SECTION EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM AND POLICIES

Overview

The Section reimburses volunteers for the reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in travel connected to their work on the Council and Accreditation Project Committees. The Section provides reimbursement on a case-by-case basis for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by participation in other Section activities. Reasonable and necessary expenses include long-distance transportation, local transportation, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses. Special rules, resulting in more limited reimbursement, apply for travel to the ABA Annual and Midyear Meetings. Special rules also apply for reimbursement of any non-travel related expenses.

Transportation

1. Reimbursement will be provided for the costs of transportation to and from meetings, both long-distance (e.g. plane or rail) and local (e.g., subway or taxi).
2. Reimbursement for the cost of transportation by private automobile will be at the rate recognized by the IRS, plus tolls and parking.
3. Reimbursement will not exceed the cost of economy class airfare plus related local transportation costs.
4. With respect to local transportation costs, volunteers are encouraged to use public transportation or complimentary shuttle services that are available and reasonably accessible.
5. Reimbursement for car rentals requires advance approval. Please contact Carl Brambrink.
6. There is no reimbursement for the separate and extra travel expenses for guests of a volunteer.

Lodging

1. Reimbursement will be provided for the cost of lodging in the Section-designated hotel for a meeting. Reimbursement will generally be for the night prior to the beginning of a meeting through the night of the day on which the meeting ends. Reimbursement outside that time window requires the approval of Carl Brambrink, Director of Operations (carl.brambrink@americanbar.org).
2. A volunteer staying at a hotel other than the Section-designated hotel or upgrading the accommodation in the Section hotel will be reimbursed an amount equal to the cost of lodging in the Section-hotel in the negotiated room-block.
3. There is no reimbursement for lodging if a volunteer is staying with family or friends.
4. There is no reimbursement for additional hotel expenses or services such as valet services, hotel shop purchases, recreational activities, health club fees, mini-bar charges, in-room movies, and the like.
5. The Section will usually arrange for internet service for volunteers at the Section hotel. If that arrangement is not made, the Section will reimburse the cost of internet access at the Section hotel.
6. While members may bring a guest to a meeting, there is no reimbursement for lodging expense in excess of the Section-negotiated rate at the Section hotel.
Meals

1. The Section will reimburse for necessary and reasonable expenses for meals en route to a meeting.
2. Except as provided here, there is no reimbursement for a meal where the Section has arranged for a group meal. Exceptions include meals when the volunteer arrives too late to join in the Section meal, or meals connected to Section business. Any such reimbursement is limited to reasonable meal expense, which generally shall be no more than $25 for breakfast, $30 for lunch, and $80 for dinner.
3. A volunteer generally may bring a guest to a group meal. Otherwise, there is no reimbursement for guests’ meal expenses.

Invited Guests

When the Chair of the Council or an Accreditation Project Committee invites a guest to join the Council or Committee for a meal, the invited guest is treated like a member of the Council or Committee for the purposes of these reimbursement guidelines.

Office Expenses

On occasion, volunteers will incur non-incidental office expenses connected to their work on the Council or Committee. Such expenses would include photocopying and express mail charges. Generally, the volunteer absorbs these expenses, but when they become significant they can be reimbursed with appropriate documentation and the approval of Carl Brambrink.

Limited Reimbursement for Annual Meeting Expenses

Because of the special rules of the ABA for travel to the ABA Annual Meeting, volunteers may not be reimbursed for travel, meals or lodging for that meeting. Exceptions are: (1) non-lawyer public members of the Council may be reimbursed in accordance with the usual guidelines set out above; and (2) Council members will receive a per diem reimbursement for the portion of the Council meeting and annual business meeting that is connected to the separate and independent accreditation business of the Council.

Reimbursement Process

Reimbursement requests must be in writing and on the form provided by the Section office. Receipts or vouchers are required for expenses of more than $20.00. Obviously, no one may claim reimbursement from the Section for an expense that is also being reimbursed by another entity. Requests must be signed, dated, and submitted to Carl Brambrink.

ABA policy and good practice require that requests be submitted no later than 30 days following the conclusion of the meeting. ABA policy prohibits reimbursement of expenses that are not submitted within six months after the end of the fiscal year (August 31) in which the expense was incurred.

Thanks for Abiding by These Policies

The smooth functioning of the Section and the Section’s budget is greatly enhanced when volunteers comply with these policies. Thank you for making the effort to know and to follow them.