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# Volunteer Meeting Reimbursement

*Policy and Guidelines*



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# 1 Introduction

Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI), as a US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, has a fiduciary responsibility to promote the public welfare and use its resources prudently, while ensuring that volunteers do not incur inappropriate or excessive expenses. Given that volunteers must travel on behalf of CLSI, the following policy and guidelines for travel expenditures have been established. Any deviation from this policy or these guidelines must be approved by a CLSI staff member at a director level or higher, in advance of the expenditure, whenever possible. Volunteers are encouraged to use their best judgment in the particular situation and maintain prudent reasonable use of CLSI’s financial resources while operating in a safe manner.

# 2 Policy Statement

Travel expenses incurred by CLSI volunteers shall be in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this document.

# 3 Scope

The Volunteer Meeting Reimbursement Policy and Guidelines are applicable to CLSI volunteers and are intended to assist CLSI volunteers with matters pertaining to CLSI-related travel while managing costs and maintaining efficient business processes. Volunteers may contact their staff project managers with any questions.

# 4 Objectives

The objectives of the Volunteer Meeting Reimbursement Policy and Guidelines are to:

- Ensure clear and consistent understanding of policies and guidelines for CLSI-related travel.
- Ensure that travel and other expenditures are reasonable and necessary.
- Provide guidance to volunteers on acceptable travel expenses.
- Ensure that adequate cost controls are in place.
- Provide a consistent approach for the timely reimbursement of authorized expenses incurred by volunteers.

# 5 Meetings

## 5.1 Committee Meetings

All CLSI committee meetings are authorized, scheduled, and arranged through the staff office. The Chairholder and CLSI are expected to maintain appropriate budgetary control, coordinate the arrangements efficiently, and communicate with all members, advisors, reviewers, and contributors who may have an interest in the committee’s activities and discussions. Committees are encouraged to meet at CLSI Committees Weeks (see Section 5.2) or at professional association trade shows or meetings where most committee members are already in attendance.

In some instances, to recoup the cost of meals and expenses for meeting attendees, there may be a daily fee to attend meetings. The amount of the fee depends on the actual costs that CLSI incurs for the meeting and will be announced in the meeting registration notices.

5.2 Committees Weeks

CLSI’s Committees Weeks are generally scheduled on a quarterly basis, composed of multiple committee meetings, and may include sessions covering various topics of interest to members of the health care field. Meeting attendees include CLSI working groups, subcommittees, and document development committees; the Board of Directors; members of CLSI; and other attendees, depending on the topics presented. Meetings are held at convenient locations (usually a hotel in a major city) for CLSI volunteers and members to maximize participation. CLSI may invoke a fee for non-CLSI members to attend any scientific or general topic sessions or take part in meals. Such fees will be announced in meeting registration notices.

6 Reimbursement

6.1 General Reimbursement

In general, CLSI expects member organizations to reimburse the expenses of their representatives serving on CLSI committees. In other cases, CLSI reimburses the expenses of committee voting members from the government and professional constituencies participating in scheduled meetings of the committee within the guidelines described here and in the CLSI Standards Development Policies and Processes. Advisors, reviewers, and contributors are not reimbursed. CLSI provides group travel accident insurance in the amount of \$50,000 US dollars (USD) for each volunteer member of CLSI committees.

CLSI does not reimburse expenses for attendance at meetings scheduled in conjunction with a professional or scientific meeting.

CLSI limits reimbursement for meetings, as described below, for voting members. Volunteers who wish to extend their stay to attend another meeting during the same Committees Week, but who are not voting members on the other committee, will not be reimbursed for the extra day(s).

When travel expenses are to be reimbursed, the meeting announcement issued by CLSI will include authorization for reimbursement, a copy of the Volunteer Meeting Reimbursement Policy and Guidelines, and an electronic Travel Expense Form. Travelers are asked to pay for expenses up front and request reimbursement by submitting the electronic Travel Expense Form and receipts. Travel Expense Forms must be submitted within 30 days of the meeting to be reimbursed per the US IRS revenue code.

All expenses denominated in foreign currency must be converted to USD on the Travel Expense Form. The conversion rate used to convert each currency must be noted on the receipt and must be from the date of the transaction or the date funds were converted.

CLSI ordinarily issues reimbursement checks within seven business days of receipt of the Travel Expense Form. Arrangements can be made to remit funds via international wire transfer. Please include wire transfer information in the *Special Instructions* box on the Travel Expense Form.

6.2 Travel Expense Form

Expenses should be reported on CLSI’s electronic Travel Expense Form. The electronic form is an Excel spreadsheet that includes formulas to tabulate all expenses when entered. Using this form eliminates the possibility of misreading handwritten numbers and introducing mathematical errors on paper forms. The form should be completed in full, signed, and accompanied by the passenger copy of the travel invoice, a copy of the hotel invoice, copies of original

foreign currency exchange receipts, and copies of original receipts for other authorized expenses of more than \$25 USD. Travel-related expenses greater than \$25 USD submitted without a receipt will not be reimbursed. Meal receipts are not required (see Section 6.3.3).

## 6.3 Reimbursable Expenses

Expenses generally reimbursed include transportation, lodging, and meals, as outlined in the following sections.

**NOTE:** Expenses incurred in a currency other than USD shall be reimbursed in full based on the actual currency outlay on the date of the transaction.

### 6.3.1 Transportation

#### 6.3.1.1 Airline Travel

The following guidelines apply to volunteers for airline travel.

- Reservations for **domestic** travel must be made via the most economic means possible (eg, Kayak, Orbitz, or airline website) or by contacting CLSI staff. Reservations for **international** travel may be made using a bona fide travel agency. Volunteers are encouraged to use CLSI's preferred travel agency for the most economical and efficient routing.
- CLSI reimburses only for the lowest economy/coach class fares; travelers should take advantage of "super-saver" or other promotional airfares when available. Nonrefundable tickets are required.
- Upgrades are not reimbursable.
- Alternative airports should be considered when the one-way savings is \$500 USD or greater.
- CLSI is not responsible for delayed or lost luggage. If the airline loses the volunteer's luggage, the volunteer should file a claim with the airline. Most airlines will reimburse for personal, essential, and reasonable items while the bag is being located.
- When travel to a CLSI meeting is combined with personal or other business travel, reimbursement is limited to the round-trip cost of the ticket as if no other travel was added. Any additional fare incurred with personal or other business travel is the volunteer's responsibility.
- When a flight is cancelled after the ticket has been issued, the individual should use the same ticket for future CLSI travel.
- As an alternative to airline travel, train travel may be more convenient and/or cost-effective. All of the above policies for airline travel also apply to train travel.

#### 6.3.1.2 Ground Transportation

Airport shuttle service, public transportation, or other convenient transportation services should be used for ground transportation. Taxis, limousines, or private car services may be used only if rides are shared with more than one volunteer and the total cost of transportation is equal to the cost of individual airport shuttle services. CLSI limits reimbursement for taxi, limousine, or private car service to an amount equal to the airport shuttle service. Individual taxis to and from airports may be used only when alternative transportation service is not available.

6.3.1.3 Mileage

When a private automobile is used, reimbursement is made at the IRS rate currently in effect at the time for CLSI business-related deductions (as indicated on the Travel Expense Form). Automobile travel is not reimbursed for round trips of more than 500 miles without prior approval from a CLSI staff member at a director level or higher.

6.3.1.4 Vehicle Rental

CLSI does not reimburse for vehicle rental when alternative forms of transportation are available. Prior approval for vehicle rental is required by a CLSI staff member at a director level or higher. When authorized, the following guidelines apply:

- Rentals should be returned to the same location to avoid surcharges.
- Rentals should be returned with a full tank of gas, whenever possible.
- Rentals should be compact or mid-size vehicles; for multiple passengers, a full-size car may be rented.
- Volunteers should only purchase the optional collision damage waiver (rental car insurance) when not otherwise covered by other insurance.

6.3.1.5 Parking

CLSI will reimburse up to the economy parking lot rate for trips longer than two days.

6.3.2 Lodging

CLSI will reserve a block of rooms at a special contracted rate. Volunteers are expected to reserve rooms within the CLSI room block before the published cutoff date. CLSI will reimburse room and tax only; incidentals are the responsibility of the volunteer.

6.3.3 Meals

CLSI pays a per diem for meal expenses at the following rates for travel within the United States, regardless of the expense amount and only when the meal is not already provided at the meeting. International per diem rates will be used for travel outside the United States. If a volunteer is paying for more than one person (eg, another reimbursable volunteer), the same limits per person apply. Names of the additional reimbursable volunteers should be listed when submitting for payment of per diems.

- Breakfast – \$15 USD
- Lunch – \$20 USD
- Dinner – \$50 USD

Per diems will be paid for the full length of travel including time in transit and in attendance at CLSI events. For US travel, specific meal per diems while in transit will be paid if not otherwise provided (eg, if arriving the night before a morning event, CLSI will pay for dinner on the in-transit day). For international travel, 75% of the departure city’s and 75% of the arrival city’s daily per diems will be paid while in transit.

**NOTE 1:** The rates listed above are based on the highest allowable US government rates, rounded up, at the time of publication of this document.

**NOTE 2:** With the use of per diems, volunteers are not required to submit any receipts for expenses related to meals.

## 6.4 Nonreimbursable Expenses

The following list includes examples of nonreimbursable expenses unless preapproved by CLSI.

- Hotel room movies
- Traffic/parking violations
- Companion travel expenses
- Dry cleaning and laundry
- Tips for hotel housekeeping service
- Fees for upgrades of airline tickets, hotel rooms, or rental cars
- Personal travel portion during a business trip
- Cost of additional group travel insurance
- Airline or train ticket changes
- Cost of car/limousine service when shuttle or other transportation is available
- Minibar charges
- Internet upgrades when basic Internet access is included in the room cost
- In-flight services on the aircraft (eg, Internet access)
- Excess baggage (eg, extra or overweight baggage) charges for personal luggage
- Rental car (see Section 6.3.1.4)
- Rental car mileage

Volunteers should contact their staff project manager for clarification.

## 6.5 Approval

Travel Expense Forms are to be submitted electronically (via e-mail) to the appropriate staff member.