



Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists

CSTE TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY
2018 CSTE Annual Conference – West Palm Beach, Florida

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.

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 2018 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.

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 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 18, 2018**. 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. When contacted by CSTE or American Express Travel to confirm ticket requests, sponsored travelers are required to respond within 24 hours during CSTE operating hours or a change in fare prices could occur at the expense of the traveler.



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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 1 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 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.
- 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 7, 2018 at 12pm Eastern. In cases that require attention after June 7, 2018 at 12pm Eastern, please contact American Express Travel directly (800-872-9954) during their normal business offices. For flight cancellations or delays, please contact the airline directly.



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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

Hotel Accommodations

Please visit the CSTE Annual Conference website at <http://csteconference.org/2018/> or click [here](#) for the full list of available conference hotels. **Travelers will only be able to reserve a hotel room once conference registration has been finalized. Availability is limited and conference hotels will most likely sell out so we encourage traveler to register and make lodging reservations as soon as possible.** CSTE will not make your lodging reservation on your behalf. Travelers should check the CSTE website frequently for lodging updates. Hotel rates are for standard single occupancy rooms exclusive of state and local taxes.

Commented [JL1]: Modified this language based on the new reservation system.

Lodging Reimbursement

- Travelers will be reimbursed up to the negotiated group room rate (+tax) for lodging at the CSTE conference hotels. 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 \$110 per night (plus tax) for stays at other nearby hotels (non-CSTE conference hotels). The traveler may be responsible for identifying nearby hotels. CSTE will reimburse for standard single occupancy rooms up to the per diem rate for West Palm Beach.
- Please refer to your travel letter for information on the number of nights that CSTE will reimburse.
- Some of the CSTE conference hotels are not walkable and will require a shuttle. However, a shuttle is not provided for all conference hotels. Please be sure to review available hotels and shuttle options on the CSTE website. Travelers that are unable to use CSTE shuttles should contact travel@cste.org as soon as possible for assistance in reserving a hotel room that accommodate any special needs the traveler has.
- 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).

Commented [JL2]: Suggestions for language.

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.



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Special Assistance

Any travelers that are unable to ride a conference shuttle between the hotel and the meeting venue should contact travel@cste.org for assistance in making a lodging reservation.

Commented [JL3]: Does this make sense? Added in multiple spots just in case.

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 W. Palm Beach is **\$59.00** 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%) = \$14.75
- Lunch (25%) = \$14.75
- Dinner (50%) = \$29.50
- Travel days (75%) = \$44.25

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

Airport Information

Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) is located approximately 4 miles from the Palm Beach County Convention Center. Learn more about the airport, servicing airlines, flights and security at <http://www.pbia.org/>

Commented [JL4]: Beverly review

Destination Ground Transportation – from Palm Beach International Airport

Once you arrive in West Palm Beach, you will need transportation to your hotel.

- Hotels in the group block will provide complimentary shuttle service to and from the Palm Beach International Airport during airport operating hours. Schedules vary by hotel and attendees should verify schedule at their selected hotel. CSTE encourages sponsored travelers to utilize this complimentary service.
- If complimentary service is not available or for travelers with late night arrivals, CSTE will reimburse travelers up to \$20 round trip for transportation between the conference hotels and the airport. If ground transportation expenses exceed \$20 roundtrip, only \$20 per person roundtrip will be reimbursed.
- Please check the CSTE website for updates for available ground transportation options. CSTE is unable to make ground transportation reservations on travelers' behalf.

Commented [JL5]: Beverly review

Destination Ground Transportation – Hotels and the Conference Venue

- A CSTE shuttle will be provided for *select* hotels for transportation between the hotel and the conference venue. Shuttle schedules will vary by hotel and attendees are responsible for verifying schedules to their selected hotel.
- Ground transportation, other than between the airport and the conference hotel, will not be reimbursed.

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



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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.

Commented [JL6]: Increased based on Atlanta's economy rate

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.

Prior approval of use of personal automobiles for 600 miles (roundtrip) or less is not required. Automobile use exceeding 600 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 \$10 per day.

Telephone Usage and Internet

Travelers will not be reimbursed for phone calls or internet use. All conference hotels provide complimentary in room internet 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.

Commented [JL7]: Confirm

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 correct 2018 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. Using an incorrect form may delay reimbursement.
- CSTE requires that travelers file an expense report by **July 16, 2018**. 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:
 - Air/rail ticket receipt
 - Hotel folio



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3. Receipts for expenses that exceed \$50.99

- Electronic (travel@cste.org) and fax copies (770-234-5268) will be accepted.

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 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 be mailed within 30 working 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 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.