

Non-Federal Travel FAQs

1. Q: Can Scientific Review Officers (SROs) authorize special travel arrangements for non-federal Reviewers?

A: No, refer all special travel arrangement requests to the appropriate SREA Division Program Manager

2. Q: Is World Travel Service (WTS) authorized to book three-leg trips for Reviewers without approval?

A: No, the approval must come from the SREA office. Once it's approved, then WTS will arrange booking their three-leg trips but the reviewer must pay out of pocket or reviewers may purchase their own tickets and claim the airfare expense for reimbursement by submitting a copy of their airfare receipts. Please be advised that airfare reimbursement will be up to, but not exceed, the cost of regular round trip tickets issued by WTS. For example, if WTS provides a quote of \$500.00 for a round trip tickets, and a Reviewer spends \$500.00 on the purchase of tickets for a three-legged trip, NIH will reimburse the Reviewer for the two legs of his/her trip associated with his/her attendance to the NIH meeting or two thirds of the total airfare expense, whichever is lower.

3. Q: What if additional sleeping rooms are necessary for a third night because Reviewers are unable to return to their base destination by 8PM?

A: The SRO should:

- Notify the hotel management and have the extra night lodging charged directly to the master bill account. The hotel should offer the government per diem rate. If not, complete an AEA memo. No additional M&IE will be reimbursed to the reviewer.
- Notify your Division's SREA Program Manager of the additional lodging rooms for the extra night so when the invoice is received it is reconciled for the extra night's lodging.

4. Q: What if the hotel does not have sleeping room availability for a third night?

A: The SRO should contact the SREA Office for assistance. If the government per diem rate is not available then an AEA Memo will need to be completed. If a sleeping room is not available at the meeting location and another hotel has availability then the Reviewer will pay out of pocket and will be reimbursed with submission of receipts.

5. Q: Can a Reviewer claim a car rental for reimbursement?

A: SREA normally does not approve car rentals for reviewers. However, if the reviewer chooses to rent a car, the \$195.00 Flat Rate for Ground Transportation and Miscellaneous will be the only reimbursement.

Q: What are the guidelines if a non-federal Reviewer wants to upgrade their air travel?

A: If the upgrade is due to a medical reason, the Reviewer may request Premium Class Travel through WTS by providing a doctor's letter to document his/her condition and approved by the SREA Office. If Reviewers want to upgrade their tickets for non-medical reasons, they may do so at their own expense. NIH will not reimburse Reviewers for such upgrades.

6. Q: A Reviewer lives in a state outside of Washington, DC Metro Area and would like to drive to my study section meeting instead of flying. How will he/she be reimbursed for his/her travel expenses?

A: The Reviewer will be reimbursed at the maximum of what it would have cost to fly to the meeting (quoted from WTS). The Reviewer will not be reimbursed for any extra hotel costs he/she incurs due to an extended journey. For example; if a Reviewer claims \$250 for mileage, parking & tolls, he will be reimbursed \$195 (Flat Rate) + \$55. Reviewers must submit a breakdown of their Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) trip to the SRO via e-mail and include the number of miles driven, amount paid in parking fees (if any); and amount paid in toll fees (if any). If the total dollar amount for the POV trip is equal to or less than the \$195.00 Ground Transportation Flat Rate, then NIH does not have to reimburse the Reviewer any extra monies. If the total dollar amount for the POV trip exceeds the \$195.00 Flat Rate, NIH will reimburse the Reviewer the \$195.00 Flat Rate plus the difference not to exceed the cost of regular round trip tickets issued by WTS.

7. Q: My Reviewer is coming into town for another NIH meeting. What does CSR pay for and what does the other IC pay for?

A: The IC and CSR may split the costs on travel and/or lodging.

8. Q: Can tickets issued by WTS be cancelled or refunded?

A: Non-refundable tickets are non-returnable and there is no refund if cancelled. When a Reviewer with a non-refundable ticket cancels his/her trip, WTS holds the ticket for a year to use it the next time the Reviewer travels to an NIH meeting.

9. Q: What is the procedure for making ticket changes as a result of inclement weather?

A: In the event of inclement weather or personal emergency, Reviewers should call World Travel Service (WTS) at 1-800-638-8500. If the travel reservation systems are down across the country, Reviewers may call the airline directly to make the necessary changes. Prior NIH approval is not required. Reimbursements will be made upon submission of receipts. To cancel flights please go to www.worldtravelservice.com.