

VA Financial Policies and Procedures  
Non-Federal Source Funding (Donated Travel)

**CHAPTER 9**

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## 0901 OVERVIEW

This chapter establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) financial policies and procedures relating to donated travel from non-Federal funding sources. These policies and procedures apply equally to both domestic and international travel. Refer to Volume XIV, Chapter 6, *International Travel*, for additional requirements relating to foreign travel. This chapter implements and supplements those portions of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) pertaining to Temporary Duty (TDY) travel. The FTR is the Federal Government regulation that implements statutory requirements and Executive Branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expense (41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Chapters 300 through 304).

As a general rule, there must be specific statutory authority to accept funds from non-Federal sources. In the absence of such authority, the acceptance of funds may constitute an unlawful augmentation of appropriations. There are currently two statutes (5 U.S.C. 4111 and 31 U.S.C. 1353) specifically authorizing Federal agencies to accept payments from non-Federal sources for expenses incident to official travel. These statutes authorize Federal agencies to accept payments associated with training, meetings or similar functions that an employee may attend while on duty.

## 0902 POLICIES

### 090201 GENERAL INFORMATION.

A. VA employees under 31 U.S.C. Section 1353 are authorized to accept travel expenses (other than cash except as provided in 090202) on behalf of VA in connection with official travel to attend meetings or similar functions that take place away from the employee's official duty station and are of mutual interest to VA and the non-Federal source.

B. VA employees may not accept travel expenses for attendance at meetings or other events that are required to carry out a function that is essential to the agency's statutory or regulatory duties, such as an inspection, a hearing or a negotiation. VA employees may not accept travel expenses in connection with promotional vendor training or other meetings held for the primary purpose of marketing the non-Federal source products or services.

C. VA employees may not solicit payment for travel expenses from non-Federal sources, but they may inform non-Federal sources of the authority to accept such payments.

D. VA Approving Officials (AO) must approve the acceptance of travel expenses at least two weeks in advance of the employee's travel. Once travel has begun, VA may approve the acceptance of travel expenses only when a non-Federal source offers to pay the travel expenses that occurred after travel has begun, and as long as VA or the

employee did not have prior knowledge of the offer. Under such circumstances, VA employees have seven (7) business days to seek the requisite approval of the acceptance of the travel expenses.

E. VA employees will use VA Form 0893, *Advance Review of Offer to Donate Support for Official Travel*, in conjunction with the travel authorization to request authority to accept travel payments from non-Federal sources. Refer to Appendix A, VA Form 0893, *Advance Review of Offer to Donate Support for Official Travel*.

F. VA will report all instances of acceptance of gifts from non-Federal sources to defray travel expenses, as required by the Office of Government Ethics on a semi-annual basis.

#### 090202 AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT NON-FEDERAL FUNDING FOR TRAVEL.

A. VA may accept travel funding from non-Federal sources in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 1353, as implemented by the FTR in 41 C.F.R. Part 304. This is the authority for accepting non-Federal funds for Government or non-Government training, meetings or similar functions. VA employees will consult their Regional Counsel prior to invoking one of these other statutory authorities.

B. If the travel is for some purpose other than to attend a meeting or similar function, contributions from non-Federal sources may be accepted under specific gift acceptance statutes or one of the other limited statutory authorities. For example, 5 U.S.C. 4111 allows Federal agencies to accept contributions from tax-exempt entities to attend non-Government sponsored training or meetings. Refer to 5 C.F.R. 410 for additional guidance on accepting contributions, awards and payments from non-Government organizations.

C. VA employees may accept payment from non-Federal sources for accompanying spouses when it is determined that the presence of spouses at the meeting or similar function is in the interest of VA. A spouse's presence at an event may be determined to be in the interest of VA if the spouse will support the mission of VA or substantially assist the VA employee in carrying out his/her official duties; attend a ceremony at which the employee will receive an award or honorary degree as prescribed in 41 C.F.R. 304-1.2(c) (3); or participate in substantive programs related to VA programs or operations. The accompanying spouse will not be deemed a Government employee for any purpose other than eligibility for payment of travel, subsistence, and related expenses.

D. If a VA employee requires an attendant to assist with travel, the same rules as referenced in 090205 apply for donated travel. If donated funds are not available for the attendant to travel, VA is required to pay for the travel expenses. Refer to Volume XIV, Chapter 6, *Travel Under Special Circumstances*, for additional information.

E. Employees frequently confuse these rules with the Government-wide Standards of Conduct concerning gifts from “prohibited sources.” These ethics rules are found at 5 C.F.R. 2635.201-205. It is important to remember that the ethics rules cover *personal gifts*, whereas Section 1353 and other statutes authorize gifts to the agency. An employee who has been authorized to accept travel expenses from a non-Federal source may not also claim that the gift be accepted under the Standards of Conduct. Regional Counsel will review ethics rules implications as well as Section 1353 rules in evaluating requests for non-funded travel.

F. VA may accept payments from multiple non-Federal sources including non-profit VA Research and Education entities.

G. VA will credit the approved donated funding to the appropriation applicable to such expenses, except as specifically provided for by law. Any checks from non-Federal sources will be made payable to “Department of Veterans Affairs” and not the employee.

#### 090203 PENALTIES.

A. Employees may be penalized for accepting payments from non-Federal sources in violation of applicable laws. The most common mistakes made when accepting funds from non-Federal sources are:

- There is no advance approval for accepting donated funds, or
- Employees receive cash or checks from donors who are other than non-profit organizations.

B. In these instances, VA will require employees to pay amounts equal to the payments accepted to the General Fund of the Treasury. In addition, the employees will not be entitled to any reimbursement from VA for their travel expenses that the payments were intended to cover.

#### 090204 REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF DONATED TRAVEL.

A. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials, and their Deputies in Central Office, and Field Facility Directors will determine in advance, after consultation with the local Regional Counsel or General Counsel, the propriety of accepting payments for travel expenses from non-Federal sources.

B. VA may accept or authorize employees to accept payments from non-Federal sources for official travel to a meeting only when VA has:

- Issued a travel authorization before the travel begins (refer to Appendix B, Creating a Non-Federal Sponsored Travel Authorization);

- Determined that the travel is in the interest of the Government and relates to an employee's official duties (noted on VA Form 0893); and
- Determined that acceptance of the payment under the circumstances would not cause a reasonable person with knowledge of all the facts to question the integrity of VA programs or operations (noted on VA Form 0893).

C. The AO will consider the following relevant factors when making a determination to accept payment from a non-Federal source for travel expenses:

- Identity of the non-Federal source;
- Purpose of the meeting;
- Identity of other participants;
- Nature and sensitivity of other matters pending at the agency that may affect the non-Federal source;
- Significance of the employee's role in any such matter; and
- Amount and nature of the travel benefits offered.

After considering these and other appropriate factors, VA may accept or decline the offered payment, or may qualify its acceptance by limiting the extent of the employee's participation or the type of benefits that may be accepted. VA will document its acceptance of the payments on VA Form 0893. If the gift will be declined, no VA Form 0893 is required.

D. The Assistant Secretary for Management/Chief Financial Officer (ASM/CFO) or designee is the only official authorized to approve the use of first-class accommodations, regardless of the mode of transportation, when travel is funded through non-Federal sources.

E. The AO can authorize the use of business-class accommodations regardless of the mode of transportation when travel is funded directly by non-Federal sources, as long as the donated funds cover the entire cost of the ticketed fare and is paid in advance of travel ("in kind" payment). If donated funds do not cover the cost of the ticketed fare, or will not be paid by the non-Federal source in advance of travel, advance authorization is required from the ASM/CFO.

Refer to Appendix C, Non-Federal Sponsored Travel: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding donated travel.

**090205 REIMBURSEMENT FOR OFFICIAL TRAVEL TO CONDUCT GOVERNMENT BUSINESS FUNDED BY DONATIONS FROM NON-VA SOURCES.**

A. Payments will be by check or similar instrument made payable to “Department of Veterans Affairs”. Payments that are “in kind” (services or other benefits for travel provided directly by non-Federal sources) may be given directly to the employee. The employee and accompanying spouse or attendant, when applicable, may accept payments in excess of maximum per diem allowance when:

- The non-Federal source pays the full amount of the per diem expense as authorized by VA; and
- The expense paid by the non-Federal source is comparable in value to that offered to, or purchased by, other meeting attendees; and
- VA has approved acceptance of the payment from the non-Federal source prior to beginning travel.

B. When determined in advance of the employee’s travel that payment from the non-Federal source will cover some but not all of the employee’s allowable transportation and per diem expenses, the employee’s travel authorization will state that the employee will receive reimbursement for the difference between the authorized travel allowances and the payment received from a non-Federal source. When the authorized travel allowances will be exceeded, payment for actual expense is required in advance of the travel.

C. Employees (and the accompanying spouse or attendant, when applicable) will submit an expense voucher for all travel expense reimbursement claims which were not paid “in kind” by non-Federal sources. The submission of expense vouchers is required in VA’s E-Gov Travel Service (ETS) within five (5) business days after the completion of official travel.

**090206 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

A. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, other Key Officials, and Field Facility Directors will submit semi-annual reports of any payments received by their organizations that amount to more than \$250 per event, to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Finance, as follows:

- Reports are due May 1 of each year with respect to payments in the preceding period from October 1 through March 31; and
- Reports are due November 1 of each year with respect to payments in the preceding period from April 1 through September 30.
- Negative reports are required. RCS Number 03-0851 is assigned to this report.

In addition, reports will be submitted to the Director of the Office of Government Ethics. NOTE: Reports will be based on when payment is received rather than when travel is performed.

B. The Charge Card Oversight and Travel Policy Service will collect the information from VA travel offices based on the approved forms (VA Form 0893) and non-Federal source funding travel authorizations submitted in VA's ETS. The Office of General Counsel and Regional Counsel Offices may assist in reviewing the approvals received.

C. VA will submit a Standard Form (SF) 326, *Semiannual Report of Payments Accepted from a Non-Federal Source*, to report payments received from non-Federal sources. This applies to all payments that are more than \$250 per event for an employee and accompanying spouse. For purposes of the \$250 threshold, payments for an employee and accompanying spouse will be aggregated.

D. VA will use the following guidance when determining the value of payments "in kind" for reporting on the SF 326:

1. For conference, training, or similar fees waived or paid by a non-Federal source, the employee will report the amount charged other participants.
2. For transportation or lodging, the employee will report the cost that the non-Federal source paid or usually would have been charged for such event.
3. For meals or other benefits that are not provided as part of the transportation, lodging, or a conference, training or similar fee, the employee will report the cost to the non-Federal source or provide a reasonable approximation of the market value of the benefit.
4. For chartered, corporate or other private aircraft:
  - When common carrier is available, the employee will report the first-class rate that would have been charged by a commercial air carrier at the time the event took place.
  - When a common carrier is not available, the employee will report the cost of chartering a similar aircraft using a commercially available service.
5. Where no commercial rate is available for lodging, the employee will report the maximum lodging rate as established by GSA for CONUS, by the Department of Defense for non-foreign areas, and by the Secretary of State for foreign areas.

E. Reports will specify the following in the order presented:

1. Location of reporting facility.

2. Information on each event for which VA accepts payment of more than \$250 for an employee and/or spouse, including the location of the event, the date(s) of the event, and the nature of the event.
3. The name of each employee for whom such payment was accepted in connection with the event, including the employee's Government position and the employee's travel date(s) in connection with attendance at the event.
4. The name of the accompanying spouse, if applicable, for whom payment was accepted in connection with the event, including the name of the employee accompanied by the spouse, the employee's Government position and the spouse's travel date(s) in connection with attendance at the event.
5. The identity of any non-Federal source from which payment was accepted in connection with the event.
6. An itemization of the benefits accepted by VA in connection with attendance at the event, including for each benefit, a description of the benefit, provided that benefits accepted as a part of a conference or training fee need not be reported separately; the method of payment (payment "in kind" or by check or similar instrument); the individual for whom payment was accepted (employee or spouse); the non-Federal source that provided the benefit; the amount of payment.
7. The total value of the payments accepted for the employee and/or spouse in connection with the event, including the total amount of payments provided by check or similar instrument, and the total value of payments provided "in kind".

### **0903 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES**

[090301 5 U.S.C. 4111, Acceptance of Contributions, Awards, and Other Payments](#)

[090302 26 U.S.C. 501, Exemption from Tax on Corporations, Certain Trusts, etc.](#)

[090303 31 U.S.C. 1353, Acceptance of Travel and Related Expenses from Non-Federal Sources](#)

[090304 5 C.F.R. Part 2635, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch](#)

[090305 5 C.F.R. Subpart E -- Accepting Contributions, Awards, and Payments From Non-Government Organizations](#)

[090306 41 C.F.R. 304, Payment from Non-Federal Sources](#)

## 0904 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

090401 The Assistant Secretary for Management/Chief Financial Officer (ASM/CFO) oversees all financial management activities relating to the Department's programs and operations, as required by the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 and 38 U.S.C. 309. Specific responsibilities include the direction, management and provision of policy guidance and oversight of VA's financial management personnel, activities and operations. The CFO establishes financial policy inclusive of travel, systems and operating procedures for all VA financial entities and provides guidance on all aspects of financial management.

090402 Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Chief Financial Officers, Finance Officers, Chiefs of Finance Activities, Chief Accountants and other key officials are responsible for ensuring compliance with the policies and procedures set forth in this chapter and will designate one or more persons to answer questions pertaining to the preparation of temporary duty travel and permanent change of station authorities and vouchers. Under Secretaries and the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals may authorize actual expense greater than 150 percent up to 300 percent for travelers under their jurisdiction.

090403 The Office of Financial Policy (OFP) under the CFO's direction, provides Departmentwide financial policy and guidance. OFP is responsible for developing, coordinating, issuing, evaluating and reviewing VA's financial policies, to include those that impact financial systems, and procedures for compliance with all financial laws and regulations.

090404 The Regional/General Counsel will review VA Form 0893 and make a determination, under the facts presented, whether accepting the offered travel support complies with ethical principles, VA travel policies, and gift acceptance authorities. The review will take place only after a fully completed form is presented, and both the traveler and approving official have signed and dated the form. Incomplete forms and untimely forms will be returned without review.

090405 Approving officials will:

- A. Authorize only that official travel for travelers under their jurisdiction at least two weeks in advance of the travel.
- B. Determine if the travel is essential for the purpose of carrying out the mission of VA.
- C. Ensure all travel is authorized and performed consistent with the FTR (41 C.F.R. 301-304), VA travel policy, and any other agency-specific guidance relating to travel issues.
- D. Ensure adequate funds are available before authorizing travel.

- E. Ensure all travel is performed in the most economical and effective manner.
- F. Ensure VA's ETS is used to prepare, process, approve, and route travel authorizations and vouchers for official temporary duty travel, including the requirement to use the ETS for making reservations.
- G. Examine expense reports to ensure the justification, supporting documentation and receipts are attached to ensure that travel expenses for which reimbursement is claimed was performed as authorized and that split-pay was used to pay for all authorized expenses made to the card.
- H. May authorize actual expense up to 150 percent of the per diem rate for travelers under their jurisdiction.
- I. Ensure travelers under their jurisdiction complete vendorizing forms to receive travel payments electronically, file expense reports with electronically attached receipts, and comply with the travel card program guidelines.
- J. Ensure travelers under their jurisdiction submit all required information to the Regional Counsel to expedite the review process. Rather than contacting the Authorizing Official, the Regional Counsel will return all submissions requesting a review if the submission package is incomplete.

090406 Travelers will:

- A. Be knowledgeable of the FTR, VA travel policy, and any other agency-specific guidance relating to travel issues.
- B. Minimize costs of official travel by exercising the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business will not be reimbursed and are not acceptable under this standard. Travelers will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference for convenience.
- C. Ensure travel is authorized by the approving official prior to departure.
- D. Submit all required information to the Regional Counsel to expedite the review process. Additionally, there must be an indication of whether the offeror is a 501(c) 3 corporation. Rather than contacting the traveler, the Regional Counsel will return all submissions to the Authorizing Official requesting a review if the submission package is incomplete.
- E. Familiarize themselves with foreign travel requirements by contacting [officialpassports@va.gov](mailto:officialpassports@va.gov) at least 60 days prior to their departure date.

F. Arrange travel using VA's ETS, including reservations for transportation, lodging, and rental cars.

G. Cancel transportation and lodging reservations timely.

H. Ensure claims for exemptions of tax imposed on hotel accommodations are applied for official travel. Claims are listed on the GSA SmartPay Website (<https://smartpay.gsa.gov/program-coordinators/tax-information/state-response-letter>). Only certificates issued by the locality granting the exemption may be used.

I. Submit claim for reimbursement of expenses within 5 business days upon return to the official station, except that travelers in an extended travel status will submit expense reports currently, i.e., at least once a month in which the travel period exceeds 30 days. Local expense reports may be submitted monthly or quarterly.

J. Liquidate travel advances.

K. Comply with VA Travel Charge Card Program guidance contained in Volume XVI, Chapter 2, *Travel Charge Card*.

## 0905 PROCEDURES

090501 Procedural and other guidance to assist the traveler can be found in Section 0902 Policies or in the following appendices:

- [Appendix A: VA Form 0893, Advance Review of Offer to Donate Support for Official Travel](#)
- [Appendix B: Creating a Non-Federal Sponsored Travel Authorization](#)
- [Appendix C: Non-Federal Sponsored Travel: Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)

## 0906 DEFINITIONS

090601 Actual Expense. Payment of authorized actual expenses incurred, up to the limit prescribed by the Administrator of GSA or agency, as appropriate. Entitlement to reimbursement is contingent upon entitlement to per diem, and is subject to the same definitions and rules governing per diem.

090602 Approving Official (AO). A supervisor at least one level above the traveler who is entitled to pre-authorize TDY travel and approve related entitlements.

090603 Conventional Lodging Facilities. Hotel, motel, or boarding house.

090604 Donor. See Non-Federal Source

090605 Flat Rate. A reduced per diem rate assigned by an approving official when he or she can determine in advance that lodging and/or meal costs will be lower than the GSA per diem rate for the TDY location.

090606 Locality Rates. Maximum per diem rates prescribed for specific localities within CONUS.

090607 Lodgings-Plus Per Diem Method. The standard method VA uses to provide a per diem allowance to travelers. VA covers the actual cost of the traveler's lodging, up to a maximum daily rate, and provides an allowance for meals and incidental expenses.

090608 Meals and Incidental Expense (MIE) Allowance. A daily allowance provided to travelers during TDY trips to cover the cost associated with reasonable meals and required travel-related expenses (e.g., tips).

090609 Meeting or Similar Function. A conference, seminar, speaking engagement, symposium, training course, or similar event that takes place away from the employee's official station. A meeting does not include a meeting or other event required to carry out an agency's statutory or regulatory functions ( i.e., a function that is essential to an agency's mission), such as investigations, inspections, audits, site visits, negotiations or litigation. A meeting also does not include promotional vendor training or other meetings held for the primary purpose of marketing the non-Federal source's products or services, or long term TDY or training travel. A meeting need not be widely attended for purposes of this definition and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- An event where the employee will participate as a speaker or panel participant focusing on his/her official duties or on the policies, programs or operations of the agency.
- A conference, convention, seminar, symposium or similar event where the primary purpose is to receive training other than promotional vendor training, or to present or exchange substantive information of mutual interest to a number of parties.
- An event where the employee will receive an award or honorary degree, which is in recognition of meritorious public service related to the employee's official duties, and which may be accepted by the employee consistent with the applicable standards of conduct regulations.

090610 Non-Federal Source. Any person or entity other than the Government of the United States. The term includes any individual, private or commercial entity, nonprofit organization or association, international or multinational organization (irrespective of whether an agency holds membership in the organization or association), or foreign, State or local government (including the government of the District of Columbia). Examples of a non-Federal sources include:

- Non-Profit (e.g., VA Research and Educational entities, American Cancer Society, or a non-profit charitable organization as defined in 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3), which is tax exempt under 26 U.S.C. 501(a)).
- For Profit Corporations or individuals (e.g., Northwestern Memorial Hospital, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants).
- Foreign (e.g., Philippines Department of Medicine; United Kingdom's National Institute for Health Research).

090611 Official Station. The official station of an employee or invitational traveler is the location of the employee's or invitational traveler's permanent work assignment (see Volume XIV, Chapter 7, *Local Travel*).

090612 Official Travel. Travel under an official travel authorization from an employee's official station or other authorized point of departure to a TDY location and return from a TDY location, between two TDY locations, or relocation at the direction of a Federal agency.

090613 Payment In Kind. Transportation, food, lodging, or other travel-related services provided by a non-Federal source instead of monetary payments to the Federal agency for these goods and services. "In kind" payment also includes waiver of any fees that a non-Federal source normally collects from meeting attendees (e.g., registration fees).

090614 Per Diem Allowance. Also referred to as subsistence allowance, a daily payment instead of reimbursement for actual expenses for lodging, meals, and related incidental expenses. The per diem allowance is separate from transportation expenses and other miscellaneous expenses. The per diem allowance covers all charges and services, including the following:

A. Lodging. Includes expenses, except lodging taxes in the United States, for overnight sleeping facilities, baths, personal use of the room during daytime, telephone access fee, and service charges for fans, air conditioners, heaters and fires furnished in the room when such charges are not included in the room rate.

B. Meals. Expenses for breakfast, lunch, and dinner and related tips and taxes (specifically excluded are alcoholic beverage and entertainment expenses, and any expenses incurred for other persons).

C. Incidental Expenses. The following incidental expenses are part of a traveler's per diem allowance and are not reimbursed as a miscellaneous expense:

1. Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, parking attendants, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships, and hotel servants (foreign countries);

2. Transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the TDY site; and
3. Mailing cost associated with filing travel vouchers and payment of Government sponsored charge card billings.

090615 Other-than-Coach Class (Premium-Class) Accommodation. First class or business class accommodations on a train or airline.

090616 Reduced Per Diem. A per diem rate that is less than the maximum allowable and is authorized when there are known reductions in lodging and meal costs or when subsistence costs can be determined in advance and are lower than the prescribed per diem rate.

090617 Standard CONUS Rate. The per diem rate allowed for any location in CONUS that does not have a specific rate approved.

090618 TDY Location. A place away from an employee's official station where the employee is authorized to travel.

090619 TDY Travel. Travel outside the established local radius of the official station by an employee on official business, as authorized by an employee's approving official through a travel authorization.

090620 Travel Advance. Prepayment of estimated travel expenses paid to an employee in the form of electronic funds transfer.

090621 Travel Authorization. Written or electronic authorization to travel on authorized official business for the Government resulting in reimbursement for expenses on a travel claim (voucher). Travel may not be authorized on a blanket (unlimited or limited) authorization. Non-Federal Source Funded foreign travel may be authorized on a trip-by-trip authorization. A trip-by-trip authorization allows an individual or group of individuals to take one specific official business trip, which must include specific purpose, itinerary, and estimated costs.

## **0907 RESCISSIONS**

No Rescissions.

## **0908 QUESTIONS**

Questions concerning these financial policies and procedures should be directed as follows:

VHA  
VBA

VHA CFO Accounting Policy (10A3A) (Outlook)  
VAVBAWAS/CO/FINREP (Outlook)

All Others

Office of Financial Business Operations  
Office of Financial Policy  
Travel Policy (Outlook)

**APPENDIX A: VA FORM 0893, ADVANCE REVIEW OF OFFER TO DONATE SUPPORT FOR OFFICIAL TRAVEL**

 Department of Veterans Affairs <b>ADVANCE REVIEW OF OFFER TO DONATE SUPPORT FOR OFFICIAL TRAVEL</b>					
<p><b>NOTE:</b> This VA Form 0893 is to be used to accept a gift of travel under 31 U.S.C. §1353 or 5 U.S.C. §4111 and does NOT replace travel authorization documents. USE THIS FORM IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CURRENT VA TRAVEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.</p> <p><b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Please complete and have office head sign on page 2. Forward to Assistant General Counsel (023)(VACO) or Regional Counsel (Field). They will review and return form to you. You must then provide form to one of the officials with gift acceptance authority listed on the bottom of page 2. Upon completion of your travel, this form (with all necessary signatures) must be included with your claim for reimbursement of travel expenses (travel voucher). Faxing a copy of this form to the current VA travel management system is acceptable.</p>					
INFORMATION ABOUT VA EMPLOYEE (Traveler)					
NAME OF VA EMPLOYEE			POSITION TITLE		
DEPARTMENT/OFFICE			DUTY STATION		
INFORMATION ABOUT DONOR AND/OR HOST ORGANIZATION					
NAME OF ORGANIZATION HOSTING THE EVENT			NAME OF DONOR ORGANIZATION (If different from Host)		
HOST ORGANIZATION POINT OF CONTACT (POC)			DONOR ORGANIZATION POINT OF CONTACT (POC)		
HOST POINT OF CONTACT E-MAIL ADDRESS			DONOR POINT OF CONTACT E-MAIL ADDRESS		
HOST POINT OF CONTACT DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER EXT:			DONOR POINT OF CONTACT DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER EXT:		
INFORMATION ABOUT MEETING OR EVENT SPONSORED BY (DONOR) HOST ORGANIZATION					
NAME AND ADDRESS OF EVENT			DATE OF EVENT	TIME OF EVENT	
PURPOSE OF EVENT (Include 1, How this event will further VA's interests, and 2, how this event relates to your official duties)					
1.					
2.					
OTHER ENTITIES ATTENDING OR PARTICIPATING			ROLE OF EMPLOYEE-TRAVELER (i.e. attendee, speaker, trainer, etc.)		
DID DONOR OFFER TO PAY COSTS FOR OTHER ATTENDEES SIMILARLY SITUATED (e.g. if you are going to be a speaker, did donor offer similar travel gifts to all speakers at the event?) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO					
<b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Fill out dollar amount and appropriate Gift Code for each applicable category. Include amounts for spouse if donor has offered to support spouse travel.					
	GIFT CODE	NO. OF NIGHTS	COST PER NIGHT		
LODGING			\$		TOTAL LODGING \$
MEALS		SELF		SPOUSE	TOTAL MEALS \$
		\$	\$	\$	
TRAVEL FARES		<input type="checkbox"/> COACH	<input type="checkbox"/> COACH	\$	TOTAL FARES \$
		<input type="checkbox"/> PREMIUM	<input type="checkbox"/> PREMIUM		
		<input type="checkbox"/> 1st CLASS \$	<input type="checkbox"/> 1st CLASS \$		
GROUND TRANSPORTATION		\$			TOTAL GROUND TRANSPORTATION \$
EVENT FEES		\$	\$		TOTAL FEES \$
OTHER EXPENSES		\$	\$		TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES \$
<b>GIFT CODE KEY</b> 1 - In-Kind - e.g. donor provides airline ticket 2 - Check/other monetary instrument payable to VA 3 - Check/other monetary instrument payable to employee* 4 - Cash to employee* *VA employees receiving cash or check payable to employee must confirm that donor is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation.					<b>GRAND TOTAL</b> ▶ \$

VA FORM 0893  
 OCT 2009



## APPENDIX B: CREATING A NON-FEDERAL SPONSORED TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

### PROCEDURES FOR CREATING THE TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

1. Log in to FedTraveler.com
2. On the **My Travel Desktop** page, select the **Non-Fed Sponsored Travel** menu option.
3. On the **Travel Authorization** page, enter your travel destinations and make your reservations.
4. Select the **Complete Authorization** button to go to the **Financial Summary** page.
5. On the **Financial Summary** page, click the **plus sign** to expand the **Summary of Expense Categories** box and then click the **binoculars icon** next to the Expense Category the sponsoring Agency is funding.
6. On the **Sponsored Travel** page, enter the **Reimburse Agency** or **Payment in Kind** amount the sponsor is funding for each expense item listed.
7. Enter any helpful remarks in the **Additional Comments** field.
8. Complete the **Sponsoring Organization Information**. Required fields are indicated by a red asterisk.
9. When finished, click the **Save** button at the bottom of the page.
10. To exit, select the **Financial Summary** menu option.
11. Verify that the amount in the first line in the **Enter Your Trip Allocations** table equals the Allowable Total amount in the **Summary of Expense Categories** box.
12. If VA is responsible for any amount, reallocate expenses in the Trip Allocations table as necessary.
13. When finished, submit the Travel Authorization by selecting the **Submit Document** menu option.

## **APPENDIX C: NON-FEDERAL SPONSORED TRAVEL: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)**

### **Q. What kinds of travel expenses may be accepted?**

A. The following may be accepted:

- Employees and agencies may accept payment other than cash from a non-Federal source for all or some of the employee's official travel expenses to attend a meeting or similar function.
- Employees are generally limited to the maximum allowable travel expenses for regular travel under applicable GSA travel regulations. However, where the non-Federal source pays in full for the particular expense (e.g., lodging or meals), the allowable maximum expenses may be exceeded subject to requisite approvals.
- Employees may only accept first class travel accommodations under circumstances where VA could pay for the travel under the FTR and subject to the approval of the Assistant Secretary for Management.
- Employees may accept business-class where the non-Federal source pays for the full cost of the travel accommodations.
- Employees also may accept benefits that cannot be paid under the applicable travel regulations but which are incident to the meeting, provided "in kind," and made available by the meeting sponsor to all attendees, such as a sporting event hosted by the sponsor in connection with the meeting.
- A non-Federal source also may pay travel expenses for an employee's spouse when it is determined to be in the interest of the employee's agency, such as for an award ceremony or other circumstances the agency determines will support its mission.

### **Q. May the non-Federal source pay the employee directly?**

A. Not in cash, only "in-kind" unless the non-Federal source is a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization. The non-Federal source may either pay the agency directly (in which case the employee processes his/her travel and obtains reimbursement from the agency in the conventional way), or pay for the travel expenses directly so that he/she and the agency do not directly incur travel expense charges (in which case the travel expenses are accepted "in-kind").

**Q. How does accepting payment from a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt entity differ from accepting payment from any other non-Federal source?**

A. Under the authority of the Training Act (5 U.S.C. 4111), an organization that is private and nonprofit as described in 26 U.S.C. 501(c) (3) and obtains a tax-exempt status under 26 U.S.C. 501, may pay directly to an employee the travel expenses associated with training or the attendance at meetings. However, as required by 5 U.S.C. 4111(b) and 41 C.F.R. 304, the amounts that otherwise would be payable by the Government on account of the employee's travel or for subsistence, will be reduced by the amount of contribution or payment which is made by the private organization for travel, subsistence or other expenses. The employee must then report this amount on a financial disclosure report.

**Q. Must payments of travel expenses by a non-Federal source be reported on a financial disclosure report?**

A. NO. Since the travel expense is accepted by or on behalf of the employee's agency, it is not a personal gift to the employee. However, if an employee and/or accompanying spouse receives such a payment on their own behalf, rather than on behalf of the agency (i.e., when Section 1353 authority is not applicable), they may be required to report the payments as gifts on their financial disclosure form. In these situations, the traveler is not required to complete VA Form 0893 for the accompanying spouse; however, the employee may be required to report the spouse gift.

**Q. What should an employee do if a non-Federal source offers to pay some or all of the employee's travel expenses after travel has begun?**

A. An employee should do the following:

- If the agency already has authorized acceptance of payment for some of the employee's travel expenses for that meeting, then the employee may accept payment for additional expenses from the same non-Federal source as long as the agency did not decline to accept payment for these particular expenses and the expenses are comparable in value to those of other "similarly situated" meeting attendees.
- If the agency did not authorize acceptance of travel expenses from a non-Federal source prior to the travel, then the employee may accept payment only for the types of expenses authorized on the employee's travel authorization (e.g., meals, lodging, transportation), and the amounts of the payments may not exceed the maximum allowances stated on the travel authorization.

In either case above, the employee must request agency authorization within seven (7) days after the travel ends. If the agency declines to accept the payment from the non-Federal source, the agency must either reimburse the non-Federal source the value of

the benefit provided, or require the employee to reimburse the non-Federal source and then claim that amount on the employee's travel voucher for the trip.

**Q. What happens if payment from a non-Federal source is accepted in violation of the regulations?**

A. If a VA employee accepts payment or travel benefits in violation of the regulations, VA may require the employee to pay the General Fund of the Treasury an amount equal to any payment or benefit accepted. Where VA requires reimbursement to the Treasury, VA must deny the employee any reimbursement for the travel expenses the payment was intended to cover.

**Q. Am I required to create a travel authorization in FedTraveler.com when a non-Federal source will provide payment?**

A. YES. Employees who are authorized to accept payments from a non-Federal source must be in an official duty status, as opposed to excused or authorized absence, and must create a non-Federal source travel authorization. Refer to Appendix B, Creating a Non-Federal Sponsored Travel Authorization, for the steps when a non-Federal source provides payment for travel expenses.

**Q. Must a claim for reimbursement of travel expenses (travel voucher) reflect the payment by the non-Federal source?**

A. YES. Employees must file a claim for reimbursement of travel expenses per current VA policy.

Employees may not claim reimbursement for travel expenses that were provided in-kind by a non-Federal source. For example, if the non-Federal source provided a meal, the employee's travel reimbursement must be decreased by the amount that would otherwise be payable for the meal. Employees are not required to provide receipts for any travel expenses provided in-kind by the non-Federal source.

However, in addition to any receipt requirements for expenses to be reimbursed with VA funds and for expenses that will be reimbursed to the agency, employees must include a copy of the VA Form 0893 with their claim for reimbursement of travel expenses (expense voucher).

**Q. How do I determine the value of payments provided in-kind?**

A. Guidance on determining the value of payments provided in-kind is as follows:

- **Transportation.** Report the cost the non-Federal source paid or usually would have been charged for such event. For chartered, corporate or other private aircraft when common carrier is available, report the first-class rate that would have been charged by

a commercial air carrier at the time the event took place; otherwise, report the cost of chartering a similar aircraft using a commercially available service.

- **Lodging where commercial rate is available.** Report the cost that the non-Federal source paid or usually would have been charged for such event.
- **Lodging where no commercial rate is available.** Report the maximum lodging rate established by GSA for CONUS, the Department of Defense for non-foreign areas, and the Secretary of State for foreign areas. These rates are available on the Internet at the GSA Web site <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>, with links to the non-foreign and foreign area rates.
- **Conference, training, or similar fees waived or paid by a non-Federal source.** Report the amount charged other participants.
- **Meals or other benefits that are not provided as part of transportation or lodging, or a conference, training or similar fee.** Report the cost to the non-Federal source or provide a reasonable approximation of the market value of the benefit.

**Q. How does VA report payments of travel expenses by a non-Federal source?**

A. FTR 304-6.4 requires VA to report payments received from non-Federal sources that are more than \$250 per event for an employee and an accompanying spouse. For purposes of the \$250 threshold, payments for an employee and accompanying spouse will be aggregated. Information is provided to the Office of Government Ethics on a semi-annual basis.