

CONNECTIONAL TABLE POLICIES

CONNECTIONAL TABLE TRAVEL POLICIES

TRAVEL BUDGET

The Connectional Table operating budget includes the travel, meals and lodging of the CT Chairperson, the Jurisdictional Members, the Central Conference Members, the Caucus Members, the Division on Ministries with Young People representatives and CT Staff.

The General Secretaries, the Presidents of Agencies, the Chairperson of the Commission on General Conference, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and the Secretary of the General Conference travel expenses are covered by the sending entity.

Purpose

The Connectional Table believes that it is important that all board members have some assurance that monies they expend traveling on CT's behalf will be reimbursed to them or covered by a *per diem*. In addition, CT wishes to ensure that equitable standards and effective procedures are in place for controlling travel costs.

The intent of these policies is to provide uniformity in handling expenses for travel and all CT related expenses for board members covered by the travel budget. All such expenses must be directly related to the business of the Church and of the CT and should be within the requirements of IRS guidelines for the deductibility of business expenses. It is the general policy of the Church to pay for actual reasonable business-related expenses incurred by individuals subject to the fiduciary and stewardship responsibilities of the Connectional Table.

Policy

Travel Authorization

To assure that the cost of travel is economically reasonable and complies with these policies, all travel must be booked through our partnership with the GCFA Travel and Meeting and their approved travel agency. If you choose to (or need to) book travel on your own, the cost of any ticket must be pre-approved by Connectional Table staff.

Before You Travel

Register with the CT International Advantage Executive Assistance Services through the app, website or toll-free phone number. Secure emergency contacts and travel documents prior to your international trip.

Travel Arrangements

Ticket purchases: All airline tickets shall be purchased through GCFA's approved travel agency as required by these Policies, using the CT ghost credit card, if any, except when CT Staff approves

purchase by an individual **in advance**.

Travel costs: Travelers should strive to secure the least expensive airfare and lodging. Whenever possible, CT members should plan travel well in advance in order to secure the least expensive airfare to accommodate efficient use of time and the accomplishment of the purpose(s) of travel. Nonrefundable or penalty tickets should be considered when it is highly unlikely that an itinerary will change, since they provide considerable savings. Air travel is normally by the most economical coach fare available. Preferences will be honored to the extent that the cost of the preference is comparable to the least costly alternative.

For international travel involving a one-way trip in excess of 3,000 miles, an extra day's lodging and meal expense shall be reimbursed. Reimbursement for travel, including travel by automobile, will not exceed the cost of the most direct coach class airfare and associated travel costs, such as to and from airports.

Change in Travel

If additional charges or penalties are imposed resulting from changes in travel plans, these additional costs will be paid by CT unless the change was for non-emergency personal reasons, in which event the additional charges or penalties will be paid by the CT member. In the event a CT member becomes ill and is unable to travel (or becomes ill while traveling), the board member is responsible for notifying CT staff and obtaining a doctor's note so that refunds can be requested.

Under no circumstances will an individual be permitted to alter cost-efficient travel plans to receive or earn promotional program advantages, such as frequent flyer miles, for the traveler's personal benefit.

Documentation

Reimbursement requests: All board members and employees on domestic travel will submit their expense reimbursement requests to CT **within thirty days**; international travel **within forty-five days**. Compliance is the responsibility of each individual. All expense forms must be signed by the board member/employee who travels submitted to the CT Staff. One expense report must be filed for each trip.

Airline receipts must be attached to the expense report. All unusual expenses shall be identified, documented and explained. When receipts or proof of payment are not available because they were accidentally destroyed, lost, stolen, or not provided by the vendor, the specific reimbursement must be hand written and attached to that line item. Itemization and explanations should be included.

Family Member Travel

Travel for a spouse and other family members are not reimbursable, unless the CT member is a minor under the age of 18.

International Travel – Foreign Currency

Fees: Passport, Visa and other travel related costs for authorized business-related travel are reimbursable.

Foreign currency transactions: Expenditures in foreign currencies should be converted to U.S. dollars for documentation as follows:

- For expenses paid in cash, use the conversion rate in effect at the time the foreign currency was exchanged for U.S. dollars. In support, submit the documentation received reflecting the exchange in addition to the required receipts and documentation.
- For credit card expenses, use the U.S. dollars actually billed on the monthly credit card statements, or, to expedite reimbursement, use the conversion rate published
- For expenses paid in cash, enter the charge in the currency of the purchase and the correct date of purchase. The expense software will convert the amount to the correct U.S. currency rate for that date.

International Travel

When applicable, CT will utilize U.S. Department of State per diem guidelines for travel outside the United States. Good stewardship, fiduciary responsibility, and the safety and welfare of the traveler will be the guiding principles for unlisted locations. Travelers should be provided a moderately priced room by standards of the country and city in which the individual is housed in a safe, reasonable, respectable and convenient lodging facility.

If the airline upgrades the traveler from coach to some other class for international travel, the practice should be noted on the documentation submitted so that it will not be presumed that an unauthorized class was booked in violation of policy.

During international travel when it may be more economical or when the traveler's safety may require it, the cost of a rental car with driver may be reimbursed upon appropriate documentation and explanation.

Telephone Usage

Telephone charges will be reimbursed if they are incurred in connection with the organization's business. Employees, who are issued cell phones, should use their cell phones to make any telephone calls while traveling. Reasonable telephone charges for personal calls while traveling overnight also will be reimbursed.

Personal Automobile Usage

Personal car mileage will be reimbursed for the miles actually driven at the IRS-approved business rate. Mileage will be measured from point of origin to the travel destination and return, and for business use while at the destination. Employees will be reimbursed for tolls, parking fees, ferry fares and the like while using a personal car on agency business. When the round-trip distance exceeds 1,000 miles for any one round trip, either the total cost of personal automobile usage (mileage plus reimbursable) or the most economical airfare available will be reimbursed, whichever is less.

If a personal car is damaged while an individual is on a trip authorized in advance by CT, whether in-town or out-of-town, CT may, but is not obligated to reimburse the individual's actual and reasonable out-of-pocket cost of repairing the car; but only to the extent of the individual's deductible, and in no

event shall the amount of reimbursement exceed \$500.00. Reimbursement of this cost from any other source obligates the individual to return the agency's reimbursement within 5 days of such reimbursement by the other source. No payment for repair of damages resulting during commutes will be made. Adequate documentation of the trip authorization and the date, time, location, and circumstances of the accident must be provided when requesting reimbursement.

The usual and ordinary expenses of parking at their principal place of employment are not reimbursable for CT Board Members. Parking expenses incurred for business meetings or other business purposes away from the place of employment are reimbursable. Exceptions to this policy for extraordinary circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

Car Rentals

Employees traveling on business in excess of an average 300 miles per day (i.e. total miles driven/total days), should consider renting a vehicle if it is more cost effective instead of receiving reimbursement for using their personal vehicle. Exceptions would include circumstances where renting would place an unnecessary burden on the individual.

Reimbursement will be made for the cost of car rentals, when to rent a car while on out-of-town CT business is more economical or practical than public transportation, on the following basis:

1. Individuals are responsible for ensuring that they are getting the best rates. A copy of the rental agreement must be submitted with the expense report.

3. An economy or mid-size car should be selected unless three or more individuals are traveling together or an individual is transporting sizable equipment or supplies. In those events, the next size class or mini-van may be rented.

4. Reimbursable items include the actual cost of the rental, tolls and gasoline purchases. One-way rentals should be avoided unless the cost is less than other modes of travel.

5. When returning a rental car to a vendor, board members should endeavor to use the most economical way to refuel. Justification of the circumstances may be required when surcharges are incurred.

6. Accidents involving hired, leased or rented cars must be reported immediately to the proper authorities and to the rental car agency and the credit card issuer. CT's Commercial Automobile Liability provides coverage for damages such as bodily injury or property damage caused by an accident through collision with another object, or vehicle overturn while traveling for work purposes.

Automobile Tolls, Parking and Fines

- Automobile tolls and parking expenses incurred for business purposes will be reimbursed. Long term parking at all airports should be used due to the expense of short-term parking. Any fines incurred as a result of driving or parking violations while on CT business will not be reimbursed.

Uber, Lyft, Taxi and Limo Car Service

Taxi fares and car service costs for business purposes will be reimbursed to the extent that the fares do not exceed the cost of renting a car to cover the same distance. When used for business-related travel, Uber, Lyft, taxi and car/limo service to and from airports and to and from hotels and business destinations are reimbursable equal to the actual fare, tolls, extra charges for luggage, passengers and the like, and a reasonable tip. The use of public transportation is encouraged when feasible and safe.

Personal Travel in Conjunction with Business Travel

Personal travel in conjunction with business travel, resulting in extending the time away from CT is permissible under the following conditions:

- CT should be informed in writing of the intention when business reservations are made;
- Direct round trip transportation to and from the city of origin is reported as business travel, and any remaining airfare or other transportation cost is paid by the individual;
- All car, hotel, and meal expenses unrelated to business travel are paid by the individual; extra expenses incurred for hotels and meals necessary in order to obtain the lowest air fare possible will be paid if the net result saves CT money;
- Disclosure of the personal travel should be made on the travel expense report;
- If the business purpose of the trip ends earlier than anticipated when the travel was authorized, actual costs incurred during the remainder of the time allocated for the meeting up to the total amount that would have been incurred had the business not ended early will be reimbursed.

Lodging

A moderately priced room with bath, in a safe, reasonable, respectable, and convenient lodging facility, is CT's standard. Generally, CT's standard should not exceed the U.S. General Services Administration or U.S. Department of State maximum lodging amount by more than 25% for that particular location; however in isolated cases it may be necessary to use the best negotiated rate possible.

A reservation should be made prior to travel. If the reserved room is not available upon arrival at the hotel, the travel itinerary or room guarantee number as proof of confirmation should be presented. The hotel is obligated to either provide an equivalent or upgraded room at no extra cost on their property or arrange for lodging in another equivalent hotel at the corporate rate originally quoted. If unable to use the reservation, it is the individual's responsibility to cancel within the hotel's cancellation time period. "No show" charges are not reimbursable and may be billed to the individual if paid by the CT, unless resulting from conditions beyond the individual's control.

The Connectional Table encourages members to share rooms when appropriate as an expression of stewardship of our resources.

Other Reimbursable Expenses

Laundry: Reasonable laundry and dry-cleaning charges will be reimbursed if the board member is traveling overnight for at least five nights.

Baggage Charges: CT will pay for one checked bag for domestic travel and up to two checked bags for international travel and travel exceeding one week.

Tips: Tips to waiters, porters, skycaps, bellhops, and others of a similar nature are permitted when reasonable and appropriate. Receipts need not be provided since they are typically unavailable. The standard gratuity for meals is 15% to 20%.

Hospitality and Entertainment Expenses: International guest: In unusual or extraordinary circumstances in which it would be a violation of international cultural practices not to do so, the expenses of entertainment and hospitality for the international guest's spouse and family may be reimbursed. The special circumstance justifying paying such family or spousal entertainment and hospitality expenses shall be documented.

Meal Expenses

Expenses for meals bought during the course of agency business will be reimbursed or paid under the following conditions:

- Receipts are expected to be provided for all meal expenditures, other than for expenditures covered by a provided per diem. Per diem rates will be in accordance with Federal guidelines. In rare instances such as, for example, when meals are purchased at vending machines or at locations which cannot or will not provide receipts, a contemporaneous log may be provided for claiming expenditures up to \$75.00 per transaction.
- Receipts for group meals should include a notation of the business purpose and those in attendance.
- Payment or reimbursement for meals may not exceed the guidelines published by the U.S. General Services Administration or by the U.S. Department of State by more than 20%.

Non-reimbursable Expenses

Non-reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to the following:

- Personal services such as barber, manicurist, shoe shines and massages;
- Special room services such as in-room movies or mini-bar;
- Clothing, luggage, reading material, and other personal items;
- Child or adult-care expenses;
- The cost of alcoholic beverages and other costs forbidden to be paid by the Discipline;
- Insurance options on rental cars;
- Any fines incurred as a result of driving or parking violations while on CT business;
- Loss of personal luggage, brief cases, travel gear, souvenirs, gifts, and the replacement or repair of lost or damaged luggage and other personal items;
- First class or business class upgrades;
- Expenses lacking adequate documentation will not be considered for reimbursement.

Procedures

Travel Authorization: CT board members must submit a copy of the Travel Request Form.

Travel Advance: If an advance is needed, the request shall be made on the Check Request Form with a copy of the approved Travel Request Form attached.

Changes or Delays in Travel: To make changes in travel once the original travel request has been scheduled, the following procedures must be followed:

If there has been a travel delay for any reason during travel to or from a CT meeting, the CT office must be contacted within 48 hours for expense reimbursement consideration if the following documentation is provided:

1. Reason for travel delay, including steps taken to honor original travel schedule and explanation of why new arrangements were necessary.
 2. Official documentation from appropriate transportation company (airline, bus service, etc.) detailing the reason for the change.
 3. Documentation (in writing) of any conversations related to travel or agreements made for accommodations, including the date and time.
 4. Confirmation of form of payment or billing agreement arranged with the airline, hotel, etc.
- Delegates are encouraged to reach out to their bishop in advance of the CT meeting in case of unexpected delays. In some cases, bishops have accommodation and/or travel requirements for delegates, or other policies related to where and how long delegates can stay while traveling for meetings related to the UMC.
 - The CT staff will honor the requests and/or decisions of the bishops.
 - Expenses lacking adequate documentation will not be considered for reimbursement.
 - Members who are unable to contact the CT office within 48 hours should explain the reason for the delay.
 - CT board members must complete a Travel Request Change form and indicate whether the request is a change or cancellation of the trip.
 - Indicate the areas that need to be changed.
 - If the change results in additional charges or penalty, the Travel Request Change form must be approved by the appropriate level of management. For changes that do not incur additional charges or penalty, the Travel Request Change Form should be returned to the Support Services Department.
 - For changes in travel that incur additional charges or penalty, the signed Travel Request Change Form should be attached to the board members' Travel Expense Report.

Documentation: All travel and other expenses to be paid or reimbursed by CT, other than for expenses covered by a provided per diem, must be supported by documentation attached to the Travel Expense Reimbursement Request. Documentation should be presented in an orderly fashion, preferably with itemized receipts affixed to sheets of 8-1/2" x 11" paper, and to include marginal explanations and cross references when necessary. There must be a clear trail from receipted amounts to the amounts claimed. Itemization must include sufficient explanation to assure that reimbursement is not sought for non-reimbursable items. Itemized receipts must be attached for expenses costing \$75.00 or more. Original documents rather than photocopies should be submitted whenever possible. For items below \$75.00 individuals are encouraged to provide receipts, however in their absence it is necessary to keep a contemporaneous expense log detailing each item with date, item description, and cost.

When receipts or proof of payment are not available because they were accidentally destroyed, lost, stolen, or not provided by the vendor, the specific reimbursement must be approved in writing by the appropriate level of management. Explanations should be included.

Individuals who fax their Travel Expense Reports or transmit them electronically must submit their original itemized receipts to CT Staff. Reimbursement will be issued upon receipt of the appropriate documentation.

Training of reviewers: It shall be the responsibility of CT staff to supply the persons who are appointed to the board to review expense reimbursements records with a copy of CT's Travel Policy and of any other information needed to perform their duties; to train those persons in the performance of their duties; and to assure that the forms recording the reviews are submitted in a timely fashion.

International Travel: Documentation for expenses incurred in international travel should be presented in the same manner as required for domestic travel. It is recognized that occasionally special circumstances will arise during international travel resulting in additional expenses. All such special circumstances should be fully documented in order to receive special consideration.

Responsibility

The Operations Manager shall be responsible for implementing and overseeing this policy.

Originating Committee

The CT's Leadership Discernment and Community Life Group (LDCL) originated this policy in conjunction with GCFA Travel Policy guidelines.