**The Episcopal Diocese of Easton**

**Guidelines for Official Travel**

*for Members of Committees, Commissions, Agencies and Boards of the Convention of the Diocese of Easton;* *the Council of the Convention; and Officers, Employees, and Volunteers of the Diocese of Easton*

*as of January 1, 2018*

# PURPOSE

The purpose of travel guidelines is to promote responsible use of, and accountability for, funds entrusted to the Diocese of Easton for its governance and mission.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

* All arrangements for travel by plane or air must be made through A & I Travel. Our main contact for this will be Nancy Smith.
* Requests for reimbursement must be submitted immediately, or no later than fourteen (14) calendar days following completion of a trip or after incurring other travel and entertainment expenses. Processing may be delayed or denied for requests postmarked more than 14 days after a trip or expense or for requests lacking the necessary documentation. No Reimbursement will be made for expenses submitted more than sixty (60) days after a trip is completed.

* Each properly documented request for reimbursement will be processed within ten (10) business days of receipt in the Finance Department.

* All requests for reimbursement must be filed on the Travel and Expense Report and must be accompanied by original receipts or e-invoices for ALL expenses other than tips. Summary credit card statements and other copies are not acceptable.

* Expense Report forms are available on line at:[Travel and Expense Report Form.](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/forms-and-guidelines)

* For control and audit purposes, exceptions to any policy relating to reimbursement may be approved only by the Bishop or the Finance Administrator.

* All ground transportation requires a receipt from a licensed transportation service (including bus, taxi or limousine service). Uber and similar services are not included.

* All requests for reimbursement must clearly identify the dates, destination and the business purpose of the trip, meeting or expense.

* Travel and Expense Reports should be completed in a single currency only (preferably U.S. Dollars). If the U.S. dollar amounts stated on the Form are derived after converting from a foreign currency, please include a copy of the source document used for conversion. This document should clearly show the rate or conversion factor that was used in the computations. We suggest using the converter available at http://www.oanda.com/convert/fxhistory.

## SPECIAL NOTE

### Expenses that are generally subject to reimbursement

The following are usually accepted for reimbursement: transportation, lodging, meals, and certain miscellaneous expenses. Details are provided in these *Guidelines*.

### Expenses that are not subject to reimbursement

Any expenses not specifically addressed in these *Guidelines* as reimbursable must have prior written explanation and approval. Non-reimbursable expenses include but are not limited to the following:

* spouse's travel expenses (unless there is an expectation that the spouse is to attend or the spouse has been specifically invited)
* dependent care, pet care
* supply clergy to substitute for clergy on official business
* lost pay
* use of frequent-flyer miles
* additional travel insurance
* luggage purchase or replacement
* unofficial (personal) entertainment, in-room movies, barber and beauty services, newspapers and magazines, sightseeing
* medical services
* motor vehicle fines
* “no show” charges for hotels, car rental and limousines
* charge card late fees and expenses

## MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

When you are traveling on official business, you should travel by the most expeditious route, which will usually be by air. *However,* you may travel by personal automobile, train or bus when the situation warrants. *Requests for rental or owned auto travel* must be submitted in writing or by e-mail to, and be approved by, the Bishop or the Finance Administrator. All travel for which reimbursement is sought must be provided through licensed commercial carrier or your own vehicle.

## AIR TRAVEL

### Fare

Reservations should be booked as early as possible to take advantage of advance purchase discounts. This is typically 21 days for travel within the U.S. and 21 to 60 days in advance for international travel. The cost for a twenty-one day advance purchase coach fare for a roundtrip flight will be the basis for determining reimbursement amounts. When travel is in response to a “call to meeting” letter or e-mail, no expenses incurred in booking flights within 14 days of the beginning of a meeting will be reimbursed. The diocese has developed a procedure with A & I Travel, its official travel agent, under which A & I Travel will **not** book an itinerary for travelers (under a “call to meeting” notification) who have not booked airline travel at least three (3) weeks before a meeting without the traveler obtaining written approval Bishop or the Finance Administrator and providing that written approval to A & I Travel. Any flight changes and additional costs after such booking will be the financial responsibility of the traveler.

*All* trips should be booked as *coach fares,* unless approved in advance by the Bishop or the Finance Administrator. The diocese will pay for a seat when none is available to pre-assign “free” in cases where A & I Travel determines that a seat assignment is necessary to ensure prompt boarding of a flight. The diocese will not pay for seat assignments to improve an existing seat assignment or to upgrade to a special section in coach-Economy Comfort, unless this is the only seat type available and A & I Travel believes it is necessary. Travelers may, however, pay to upgrade their seats at their own expense. The diocese will pay for an aisle seat in coach, if the airline charges for all aisle seats. Also, the diocese will reimburse for one checked bag, if the airline charges for the first checked bag. The diocese will not reimburse for additional baggage fees. The diocese’s travel agency will choose the most cost-effective route of travel. Travelers wishing to deviate from the travel agency’s choice by choosing their airline or routing will be expected to pay the excess cost above the travel agency’s quote for airfare.

Charges incurred for itinerary changes made outside of these Guidelines or for the convenience of the traveler will not be reimbursed.

## TRAIN TRAVEL

All travel on Amtrak should be booked as coach fares on regional trains, unless prior approval is received from the Bishop or the Finance Administrator to book Acela or Business Class seats. You do not need to use A & I Travel to book Amtrak tickets; but you must submit a receipt for reimbursement.

## AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL

### Rented Vehicle Policy

You must have the prior written approval of the Bishop or the Finance Administrator in order to rent a car or van for official business travel. The diocese’s designated travel agent has arranged favorable rates with several auto rental companies.

The diocese’s insurance coverage protects against auto liability claims that arise when autos are used for church related activities. The Diocese of Easton is subject, however, to a $500 deductible if its traveler is deemed the “at-fault” driver involved in the accident. To protect yourself and the diocese to the maximum extent possible, the traveler should rent the car in the name of the diocese; elect the collision damage waiver; and/or confirm that your credit card company offers zero-deductible collision coverage (which may be comparable to CDW).

### Allowances for traveler's own vehicle

* Employees - The rate of reimbursement is the current IRS “Business” rate plus tolls and parking fees. Receipts for tolls and parking fees must accompany requests for reimbursement (regardless of the dollar amount).
* Volunteers - The rate of reimbursement is the current IRS “Business” rate plus tolls and parking fees. Receipts for tolls and parking fees must accompany requests for reimbursement (regardless of the dollar amount). *Please note that the IRS has standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business or charitable purposes. Beginning on Jan. 1, 2017, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be 53.5 cents per mile for business miles driven and 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations. Payments made to volunteers at the business rate are subject to be taxable for the portion above the “Volunteer” rate and a volunteer could be subject to having a 1099 issued by the Diocese if that amount paid in the course of a year was substantial.*
* Gasoline and oil are ***not*** reimbursable expenses in addition to this per-mile reimbursement; rather, they are a part of it.
* Total reimbursement shall not exceed the sum of direct airfare plus rebated ground transportation, except in situations where the use of an automobile, in lieu of another means of transportation, can be justified.

## LODGING

The *allowance for lodging* will generally be equal to the *standard business rate* (determined by locality) at a moderately priced hotel.

### Billing

*Individual Billing:* You must pay your own hotel bill and submit your receipt for reimbursement. ***You may not charge the hotel bill of another person traveling on Diocese of Easton business and expect reimbursement.*** The diocese will not reimburse you for such a charge.

*Group Billing:* If a group wishes to arrange hotel accommodations for members attending a meeting or conference, the diocese will accept direct billing from the hotel for room, group catering and audio-visual charges. All individual charges (e.g., room service, meals, telephone, etc.) must be submitted through an individual Travel and Expense Report. A *contract* for group accommodations must be submitted for review and signed by the Bishop or the Finance Administrator at least 60 days in advance of the meeting or conference.

### Length of Hotel Stay

The diocese will reimburse travelers for hotel rooms during the period of a scheduled meeting and any additional night required to accommodate public transportation schedules. A traveler may be reimbursed for an extended stay *to the extent that the traveler can document* that the savings in transportation costs exceed the additional expense of extended lodging (e.g., the reduced fare for a weekend flight exceeds the additional hotel room charge).

## MEALS

### Allowance

Travelers will be reimbursed for the actual amount spent for meals and beverages, not to exceed the U.S. Government’s per diem rate for the U.S. locality. Travelers must append to their Travel & Expense Form a printout from the GSA website showing the per diem rate(s) utilized. Data can be found at [www.gsa.gov/perdiem.](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem)

If the traveler is in a location for less than a day or is traveling internationally, the per diem rate does not apply. In that case, meal reimbursement will not exceed $10 for breakfast, $10 for lunch, and $40 for dinner.

Reimbursement will not be made for alcoholic beverages.

Original receipts for all individual meals must be provided. You may submit for reimbursement ***only*** your expenses. Please see *Miscellaneous Expenses,* below, for guidelines related to guests.

### Reimbursement

*Requests for reimbursement for each meal must be accompanied by a bill specifying as separate items food, alcohol, and tax.* This is a requirement of the Internal Revenue Code.

* No reimbursement will be made for meals, which are provided as part of the group arrangements for a meeting.
* When full or continental breakfast is included in the hotel rate, no reimbursement will be made for room service breakfast.
* The Bishop or the Finance Administrator must approve a request for reimbursement for the entertainment of guest/guests of the Diocese.

## MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

### Transfers

Reimbursement may be denied for taxi fares when shuttle service is provided by a hotel or conference center.

### Host/Hostess Gift

For a meal, or hospitality in lieu of hotel accommodations, a gift is permitted provided that its cost does not exceed that of a local restaurant (for a meal) or one night's hotel rate (for hospitality). Approval from the Bishop must be received in advance. For reimbursement, you must submit a receipt for the gift and note on it the name of the recipient.

**Laundry and Valet Services**

On trips of five (5) or more days, the cost of necessary laundry and valet services is reimbursable.

### For Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities who need special transportation, wheelchairs, scooters, sign language interpreters or aids for vision may request provision of these and other services from the Bishop or the Finance Administrator who will approve or disallow them on a case by case basis.

### Business Entertainment

The traveler may be reimbursed for entertaining a guest or employee of the diocese if such entertainment is for business purposes and is pre-approved by the Bishop or the Finance Administrator. Reimbursement for meals included in entertainment expenses must be within the guidelines for individual meals.

**Staff Acknowledgment:**

I have read the policy above and agree to follow this policy to the best of my ability.

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Name Date

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My office hours are 8:30AM-5PM Central Mon-Fri

Notes:

[Travel and Expense Report Form.](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/forms-and-guidelines) *Place on our website.*