

CSTE TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY
2021 CSTE Annual Conference – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Purpose

CSTE appreciates the efforts of those who travel for the organization. Travelers should be comfortable while traveling, understand all travel related policies, and obtain reimbursement quickly. At the same time, it is necessary to keep costs within reasonable limits and to follow consistent reimbursement procedures. Expenses not specifically addressed in these guidelines must be pre-approved by the CSTE National Office prior to incurring the expense. CSTE reserves the right to deny expenses exceeding reasonable or allowable costs as deemed appropriate by CSTE. Travelers that do not attend workshops or other sessions contingent on funding received will not be reimbursed. **Hotel and Airline reservations are not available at this time – communications will be sent later when conference activities are confirmed.**

The travel policy meets the IRS definition of an “accountable plan;” therefore, travel reimbursements will not be reported as income. A complete expense reimbursement form accompanied by receipts substantiating the amount, time and business purpose of the expenses is required within 30 days of trip completion or expenses may not be reimbursed.

Key Dates

Please read the entire policy for more information on key dates listed below.

- Hotel and Airline Reservations Available – March 2021 (**TBD**)
- Hotel Reservation Deadline (rooms may sell out before the deadline) – May 21, 2021
- Registration Deadline – May 24, 2021 (workshops may meet capacity before deadline)
- Airline Reservation Deadline – June 3, 2021
- Deadline for Travel Inquiries from the CSTE National Office – June 10, 2021
- CSTE Annual Conference – June 13 through June 17, 2021
- CSTE Travel Reimbursement Submission Deadline – July 16, 2021

Registration

Travelers sponsored for conference registration to attend the 2021 CSTE Annual Conference will be notified by the CSTE National Office. All sponsored registrations should be made using the personalized web link created for the sponsored traveler. Registration is not transferrable and should not be shared with others. Sponsored travelers should not purchase conference registration on their own using a personal method of payment. If registration purchased on a personal credit card is canceled, a \$25.00 cancellation fee will be assessed and must be paid by the traveler. This \$25.00 fee is non-refundable and cannot be reimbursed by CSTE. Sponsored travelers are encouraged to register early as space for some workshops is limited. If a sponsored traveler is not able to register for a workshop because space becomes unavailable, and funding is contingent upon attendance at this workshop, the sponsored traveler will no longer receive funding support.

COVID-19 Liability Waiver

All participants agree to the COVID-19 Liability Waiver included below.

Air Travel

Travelers are expected to book the lowest-priced, coach class airfare available of any airline that is within two hours of (prior to or after) desired flight time; to use an alternative airport serving the destination city; and/or to use multiple stop flights that may include layovers. Travelers choosing an airline for its amenities or frequent flyer programs will be responsible for the difference in cost. Although CSTE currently awards the benefits of frequent flyer clubs and hotel programs to its travelers, it reserves the right to change this policy. CSTE will not reimburse travelers for tickets purchased with frequent flyer miles.

Reservations can be made for sponsored traveler only. Reservations for family members and/or companions cannot be made through BCD Travel.

Costs associated with non-coach airfare (including business, economy plus, and first class) will not be reimbursed unless the CSTE Executive Director has a letter (from a medical professional if applicable) explaining the medical reasons or extenuating circumstances that require such service in advance of ticket purchase. Documentation of approval is required with the expense reimbursement form.

Airline Reservations **(Available March 2021 through June 3, 2021)**

BCD Travel is the official travel agent for CSTE, and airline reservations must be made through BCD Travel either online or by phone. Reservations made by following the instructions below will be charged directly to CSTE. To reserve the lowest ticketed price, reservations must be made no later than June 3, 2021. Reservations not made by this date are subject to a fare differential that may be the responsibility of the traveler. Attendees that register for the conference before airline reservations are available will receive communications first when reservations are opened.

1. **ONLINE – Booking Available Sunday through Thursday** at <https://www.concursolutions.com/home.asp>. You will need to create a profile before tickets can be made. If booking online, travelers are encouraged to make their reservation between Sunday and Thursday as reservations made online Friday-Saturday may not be approved and may require rebooking. Please see instructions below for registering and creating your traveler profile if you have not done so before. Please note that airline ticket approvals may take 1-2 business days.

OR

2. **BY PHONE – Booking Available Monday through Thursday** by calling (800) 778-0907 between 8:00am to 6:00pm ET. Reservations made online Friday-Sunday may not be approved and may require rebooking. Please note that airline ticket approvals may take 1-2 business days. **Reservations can be made for sponsored traveler only. Reservations for family members and/or companions cannot be made through BCD Travel.**

Creating a Traveler Profile

1. Click [here](#) to begin the registration process for your travel profile
2. Upon completion, CSTE's Travel Administrator will approve your access and you will be notified via email upon approval
3. Profile approval may take 1-2 business days
4. Once you have access to Concur, be sure to update your travel profile before attempting to book travel
5. Contact the CSTE Travel Administrator at 770-458-3811 or via email at travel@cste.org if you need assistance

CSTE will not respond to inquiries or changes regarding airline travel after June 10, 2021 at 4pm Eastern. In cases that require immediate attention after June 10, please contact BCD travel directly (800) 778-0907 during their normal business hours. For flight cancellations or delays, please contact the airline directly. For after-hours **emergency** assistance, you may call BCD Travel at (800) 251-9047 and refer to code W-7CD.

Airline Travel Restrictions

Travelers who are booking flights arriving prior to or departing after the approved travel days must also collect documentation on the cost of extending the travel dates. Travel will only be supported for the portion directly related to the CSTE Annual Conference. If there is an *additional* cost to extend travel, such as higher airfares, the traveler must send this additional payment to CSTE within one week of booking the ticket. The traveler must also include documentation on the fare differential. If there is no additional cost to CSTE to extend travel, the traveler is not responsible for any fare differential, but the traveler is required to provide confirmatory documentation with the expense reimbursement. It is the responsibility of the traveler to pay for all costs (within one week of booking the ticket) associated with extended travel and to provide documentation on these costs (if applicable).

Travelers booking flights independent of BCD Travel must be approved by the CSTE National Office before booking by providing a comparative chart of the airfares, such as www.bookingbuddy.com. The traveler is responsible for including documentation of approval and a comparative chart with the expense reimbursement form. Reservations not made through BCD Travel must be paid for by the traveler, and reimbursement for preapproved expenses will not occur until after the CSTE Annual Conference.

Upgrades for Domestic Air Travel

- An upgrade at the expense of CSTE is not permitted.
- A free upgrade or an upgrade at the expense of the traveler must be noted as such on the expense reimbursement form.

Sponsored Domestic Travel

As CSTE sponsored travel is supported by federal funds, travelers must use U.S. carriers at coach rates. Airfare costs more than the lowest available commercial discount airfare or customary standard (coach or equivalent) airfare on a U.S. carrier are not allowed except when such accommodations would:

- Require circuitous routing
- Require travel during unreasonable hours
- Excessively prolong travel
- Result in increased costs that would offset transportation savings
- Be inadequate for the medical needs of the traveler.

For the complete federal travel regulations please refer to OMB Circular A-21.

Sponsored project travel should adhere to the guidelines set forth by this policy unless the sponsor imposes greater restrictions.

Cancellations/Changes

CSTE will not pay for airline change fees unless the changes are due to an emergency or approved by the CSTE National Office prior to incurring the expense. Please also see the COVID-19 Liability Waiver. The traveler is responsible for including documentation of approval with the expense reimbursement form.

- When a trip is cancelled after the ticket has been issued, the travelers should inquire about using the value of the ticket for future CSTE-approved travel.
- Travelers can reuse airline tickets for future CSTE travel if airfare eligibility requirements are met. These requirements should be verified with the issuing ticketing agency.
- Please note that airline cancellations or changes may be the responsibility of the traveler.

Luggage Fees

CSTE will reimburse for one checked bag each way on travel requiring less than a one week stay. No other luggage expenses, including oversize or overweight luggage fees, will be reimbursed to travelers.

Lodging (Available March 2021 through May 21, 2021)

Travelers will only be able to reserve a hotel room through CSTE's exclusive housing service after conference registration has been finalized. CSTE will not make your lodging reservation on your behalf. Information on hotels will be accessible through the registration system after you have registered for the conference, but that portal is delayed until late March 2021 to better assess social gathering guidelines. Attendees that register for the conference before hotel accommodations are available will receive communications first when housing is opened. Group block hotel rates range from \$175 - \$215 per night + 14% tax. Hotels will assign specific room types upon check-in based on availability and special requests are not guaranteed.

Lodging Reimbursement

- The traveler is responsible for paying for lodging at the time of travel. Travelers will be reimbursed up to the negotiated group room rate (+tax) for lodging at CSTE conference hotels through the expense reimbursement process. CSTE will not reimburse room rates higher than the conference rate for stays at the CSTE conference hotels.
- If CSTE conference hotels become unavailable, travelers will be reimbursed up to the per diem rate of \$124 per night (plus tax) for stays at other nearby hotels (non-CSTE conference hotels). The traveler is responsible for identifying other nearby hotels. CSTE will reimburse for standard single occupancy rooms up to the per diem rate for Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Please refer to your travel letter for information on the number of nights that CSTE will reimburse.
- Many hotels have frequent guest programs that reward travelers with free accommodations in exchange for a specified number of paid room nights at a hotel. CSTE will not reimburse travelers for the value of free accommodations used for business travel.
- If a traveler extends their stay beyond the number of nights approved by CSTE, all costs for the additional nights are the responsibility of the traveler. Please note airline flights may be limited and travelers may be required to stay additional nights and these costs are the responsibility of the traveler.
- Suites and concierge-level rooms are not reimbursed. An upgrade at the expense of CSTE is not permitted. A free upgrade must be noted on the expense reimbursement form.
- For safety and security, travelers should always investigate security measures of the hotel room (e.g., door locks, fire exits, and alarm systems).

Cancellations

- It is the traveler's responsibility to notify either the hotel or the agency with which the reservation was made to cancel room reservations.
- Cancellation deadlines are based on the local time at the destination hotel.
- Travelers should request and record the cancellation number in case of billing disputes.
- Travelers will not be reimbursed for "no show" or late cancellation charges.
- Deposit of one nights' room and tax will be forfeited entirely if cancellation occurs within 48 hours of arrival date, which will be the responsibility of the traveler.

Hotel Personal Expenses

- Personal expenses incurred while traveling will not be reimbursed.

Meal Expenses

Travelers are given per diem to cover lodging, meals, and incidental expenses in connection with the performance of service to CSTE. Please refer to www.gsa.gov for a complete, up-to-date listing of per diem rates. Travelers are not required to provide documentation of each meal expense to receive meal per diem, but they must demonstrate that the trip occurred with a receipt, such as an airline ticket or hotel folio, that indicates the dates of travel. For audit purposes, this documentation must be attached to the expense report.

The federal per diem for meals will be awarded for the destination of the trip. The per diem for Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is **\$56.00** per day. Meals are not provided during the CSTE Annual Conference. Travelers will be reimbursed a fixed rate of 75% of per diem for travel days to and from the conference. Allowances for per diem are as follows:

- Breakfast (25%) = \$14.00
- Lunch (25%) = \$14.00
- Dinner (50%) = \$28.00
- Travel days (75%) = \$42.00

Example: A traveler receiving three-night sponsorship would receive the following per diem break down:

- Day 1 – 75% per diem (less any meals provided) for travel and one-night lodging
- Day 2 – 100% per diem (less any meals provided) and one-night lodging
- Day 3 – 100% per diem (less any meals provided) and one-night lodging
- Day 4 – 75% per diem (less any meals provided)

Per diem allowances may not be issued in lieu of service payments such as consulting fees or honoraria.

Airport Information

Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT), is located approximately 20 miles west of downtown Pittsburgh. Learn more about the airport, servicing airlines, flights and security at : <https://flypittsburgh.com>

Destination Ground Transportation – from Pittsburgh International Airport

Once you arrive in Pittsburgh, you will need transportation to your hotel. CSTE will reimburse travelers up to \$45 each way for transportation between the airport and the conference hotel. Transportation options include:

- The Port Authority of Allegheny County from Pittsburgh International Airport via the West Busway (28X Airport Flyer). The route runs to and from PIT, Downtown Pittsburgh, Robinson Towne Center, and Oakland on a regular schedule. Buses run every 30 minutes. Bus service is wheelchair accessible. For travelers arriving outside the bus service operating hours or those that may need special assistance, please contact travel@cste.org to discuss alternative options.
- *zTrip Taxi*
- Airport to or from Downtown Pittsburgh - Approximate Fare- \$40-45.00 one way, not including gratuity
- Uber – Lyft
- Please check the CSTE website for updates for available ground transportation options. CSTE is unable to make ground transportation reservations on travelers' behalf.

Destination Ground Transportation – Hotels and the Conference Venue

Pittsburgh has a variety of public transportation options, learn more at <https://downtownpittsburgh.com/visit/getting-here/public-transit-passenger-rail/>. Please note that ground transportation, other than between the airport and the conference hotel, will not be reimbursed. All CSTE conference hotels are within walking distance of the conference venue.

Departing City Ground Transportation

CSTE will reimburse mileage at the prevailing IRS rate to and from the traveler's home or business to the departing airport. As an alternative, CSTE may reimburse ground transportation expenses for the use of a shuttle or taxi up to \$25.00 each way to and from the traveler's home or business to the departing airport. If CSTE reimburses ground transportation for transportation between the traveler's home/business and the traveler's departing airport, CSTE will not reimburse the traveler for airport parking and mileage.

CSTE will reimburse parking for the traveler's personal automobile at the economy lot rate at the home airport up to \$14 per day.

Rental Cars

Rental car reimbursement is allowed if a drive trip is preferable to airline transportation. The number of days allowed will correspond with the number of days of sponsored travel. Car rental must be booked through Concur with Enterprise - National or Avis - Budget (up to intermediate size). Travelers choosing any car type other than that will be responsible for the difference in cost. Upon rental you must elect the Collision Damage Waiver. Should a traveler decide to extend the rental of the vehicle for days beyond their sponsored travel days, the traveler is responsible for the cost, including insurance for those days. If the insurance is not purchased 100% liability will be assumed. In any case, it is expressly understood and agreed that Traveler

assumes all risks and liability for all direct and indirect consequences and costs resulting from events occurring before or during the trip. Reimbursement for hotel parking will not exceed \$38 per day.

Personal Automobile

Mileage will be reimbursed at the prevailing IRS per-mile rate for business use of personal automobile. Other automobile expenses such as gas, oil, tires, etc. are not reimbursable expenses.

Prior approval of use of personal automobiles for 1200 miles (roundtrip) or less is not required. Automobile use exceeding 1200 miles (roundtrip) must be preapproved by CSTE and reimbursement (including hotel parking) cannot exceed the total cost of the most economical roundtrip airfare. Travelers must provide a comparative chart of the airfares, such as a “Booking Buddy” with the request. Travelers are required to submit documentation of approval and comparative chart with their completed expense reimbursement form. Reimbursement for hotel parking will not exceed \$38 per day.

Telephone Usage and Internet

Travelers will not be reimbursed for phone calls or internet use. All conference hotels provide complimentary in room Wi-Fi access to all attendees in the CSTE group block. Internet will not be reimbursed for travelers staying at non-conference hotels or not within the CSTE group block. CSTE can not guarantee the complimentary Wi-Fi provided in guest rooms will be sufficient to view virtual conference sessions and any upgrade in Wi-Fi access is at traveler’s expense.

CSTE Annual Conference Evaluations

All recipients of funding from CSTE to attend the CSTE Annual Conference must complete a conference evaluation form. These evaluations forms will be available at the end of the conference or online at www.csteconference.org. A link to complete the evaluation form will be sent to travelers at the end of the conference.

Other Expenses

Travelers requesting reimbursement for expenses not described within this document must obtain approval *before* travel occurs. The traveler is responsible for submitting documentation of approval with the expense reimbursement form.

Expense Reporting

- Travelers should complete the 2021 CSTE Annual Conference Expense Reimbursement Form. To receive this form, please contact the CSTE National Office or pick one up at the CSTE registration desk at the CSTE Annual Conference. Using an incorrect form may delay reimbursement.
- CSTE requires that travelers file an expense report by July 16, 2021. Expense reports filed after this date will not be paid unless approved by the CSTE Executive Director for reasonable cause. A request to the CSTE Executive Director explaining the extraordinary circumstances that prevented submission of the expense report on time must accompany the late expense report.
- The expense report must include a date and the traveler’s signature.
- Documentation should include receipts, name of the traveler, location, date, and dollar amount. In addition, the following must be included:
 1. Air/rail ticket receipt
 2. Hotel folio
 3. Receipts for expenses that exceed \$50.99 (meal receipts are not required)
- Submit your expense reimbursements to by email at travel@cste.org; fax at 770-458-8516; or by mail to:

CSTE National Office
2635 Century Parkway NE, Suite 700
Atlanta, GA 30345

Incorrect or Incomplete Expense Reports

Expense reports that are incorrect, on the wrong form, or incomplete will be returned to the traveler for corrective action and will result in delay of reimbursement. The most frequent reasons for returned expense reports include missing traveler's signature and missing receipts.

A correction and/or change to the expense report because of an accounting audit of the report will be documented with a correction note. For errors in arithmetic and disallowed items, notes denoting the errors will be sent to the traveler and an appropriate adjustment made to the reimbursement.

Reimbursement

Reimbursement will be mailed within 30 business days of receipt of a complete expense report by the CSTE accounting department. Additional time should be allowed for mail delivery. Checks will be sent to the address provided on the expense reimbursement form.

COVID-19 Liability Waiver

Due to its capacity to transmit from person-to-person through respiratory droplets, the government has set recommendations, guidelines, and some prohibitions which CSTE adheres to comply. In consideration of your participation of any travel for the organization and attendance of an event, you acknowledge and agree (1) the contagious nature of the COVID-19; (2) that you are aware of the existence of the risk of becoming exposed to and/or infected by COVID-19 from the actions, omissions or negligence of yourself and others, including, but not limited to, travel of both air and/or road, and participation in activities related to your travel; (3) understand that Covid-19's impact on individuals is varied and may have long term and/or serious implications on person's health including those that are currently known and those that are yet unknown and/or unanticipated and (4) you are fully and personally responsible for your own safety and actions while and during your participation and you recognize that you may be at risk of contracting COVID-19. You hereby release and agree to hold CSTE harmless from, and waive on behalf of yourself, your heirs, and any personal representative any and all causes of action, claims, damages, costs, expenses and compensation for damage or loss to yourself and/or your property that may be caused by any act, failure to act of CSTE, or that may otherwise arise in any way connected to your travel and attendance of the conference.

In the event of any injury requiring medical care, you, or your own personal health insurance will be responsible for payments of all medical costs. You further agree that you are not covered by CSTE's liability, medical and/or travel insurance and thus are responsible for obtaining your own. You agree to accept all financial responsibility for the costs related to any emergency treatment and/or travels.

The 2021 conference venue, Pittsburgh's David L. Lawrence Convention Center (DLCC), has committed to providing a safe environment to all attendees and has set an exposure policy for all staff, show management, attendees, and exhibitors. You agree to follow the DLCC policy as of November 2020, and subject to change without notice, in the event you suspect and/or become exposed to and/or infected by COVID-19. Information on the venue exposure policy is available on the Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau under the DLCC section at <https://www.visitpittsburgh.com/plan-your-trip/pgh-commitment/health-safety-practices/>.

CSTE reserves the right to request all in-person attendees to provide proof of coronavirus vaccination or a negative test for coronavirus approximately 24-72 hours prior to day of intended travel. Attendees may be directed to a third-party administrator for verification.

Please contact the CSTE National Office at 770-458-3811 or travel@cste.org for any questions related to sponsored travel or expense reimbursement. Additional 2021 CSTE Annual Conference Information can be found here: <https://www.csteconference.org/>.