

CSTE TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY 2014 CSTE Annual Conference – Nashville, TN

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.

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.

Registration

Travelers sponsored for conference registration to attend the 2014 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. This \$25.00 fee is non refundable and cannot be reimbursed by CSTE.

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; the use of an alternative airport serving the destination city; and/or the use of 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 at the present time CSTE 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.

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 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

American Express Travel is the official travel agent for CSTE and airline reservations must be made by American Express Travel by contacting 800-872-9954. In order to reserve the lowest ticketed price, reservations must be made no later than **May 30, 2014**. Reservations not made by this date are subject to a fare differential that may be the responsibility of the traveler. Reservations made via American Express Travel will be charged directly to CSTE.

Travelers who are booking flights to arrive prior to or to depart after the approved travel days must also collect information from American Express Travel on the cost of extending the travel dates. If there is an *additional* cost to extend travel, such as higher airfares, the traveler must send this additional payment to CSTE within 2 weeks 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 any costs associated with extended travel and to provide documentation on these costs (if applicable).

Travelers booking flights independent of American Express 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 by American Express Travel must be paid for by the traveler, and reimbursement 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 Project Domestic Travel

Federally funded trips must be traveled on U.S. carriers at coach rates. Airfare costs in excess of 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; and
- 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. 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.
- Unused airline tickets or flight coupons have a cash value and therefore must not be discarded or destroyed.
- To expedite refunds, unused or partially used airline tickets must be returned immediately to the travel agency that issued the ticket.
- Unused tickets must not be sent to the airline unless they were issued directly from the airline. Contact the airline for their return procedures and requirements.
- Travelers should not include unused tickets with their Expense reports.
- Please note that airline cancellations or changes may be the responsibility of the traveler.

CSTE will not respond to inquiries or changes regarding airline travel after June 19, 2014. In cases that require attention after June 19, 2014, please contact American Express Travel directly.

Luggage Fees

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

Lodging

The Renaissance Nashville Hotel has been selected as the primary hotel for the conference. The Renaissance Nashville Hotel is next door to the Convention Center, where the CSTE Annual Conference is located.

All hotels provide *complimentary* internet access to all attendees in the group block. The deadline for reservations at the group rate is **May 30, 2014**. However, if the group block sells out for any or all nights of the conference prior to the deadline, then the group rate will no longer be available. The hotel may also sell out even after the CSTE group block sells out. To ensure that the traveler obtains a reservation at the conference hotel, it is recommended that the traveler make a reservation as early as possible. CSTE does not provide ground transportation between hotels in the area and the Nashville Convention Center, and expenses associated with ground transportation (except for travel to and from the airport) in Nashville will not be reimbursed.

Travelers should directly contact the hotel in the CSTE group block to make their reservation. Reservations may be made online at https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=10853265. CSTE will not make lodging reservations on behalf of the traveler. If calling by phone, please indicate that the traveler is part of the "CSTE Annual Conference" to receive the group rate. Please check the CSTE website periodically at <http://www.csteconference.org/> for hotel updates and availability.

CSTE Conference Hotel

Renaissance Nashville Hotel

\$169 per night plus tax at the group rate

611 Commerce Street

Nashville, TN 37203

Telephone (615) 255-8400

Fax (615) 255-8202

Hotel Information: <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/bnash-renaissance-nashville-hotel/>

Online Reservations: https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=10853265

Lodging Reimbursement

- Travelers are expected to make their own travel reservations. CSTE will not make reservations on behalf of the traveler.
- Travelers will be reimbursed up to the negotiated group room rate (+tax) for lodging at the CSTE conference hotels as indicated above.
- If CSTE conference hotels become unavailable, travelers will be reimbursed up to the per diem rate of \$122.00 per night (plus tax) for stays at other nearby hotels (non-CSTE conference hotels). The traveler is responsible for identifying nearby hotels. CSTE will not reimburse room rates higher than the conference rate at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel.
- Please refer to your travel letter for information on the number of nights that CSTE will reimburse.
- The deadline to make a reservation to receive the group rate is May 30, 2014. However, sponsored travelers should make reservations as early as possible, as the group rate is expected to sell out prior to May 30, 2014.
- 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.
- Suites and concierge-level rooms are not reimbursed. 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).

Hotel Upgrades

- An upgrade at the expense of CSTE is not permitted.

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" charges.

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 who use per diem allowances do not have to substantiate each meal expense, 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 Nashville, TN is **\$66.00** per day. Per diem must be accounted for on the travel reimbursement, less meals provided by the travel destination or host and partial day travel. A continental breakfast is no longer provided on Sunday through Wednesday at the CSTE Annual Conference. All provided meals (if applicable) must be deducted from the traveler's expense reimbursement form, even if the traveler chooses not to eat that meal. Travelers will be reimbursed a fixed rate of 75% of per diem for travel days to and from the conference (less any meals provided, if applicable). Allowances for per diem are as follows:

- Breakfast (25%) = \$16.50
- Lunch (25%) = \$16.50
- Dinner (50%) = \$33.00
- Travel days (75%) = \$49.50

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

Destination Ground Transportation

Once you arrive at the Nashville International Airport, you will need transportation to your hotel. The following is a list of options to help plan your way around Music City.

Shuttle Service

Rates: \$14 One Way and \$25 Roundtrip

The Gray Line Airport Express services the downtown and West End hotels of Nashville from the Nashville International Airport. Service begins at 5:00 am and runs until 11:00 pm. Departs occur every 15-20 minutes from the airport and every 30 minutes from most hotels. Reservations are not required but recommended for the service from the airport. Learn more: <http://graylinetn.com/>.

Public Transportation

For just \$1.70, you can ride the Nashville MTA's route 18 Airport/Elm Hill Pike bus between the Nashville International Airport and Downtown Music City. The bus stop at the airport is on level 1 in the ground transportation area. For trips to the airport, customers should board at [Music City Central](#) in downtown Nashville on Deaderick Street, between 4th and 5th Avenues North. Learn more: <http://www.nashvillemta.org/Nashville-MTA-airport-service.asp>.

Taxi

You may also hail a taxi from the ground level of the airport. The rate is a \$25.00 one-way flat rate from the Airport to the Nashville downtown area.

If sponsorship includes reimbursement for ground transportation within the destination city, sponsored travelers will be reimbursed up to \$25 roundtrip. If ground transportation expenses exceed \$25.00 roundtrip, only \$25.00 per person roundtrip will be reimbursed. Sponsored travelers are responsible for making their own arrangements to the conference venue site. Please check the CSTE website for updates for available ground transportation options. CSTE is unable to make ground transportation reservations on travelers' behalf.

Please see the CSTE website at <http://www.csteconference.org/> for updates and further information on ground transportation.

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 \$10 per day.

Rental Cars

Rental car expenses are not reimbursable unless the traveler receives prior approval from CSTE. The traveler is responsible for submitting documentation of approval with expense reimbursement form.

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.

Use of personal automobiles for trips exceeding 600 miles round trip is not permissible without prior approval from CSTE. Travelers must provide a comparative chart of the comparable airfares, such as "Booking Buddy," with the request. Documentation of approval and comparative chart is required with expense reimbursement form. In all cases, the maximum amount of reimbursement (including parking fees at the conference hotel) will be the total cost of the most economical airfare (based on round trip in most cases).

Telephone Usage

Travelers will not be reimbursed for phone calls or internet use. All conference hotels provide complimentary internet access to all attendees in the group block.

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 conclusion of the conference or online at www.csteconference.org. A link to complete the evaluation form will be sent to travelers at the conclusion 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 2014 CSTE Annual Conference Expense Reimbursement Form. To receive this form, please contact the CSTE National Office.
- CSTE requires that travelers file an expense report within 30 days of trip completion (**July 28, 2014**). Expense reports filed after 60 days 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 tolls and parking if total costs are \$25.00 or greater
- Electronic (travel@cste.org) and fax copies (770- 234-5268) will be accepted.

Incorrect or Incomplete Expense Reports

Expense reports that are incorrect or incomplete will be returned to the traveler for corrective action and may 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 as a result of an accounting audit of the report will be documented with a correction note. For errors in arithmetic and disallowed items, a correction note denoting the errors will be sent to the traveler and an appropriate adjustment made to the reimbursement.

Reimbursement

Reimbursement will occur within 30 working days of receipt by the CSTE Accounting Department. Checks will be sent to the address provided on expense reimbursement form.

Please contact the CSTE National Office at 770-458-3811 or travel@cste.org for any questions related to sponsored travel or expense reimbursement.