

California Lawyers Association
Travel and Business-Related Expense Policy: Volunteers and Staff
REVISED AUGUST 7, 2022

The California Lawyers Association greatly appreciates the service of its employees and many volunteers, and is able to reimburse reasonable, documented travel expenses incurred for California Lawyers Association business, pursuant to this policy. As to volunteers, we do have a limited travel budget, so if your employer or another source is able to cover the cost of your travel expenses while providing volunteer services to the California Lawyers Association, we strongly encourage you to look to these sources first for reimbursement as it will allow us to stretch our budget and devote additional resources to the important work of the California Lawyers Association.

I. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy document sets forth the standards and procedures used to identify and reimburse legitimate travel and business-related expenses incurred while conducting necessary, authorized business of the California Lawyers Association.

II. SCOPE

This policy covers all employees and volunteers of California Lawyers Association, including but not limited to, the California Lawyers Association Board, committee members, speakers, invited guests, other volunteers, and contractors, who incur or seek reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while conducting California Lawyers Association business. Authorization from the Executive Director or his /her designee and the Section Chair, for Section-related travel, is required to make exceptions to these policies.

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. This document addresses the most common scenarios and issues for travel and business-related expenses, but it is not necessarily exhaustive. For any scenario or issue not specifically addressed, the California Lawyers Association's Executive Director or his /her designee will interpret and apply this policy and any other applicable California Lawyers Association policies. In addition to the specific policy guidelines described here, travel and other business-related expenses must be reasonable, as compared to other similar travelers' expenses or other historical travel benchmarks. California Lawyers Association staff reserve the right to reduce or deny a request for reimbursement or payment for any expense that is deemed either not in compliance with policy or otherwise unreasonable.
- B. Travelers should travel economically, taking into account both monetary and time costs.
- C. Each traveler is responsible for his /her own expenses and should not pay, or seek reimbursement, for the expenses of other employees, volunteers or contractors. There will be no reimbursement for the expenses of a spouse, guest or pet who accompanies a traveler on California Lawyers Association business.
- D. Individual business-related travel for any out of state destination requires express prior written approval from the Executive Director or his /her designee. Requests for reimbursement should be made after the actual travel has occurred and include all out-of-pocket expenses, regardless of when tickets were purchased, or transactions occurred.
- E. Claims for payment or reimbursement must be truthful and accurate and include only allowable expenses. Intentional misrepresentation on a payment request or reimbursement claim shall be subject to those consequences permitted by law.

- F. Volunteers may incur expenses for their own travel in accordance with this policy. Volunteers are not allowed to make other purchases or render or engage services for the California Lawyers Association. All purchases or services must be initiated by California Lawyers Association employees per the CLA Procurement Policy.

IV. REPORTING GUIDELINES

A. EXPENSE REPORT

1. Policy Compliance: Expense reports are reviewed for accuracy, completeness and policy compliance by California Lawyers Association staff before they are sent to Gilbert Associates (CPA) for processing and payment. California Lawyers Association staff reserve the right to reduce or deny a request for reimbursement for any expense that is deemed either not in compliance with policy or otherwise unreasonable.
2. Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of travelers to submit to their California Lawyers Association staff liaison a completed, legible Expense Report with supporting documentation for approval. Any additional explanation or justification memos required must be initialed by the traveler's staff liaison, unless noted otherwise. It is the responsibility of approvers to assure that Expense Reports submitted for approval are complete and accurate, comply with this policy, and are timely forwarded to the California Lawyers Association official CPA.
3. Expense Reporting: The Expense Report form (example: Appendix A) is used to reimburse individuals for out-of-pocket travel expenses while conducting business for the California Lawyers Association. Reimbursement will be made to the individual traveler and not to the firm. Independent contractors with allowances for travel expense reimbursements should follow the terms of their specific contracts.
4. Travel Dates: Travelers can use the Expense Report for a maximum of two trips conducted within any seven consecutive calendar days. If a single trip goes over seven consecutive calendar days, a separate Expense Report is required.
5. Expense Report Receipts: Receipts for expenses over \$25 other than per diem meals should be attached to the Expense Report. Where receipts for ground and public transportation are not provided by the carrier, or contain no itemized trip detail, expenses are reimbursable if the amount claimed is deemed reasonable as compared to other similar travelers' expenses.

Reimbursement for any items claimed under "Other Claims" will not be approved without a supporting itemized receipt. Receipts for air, rail, lodging and car rental expenses must contain itemized pricing and reflect appropriate travel detail (e.g., departure/arrival times, travel dates and location, service class, upgrades, additional fees, etc.).

Statement summaries and non-itemized credit card receipts are not acceptable substitutes for receipts but can serve as additional, supporting documentation for original receipts that naturally lack the required detail. If booking through third party vendors such as Travelocity, Orbitz, etc., and no receipt is provided by the vendor, the traveler should include booking confirmations with equivalent detail. Electronically issued receipts for online purchases are considered original issued receipts. To substantiate a claim for reimbursement, receipts for lodging and transportation must be in the name of the traveler.

6. Deadlines: The deadline for submitting an Expense Report to the California Lawyers Association liaison is 30 calendar days from the end of the week the trip concludes. Incomplete, incorrect, or illegible reports may be returned to the requestor for correction.
7. Signature: All Expense Reports must be signed by the traveler seeking reimbursement. Digital signatures and digital scans are acceptable.

8. Revisions: All modifications to a handwritten Expense Report must be individually initialed by the person making the correction. Any revisions necessary to correct or add to a previously submitted Expense Report must be clearly labeled as “revised” at the top of the form.
9. Credits: Previously paid credits issued for canceled air flights can be used to reduce the cost of other future airfare for California Lawyers Association business. However, gift-certificates, vouchers, coupons, points or other promotional “credits” may not be used to purchase or be used to increase traveler reimbursements.
10. Gifts, tokens of appreciation and other non-travel-related or non-business-related expenses are not reimbursed under this policy.
11. Travelers must use the current year electronic Expense Report form to ensure policy compliance.

B. **PURCHASING CARD REPORTING**

1. Purchasing Cards are not issued to volunteers.

V. **ALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

A. **TRANSPORTATION**

1. **Personal Automobile**

- a) Travelers required to use a personal automobile to conduct California Lawyers Association business will be reimbursed for mileage at the Internal Revenue Service approved rate as follows:
 - i) Reimbursable mileage is incurred while conducting California Lawyers Association business while on the way to or from home or the primary workplace. Reimbursement will be for that mileage.
 - ii) . Fuel that is put into a private vehicle is not reimbursable and cannot be charged to a Pcard. The mileage rate is intended to reimburse fuel costs maintenance and other depreciation for private auto use.
 - iii) Damage to personal autos while being used on California Lawyers Association business is not covered.

2. **Car Rental**

- a) Rental cars may be used to conduct California Lawyers Association business when necessary and economically practical compared to other modes of transportation. All associated rental costs should be considered and compared to the equivalent taxi or other ground services available, including the taxes, surcharges, fuel expense, hotel parking and highway tolls. Approvers are responsible for verifying that modes of ground transportation used to attend offsite meetings are consistent for their group and that any deviations or special circumstances are noted.
- b) As a general rule, rental cars should be limited to the most economic and safe model, given the weather and road conditions...
- c) The California Lawyers Association carries insurance that covers travelers (both employees and volunteers) when renting a vehicle while on California Lawyers Association business. Thus, travelers should not elect to carry the additional collision and liability

coverage offered by rental agencies when traveling on California Lawyers Association business. Any additional insurance elections will be deemed a personal expense and will not be reimbursed.

- d) Cars should be returned with a full tank of gas; pre-paid tank options should be incurred only when the renter is sure that he/she will exhaust close to a full tank of gas.
- e) Fuel costs incurred for rental cars while on California Lawyers Association business are reimbursable, and for staff may also be charged to a Pcard. Fuel should be charged to the same Pcard account that was used to reserve the automobile rental. Compliance with the rental car agency agreement is the responsibility of the traveler who signs the rental agreement. Please be aware of provisions in the rental agreement that prohibit any other person from driving the car.
- f) In the event of an accident, follow these steps:
 - Attend to any medical issues.
 - Report to appropriate law enforcement agencies immediately.
 - Consult the rental contract and follow its instructions.
 - Promptly submit an accident report to the Executive Director.

3. **Air Travel**

- a) Reimbursement for air travel will be limited to the cost of a refundable coach/ economy fare, subject to the further restrictions below, plus the cost of checking up to two pieces of luggage per traveler, if required. Lower cost non-refundable fares should be purchased if it is practical to do so. First Class, Business Class or Southwest Business Select fares are not permitted; if purchased, the difference between the economy and higher-class fare will be considered a personal expense and will not be reimbursed. The cost of airline memberships, preferential seating, pre-boarding or any other accommodation upgrade will be considered a personal expense and will not be reimbursed. Charges incurred from a change of flight schedule for personal convenience are not reimbursable but may be permitted for business purposes or other extenuating circumstances if the reason accompanies the Expense Report.
- b) Travelers who incur excessively high fares due to a personal choice to use an airline, or to use a non-standard route when a more reasonable route exists, will be reimbursed only for the portion of the fare equal to the comparable fare for the more reasonable route.

4. **Rail Service**

- a) Coach rail service may be used when necessary and economically practical compared to air and/or ground transportation. Reimbursement will be made based on the most economical, reservable service class available. Preferential or other luxury upgrades are not reimbursable. Note that on Amtrak, all reservable seats are called "business class" and are permitted.

5. **Shuttle/Taxi/Car Service/Rideshare Service**

- a) Shuttles, taxis, car services and rideshare services required to conduct California Lawyers Association business are allowable expenses.
- b) Tipping is optional but should not exceed 20 percent except in the case of an extremely low fare value.
- c) Airport trips may be covered by a fixed flat fee, and the metered fare or flat fee fare can be selected by the traveler at the payment point, whichever is more economical. Reimbursements should be capped at the fixed flat rate plus gratuity if less than the

metered fare.

- d) Travelers may also use rideshare options such as Uber and Lyft, as these services may be cheaper than traditional taxis. Any premium service offered (i.e. Uber Black or Uber SUV) will be considered a town car equivalent and subject to the limitations below. If tipping is included in the fare (typically), any additional tipping is not permitted. Insurance coverage limits and exclusions may differ from provider to provider.
- e) A higher-cost limousine, town car, or black-car service is not reimbursable unless a less-expensive service is unavailable.
- f) Travelers going to the same destination are encouraged to share ground transportation whenever it is practical to do so.

6. **Transit, Tolls, Parking and Fines**

- a) Public transit fares, bridge tolls and parking fees incurred by travelers on California Lawyers Association business are allowable expenses.
- b) Parking tickets and traffic fines incurred by travelers will not be reimbursed.

B. **LODGING**

1. When lodging away from home is required to conduct California Lawyers Association business, reimbursement for lodging expenses will be made for the actual cost of a standard single accommodation hotel room, up to the maximum authorized lodging rate (Appendix B) or the contracted group rate pre-negotiated by California Lawyers Association staff for specific group meetings.
2. Individuals engaged as speakers for California Lawyers Association programs may be reimbursed for the actual cost of a standard single accommodation hotel room per their individual contract terms, if applicable.
3. When the California Lawyers Association has not contracted for a block of hotel rooms for a group meeting or event, individual lodging accommodations can be reserved directly with a hotel or with AirBnB, VRBO, or similar type accommodation.

When the California Lawyers Association has contracted for a block of hotel rooms for a group meeting or event, attendees of that meeting or event must stay at the contracted hotel to ensure that California Lawyers Association meets its contracted minimum number of rooms and does not incur fees for unused rooms. Travelers who choose, as a matter of personal preference, to stay at a different hotel or AirBnB, VRBO, or the like, will not be reimbursed for lodging costs, and will be required to make their own reservations without the assistance of staff unless they have received confirmation from staff, that the room block is full.

4. Lodging must be provided by a commercial establishment in the travel accommodation industry (e.g., hotel, motel, and executive leased apartments). No reimbursement will be made for stays at personal residences, home-sharing services, or other barter or in-kind arrangements.
5. Lodging expenses in excess of the current authorized lodging rates will not be reimbursed unless a prior contracted group rate has been negotiated with the hotel, or unless expressly authorized for some other business purpose. Staff will make every effort to contract group rates within the lodging per diem in appendix B when possible. Exceptions may be made by the Executive Director or his/her designee if necessary to contract group rates for Board, Executive Committee/Committee Meetings that exceed the lodging per diems.
6. The California Lawyers Association covers the cost of the hotel room and, parking, internet

charges and business center expenses. Travelers are responsible for covering their personal incidental expenses including room service and other in-room self-service items. All hotel guests are asked to provide a personal credit card at the time of check-in to cover the cost of personal incidentals. See section V.D., Communications & Incidentals.

7. Any charges resulting from failure to cancel lodging reservations are not the responsibility of the California Lawyers Association unless the reason for failure to cancel in time is related to California Lawyers Association business or due to an unavoidable personal emergency.
8. Lodging per diems will be reviewed and updated annually and will be effective January 1.

C. **MEALS**

1. **Per Diem Reimbursed Meals for Individuals**

- a) Per diem meal costs will be reimbursed at the authorized per diem meal rate (Appendix B).
- b) The meal per diem may not be claimed when a meal is otherwise provided (e.g. a California Lawyers Association catered lunch, conference meals, etc.).
- c) Tips for restaurant service are considered to be part of the per diem rate and are not reimbursable beyond the per diem rate.
- d) Meal per diems will be reviewed and updated annually and will be effective January 1

2. **Catered Meals**

- a) Refreshments and/or meals may be catered at California Lawyers Association expense at California Lawyers Association meetings and events. Individuals (including members of the Board, committee members, and California Lawyers Association employees) attending such activities as part of their duties are entitled to partake of the catered meal..
- b) Catering for offsite meetings and events is addressed in Section VII below.

3. **Offsite Dinners:**

- a) Food and beverage minimums within a hotel contract must be met before arranging offsite dinners at restaurants. An exception may be requested and must be approved in advance by the Executive Director or his or her designee.
- b) The cost per person for an offsite Executive Committee dinner should not exceed \$125 (exclusive of tax and gratuity).

4. **Alcoholic Beverages**

- a) Alcoholic beverages and corkage fees are not reimbursable expenses.

D. **COMMUNICATIONS, MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES & INCIDENTALS**

1. Reimbursement is provided for reasonable business-related expenses incurred such as offsite photocopying, or other hotel business center charges.
2. Incidental expenses for such items as gratuities for luggage assistance, valet service or maid service are allowable expenses at a maximum incidental rate of \$10.00 (per day to cover the cost of gratuities and other minor expenses incurred).

VI. EXPENSE ADVANCES

- A. Volunteers and contractors are not eligible for travel advances.

VII. MEETINGS, EVENTS, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- A. Contracts for offsite meeting and event venues, and all products and services must be initiated by the California Lawyers Association staff. Volunteers are not authorized to contractually obligate California Lawyers Association. See CLA Procurement Policy.

Appendix A

Authorized Travel and Meal Reimbursements (Effective October 1, 2022)

Mileage, Lodging and Meal per diems will be reviewed and updated annually and will be effective January 1.

Mileage Reimbursement

Effective July 1, 2022 the personal auto mileage reimbursement rate is 62.5¢ per mile driven. The mileage reimbursement rate will be adjusted to mirror the reimbursement rate established by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service for business-related reimbursement. These rates are imbedded in the formulas of the online Expense Report and will be adjusted on the effective date of any rate change.

Lodging Reimbursement (excluding all taxes)

These rates are for individual travel when the Section does not have a contracted group rate with a hotel. The lodging reimbursement rate will be adjusted to mirror the reimbursement rate established by the California Lawyers Association.

Metropolitan Areas --\$350
Napa/Sonoma --\$425
All other locations - \$250

Individual Travel Meal Reimbursement

These rate limits do not apply where the Section has contracted meals with a hotel or other venue for a specific event (e.g., conference or executive committee meeting).

Breakfast:	\$15.00
Lunch:	\$20.00
Dinner:	\$40.00

Exceptions to the lodging and meal reimbursements may be made on a case-by-case basis if approved by both the Executive Director or his /her designee and the Section Chair, for Section-related travel. Staff may use the P-card for meal diems in compliance with the purchasing card rules.