate available from Southwest. In such a case, the comparison rate from Southwest must be attached to the Expense Report or Pcard statement.
- d. Travelers who incur excessively high fares due to a personal choice to use an airline other than Southwest, or to use a nonstandard route when a more reasonable route exists, will be reimbursed only for the portion of the fare equal to the comparable Southwest fare and/or the fare for the more reasonable route.

### **4. Rail Service**

- a. Coach rail service may be used when necessary and economically practical compared to air and/or ground transportation. Reimbursement will be made based on the most economical, reservable service class available. Preferential or

other luxury upgrades are not reimbursable. Note that on Amtrak, all reservable seats are called "business class" and are permitted.

#### **5. Shuttle/Taxi/Car Service/Rideshare Service**

- a. Shuttles, taxis, car services and rideshare services required to conduct State Bar business are allowable expenses.
- b. Tipping is optional but should not exceed 15 percent except in the case of an extremely low fare value.
- c. Airport trips may be covered by a fixed flat fee, and the metered fare or flat fee fare can be selected by the traveler at the payment point, whichever is more economical. Reimbursements should be capped at the fixed flat rate plus gratuity if less than the metered fare. (In Los Angeles, the taxi rate between LAX and downtown, including the State Bar's office at 845 South Figueroa, is a flat fare, plus a surcharge for trips originating at LAX; travelers should not pay the metered fare between LAX and the LA office.)
- d. Travelers may also use rideshare options such as Uber and Lyft, as these services may be cheaper than traditional taxis. Any premium service offered (i.e. Uber Black or Uber SUV) will be considered a town car equivalent and subject to the limitations below. If tipping is included in the fare, any additional tipping is not permitted. If tipping is not included in the fare, it is permitted consistent with section (b) above.
- e. A higher-cost limousine, town car, or black-car service is not reimbursable unless a less-expensive service is unavailable.
- f. Employees traveling to the same destination are encouraged to share ground transportation whenever it is practical to do so.

#### **6. Transit, Tolls, Parking, and Fines**

- a. Public transit fares, bridge tolls and parking fees incurred by travelers on State Bar business are allowable expenses.
- b. Airport parking reimbursement will be limited to the onsite economy or daily rates available. Short-term, hourly, or premium parking expenses are not allowable.
- c. Parking tickets and traffic fines incurred by travelers will not be reimbursed.



## **B. LODGING**

1. When lodging away from home is required to conduct State Bar business, reimbursement for lodging expenses will be made for the actual cost of a standard single accommodation hotel room, up to the maximum authorized lodging rate (Appendix A) or the contracted group rate pre-negotiated by State Bar staff for specific group meetings.
2. Individuals engaged as speakers for State Bar programs may be reimbursed for the actual cost of a standard single accommodation hotel room per their individual contract terms, if applicable.
3. When the State Bar has not contracted for a block of hotel rooms for a group meeting or event, individual lodging accommodations can be reserved through the TravelStore, or directly with a hotel. If travelers encounter issues finding lodging, they may request the assistance of Meeting & Travel staff in the Office of General Services. Travelers should always check to see if government rates or other discounted rates are available.
4. When the State Bar has contracted for a block of hotel rooms for a group meeting or event, attendees of that meeting or event must stay at the contracted hotel to ensure that State Bar meets its contracted minimum number of rooms and does not incur fees for unused rooms. Travelers who choose, as a matter of personal preference, to stay at a different hotel, will not be reimbursed for lodging costs, and will be required to make their own reservations without the assistance of State Bar Meeting & Travel staff.
5. Contracts for hotel room blocks for group meetings and events must be initiated by the Office of General Services. This requirement does not apply to the Office of Admissions for hotel room blocks for the Bar Exam.
6. Lodging must be provided by either (i) a commercial establishment in the travel accommodation industry (e.g., hotel, motel, executive leased apartments), or (ii) a short-term rental through a centralized online platform (such as Airbnb) whereby the rental is advertised, payment for the rental is securely processed, and an itemized receipt is provided. No reimbursement will be made for informal stays at personal residences or other barter or in-kind arrangements.
7. Lodging expenses in excess of the current authorized lodging rates will not be reimbursed unless a prior contracted group rate has been negotiated with the hotel, or unless expressly authorized for some other business purpose. This must be confirmed by the submission of a [Hotel Authorization](#) form listing the room rate,

taxes and dates of stay, with approval from either the traveler's Office Director or the manager responsible for negotiating the contracted group rate for the event.

8. If an Expense Report is submitted without the necessary Hotel Authorization and the lodging rate is in excess of the authorized rate, the Expense Report will be returned to the traveler for correction, or reimbursement will be made for only the authorized maximum hotel rate.
9. The maximum authorized lodging rate is exclusive of tax, i.e., reimbursement will be made up to the maximum rate, plus tax. Note, however, that in some cities, including San Francisco and Los Angeles, employees of government agencies are exempt from the Transient Occupancy Tax on hotel stays. Upon check-in, travelers should inform the hotel that they are government employee and fill out an exemption form. Exemption forms are also available from General Services. Hotels will usually ask to see a government-issued identification card. Some hotels also ask for "travel orders" or a travel authorization letter from the agency; these letters can be provided by General Services.
10. For lodging through Airbnb or similar platforms, the maximum authorized lodging rate is exclusive of tax but is **inclusive** of cleaning fees or other service fees.
11. The State Bar covers the cost of the hotel room and necessary business-related telephone calls, parking, nonpremium internet charges and business center expenses. These expenses should be itemized on the Expense Report and not included with the lodging rate. Travelers should use their own wireless devices wherever feasible if more economical than using the hotels' services.
12. Room service, minibar charges, in-room movies and other in-room self-service items, and gratuities for such items as luggage assistance, valet service or housekeeping service, are not reimbursable expenses. Travelers, may, however, claim a \$5.00 Incidentals Per Diem to cover the cost of minor personal incidental expenses incurred while on Travel Status.
13. Any charges resulting from failure to cancel lodging reservations are not the responsibility of the State Bar unless the reason for failure to cancel in time is related to State Bar business or due to an unavoidable personal emergency.
14. For individuals not on Travel Status, lodging may be reimbursed only if there is a specific business need for the hotel stay, such as staffing the Bar Exam or an offsite meeting at the hotel.

## **C. MEALS**

### **1. PER DIEM REIMBURSED MEALS FOR INDIVIDUALS**

- a. Pcards may not be used for any individual meals.
- b. Per diem meal costs will be reimbursed at the authorized per diem meal rate (Appendix A).
- c. Per diem meal costs will be reimbursed based on the following travel status guidelines:
  - Breakfast: Traveling before 7:00 a.m.
  - Lunch: Traveling at 12:30 p.m.
  - Dinner: Traveling after 7:00 p.m.
- d. The meal per diem may not be claimed when a meal is otherwise provided (e.g. a State Bar catered lunch, conference meals, etc.).
- e. Tips for restaurant service are considered to be part of the per diem rate and are not reimbursable beyond the per diem rate.
- f. For individuals not on Travel Status, meal costs may be reimbursed at the authorized per diem meal rate if the meal was work-related and in conditions beyond the individual's control. Examples include required attendance at an offsite meeting or staffing the Bar Exam.

### **Catered Meals for Onsite Meetings & Events**

- a. Refreshments and/or meals may be catered at State Bar expense at State Bar onsite meetings and events provided that the attendees are not exclusively State Bar employees and the subject matter of the event is not routine internal State Bar business or staff meetings.
- b. The cost of catering for onsite meetings and events may not exceed the authorized onsite catering rates, which are the same as individual per diem rates in most cases (Appendix A). Onsite catering must be arranged through the Meeting & Travel staff in the Office of General Services to ensure compliance with policies related to cost, insurance and building access.
- c. Catering may be provided to employees in lieu of their individual per diems in instances where the need to keep the team together for a “working lunch” or other special group project is the most efficient use of time and expense.

The total amount of the catering cannot exceed the combined total of the participants' collective per diem amounts and the manager must ensure that any per diem meals are not claimed on any individual Expense Reports.

### **Alcoholic Beverages**

- a. Alcoholic beverages and corkage fees are not reimbursable expenses and may not be charged to Pcards.

## **D. COMMUNICATIONS AND BUSINESS CENTER EXPENSES**

1. **Reimbursement is provided for reasonable expenses incurred in making business-related telephone calls and limited calls to the individual's home resulting from the requirements of business; and for expenses such as offsite photocopying, faxing or hotel business center charges. These expenses are reimbursable whether or not Travel Status requirements are met.**
2. **Any additional roaming services needed to accommodate State Bar communications while an employee is not on Travel Status (e.g., office communications while on vacation) must be approved and arranged through Procurement in advance of travel.**

## **VI. EXPENSE ADVANCES**

- A. State Bar employees who have a Pcard **must** use it for all travel and business-related expenses whenever feasible, to reduce processing costs and maximize organizational efficiencies. For State Bar employees who do not have a Pcard, it is preferred that they use their personal funds for travel expenses and request reimbursement at the conclusion of the trip.
- B. Travelers may, under specific circumstances, request temporary travel advances by submitting a Cash Advance request (found in the Expenses module in Oracle Fusion) at least three workdays prior to the requested disbursement date of the travel advance. Travelers are required to comply with the State Bar's [Travel Advance Policy](#). The Check Request must specify the trip's purpose and duration, and be approved by the traveler's immediate supervisor, manager or office head.
- C. The amount of the advance will be based on the nature and requirements of the trip. Eligible expenses include meal per diem, lodging and ground transportation. Under no circumstances shall the advanced amount exceed \$250 per day.
- D. All advances are "loans" and as such must be repaid or offset by properly approved Expense Reports within 10 calendar days after completion of the trip for which they were

advanced. It is the responsibility of the traveler to advise the Office of Finance of any circumstances that will prevent timely settlement of the advance. Travelers must submit to Procurement an approved Expense Report, original issued receipts for all expense items, and reimbursement for any unused funds in settlement of the advance. Procurement will transmit the funds to the Office of Finance with the approved Expense Report.

## **VII. OFFSITE MEETINGS AND WEEKEND/EVENING MEETINGS**

- A. Meetings and events should be held onsite at the State Bar's offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles, in order to avoid the cost of offsite meeting room rental fees and, in particular, hotel catering, which is usually significantly more expensive than onsite catering. Meetings should only be held offsite if there is a significant business need to use another venue. Factors to be considered include: (1) the availability of State Bar conference center space; (2) the size of the meeting; (3) unique logistical requirements of the meeting; (4) the cost of offsite meeting space and catering; and (5) the proximity of the proposed offsite location to economical transportation and lodging options. Except as specified in (B) and (C) below, meetings anticipated in offsite venues require written documentation of the business need for an offsite venue, and approval of the executive director or chief administrative officer, before the meetings are scheduled and before any outside venues are secured. The Office of General Services will coordinate between the requesting office and the executive director or chief administrative officer to document the business need for and approval of an offsite venue.
- B. A documented business need and advance approval of the executive director or chief administrative officer is not required for Bar Exam testing sites, or for offsite events held in conjunction with law schools or similar organizations where there is no cost for use of the offsite venue.
- C. Contracts for offsite meeting venues must be initiated by the Office of General Services. This requirement does not apply to the Office of Admissions for Bar Exam testing sites; subject to the provisions above, Admissions may initiate Bar Exam site contracts per their established procedures.
- D. Offsite catering costs may require separate approval even if approval for an offsite venue is initially granted by the executive director or chief administrative officer.
- E. Onsite meetings should be scheduled for business hours whenever possible, to avoid extra charges that may be incurred to provide building services or staff services on evenings and weekends.

## Appendix A

### Authorized Travel and Catering Rates (Effective January 1, 2021)

#### Mileage Reimbursement

Effective January 1, 2021, the personal auto mileage reimbursement rate is \$0.56 per mile driven. The mileage reimbursement rate will be adjusted to mirror the reimbursement rate established by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service for business-related reimbursement. These rates are imbedded in the formulas of the online Expense Report and will be adjusted on the effective date of any rate change.

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