

## **TRAVEL GUIDELINES FOR THE PVAMC RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

These guidelines are designed for travelers who are 1) employed by Portland VA Medical Center R&D Service, and/or 2) utilizing research funding administered by VA or PVARF. Travelers who travel to attend meetings, present findings, conduct site visits, or participate in study sections, must complete paperwork to comply with the many regulations that surround Federal Temporary Duty Travel. The regulations are designed to allow a traveler to travel economically, ensure that he/she accepts only approved reimbursement, and protect both the traveler and the VA in the event there is an accident during travel. These guidelines are intended to concisely summarize these requirements.

Travel by PVAMC R&D Service employees on authorized absence and/or supported by VA or PVARF research funds must be reviewed by the R&D Service Office prior to travel. The R&D Travel Coordinator will provide advice on travel regulations and prepare the necessary paperwork for the traveler. The traveler should be aware that timeliness is a factor in this process and should notify the Travel Coordinator of plans well in advance of travel.

### **FORMS**

All VA and PVARF forms are available in the PVAMC R&D Service Office (Bldg 101/Room 502).

#### ***VA Forms***

**SF 71: Application for Leave** – Request leave and obtain approval on paper IN ADDITION TO entering leave in VISTA Time and Attendance. *VA Employees Only*

**OP 165: Request for Travel/Tuition** – Provide PVAMC Fiscal Service–Employee Travel Office with conference dates, location, purpose, and personal information necessary for processing traveler’s request and preparing reimbursement.

#### **Memo to Regional Counsel &**

#### **OP 10-0101B: Request for Approval of Acceptance of Gifts or Donations**

*VA Employees Only*

**Memo to Regional Counsel** – Request legal review of unsolicited offer of support for official travel from a non-Federal source. Companion to the OP 10-0101B.

**OP 10-0101B: Request for Approval of Acceptance of Gifts or Donations** – Request VA approval to accept unsolicited offer of support for official travel from a non-Federal source. Companion to the Memo to Regional Counsel.

**10-5504: Foreign Travel Request Briefing Slip** – Request VA approval of travel outside of the US, Canada, or Mexico. *VA Employees Only*

**DSP-11: United States Department of State Passport Application** - For VA employees traveling on official government business who have never had a passport issued (official or personal). *VA Employees Only*

**DSP-82: United States Department of State Application for Passport by Mail** - For VA employees traveling on official government business who have had a passport issued within the last 15 years and their name is the same as on the passport. *VA Employees Only*

#### ***PVARF Forms***

**Check Request** – Request payment of expenses using funds from a PVARF account.

**Travel Authorization/Reimbursement Form** - Request advance payment or reimbursement from a PVARF account by listing travel expenses.

## REQUESTING AUTHORIZED ABSENCE OR ANNUAL LEAVE

### *VA Employees Only*

If a traveler is a VA employee, he/she must account for the absence when traveling by requesting either annual leave (AL) or authorized absence (AA). *Authorized absence must be approved in advance by the appropriate leave-approving official (typically the employee's PVAMC Service Chief).* The source of the travel funding can affect the leave status that the traveler may request and the paperwork that is required.

If using VA funds, the traveler *must* request authorized absence by following these steps:

1. Complete a **SF 71: VA Application for Leave** form. Insert AA in the box titled 'Other Paid Absence'. Provide the purpose and location of the travel in the 'Remarks' box.
2. Enter leave in **VISTA Time and Attendance**. Indicate the location and purpose of travel in the 'Comments' field.

If using non-VA funds, the traveler *may* request AA during travel:

1. Complete a **SF 71: VA Application for Leave** form. Insert AA in the box titled 'Other Paid Absence'. Provide the purpose and location of the travel in the 'Remarks' box.
2. Enter your leave in **VISTA Time and Attendance**. Indicate the location and purpose of travel in the 'Comments' field.

If using non-VA funds, the traveler *may* request AL during travel:

1. Enter your leave in **VISTA Time and Attendance**. No other VA forms or approvals are needed for AL.

## **OP 165: REQUEST FOR TRAVEL/TUITION**

The PVAMC Employee Travel Office requires an **OP 165: Request for Travel/Tuition** form for any VA or non-VA employee requesting the use of VA administered funds and/or VA government-rate airfare. The OP 165 is also required when a VA employee is receiving cash/check reimbursement, via the PVAMC, from a for-profit organization. Two authorizing signatures are needed on this form: the traveler's supervisor or service chief and the approving officer of the travel funding. At PVAMC, the ACOS of R&D Service authorizes the use of VA and PVARF research funding. All requests should be submitted at least thirty days before the date of travel.

The R&D Travel Coordinator prepares and submits the OP-165 once the traveler has provided the following information:

1. Travel documentation (including dates, location, and purpose) and itinerary
2. Funding source(s) supporting the traveler
3. Estimated travel expenses to be supported
4. Traveler's work and personal details
5. Traveler's special request of VA support for:
  - a) **Cash advance:** The cash advance is 80% of the estimated travel expenses, not including the airfare. A traveler may not receive a cash advance if he/she has a government travel credit card. VA employees receive cash advances via electronic funds transfer to their designated bank accounts prior to travel. An approved non-VA employee receives cash advances in the form of a check prior to travel.
  - b) **Actual lodging expenses:** Under normal circumstances, lodging expenses may not exceed 150% of the per diem rate. Actual lodging expense reimbursement must be requested on the OP 165 and supported by advanced written authorization from the funding source.
  - c) **Rental car:** The VA advocates the use of public transportation. If the traveler requires a rental car it must be requested on the OP 165 and supported by advanced written authorization from the funding source. The rental car should be reserved through the PVAMC travel agency, TQ3 Navigant.
  - d) Any other special requests.

**MEMO TO REGIONAL COUNSEL & OP 10-0101B:**  
**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS OR DONATIONS**

*VA Employees Only*

The **Memo to Regional Counsel** form and **OP 10-0101B: Request for Approval of Acceptance of Gifts or Donations** form are paired together in a three-page packet.

If a VA employee is requesting authorized absence from the PVAMC for travel supported by a non-Federal organization, he/she must complete the Memo and 10-0101B to request approval to accept unsolicited offer of support for official travel from a non-Federal source. For more detailed VA regulations regarding travel support from external sources please refer to sections of this document specific to the funding source.

Regional Counsel (VA Attorney) conducts a legal review of ethics and legal issues and advise whether the approving official (PVAMC Director) could lawfully determine that the traveler or the VA may accept travel support from the source. The R&D Travel Coordinator returns a signed copy with Regional Counsel's recommendations to the traveler after submission of the Memo and 10-0101B.

The R&D Travel Coordinator prepares and submits these forms once the traveler has provided the following information:

1. Travel documentation (including dates, location, and purpose) and itinerary
2. Funding source(s) supporting the traveler
3. Estimated travel expenses to be supported
4. Traveler's work and personal details

The following instructions are intended to clarify the most commonly misinterpreted portions of the Memo and 10-0101B:

- I:5) The VA classification of payment from an outside source can cause confusion. **'Payment in Kind'** is defined as goods, services, or other benefits provided for travel, subsistence and related expenses in lieu of cash or funds paid by check or similar instrument. **'Payment in Cash'** includes any other payment, usually in the form of a check. Travelers are not allowed to accept cash/check directly from a non 501(c)(3) tax-exempt (for-profit) organization, including OHSU. Rather, the payment must be distributed via the VA.
- V:1) **'Part V'** is completed once the travel is complete and all reimbursements are received from external sources. Through the Part V, the PVAMC Employee Travel Office is informed of the total actual support that was provided to the VA employee. The PVAMC Employee Travel Office sends the Part V to the traveler after the 10-0101B has been processed. The traveler is responsible for completing and returning the Part V to the PVAMC Employee Travel Office.

## TRAVEL SUPPORTED BY VA FUNDING

To facilitate operations, communication, training, and education, the VA provides specific funding to support travel for its staff. VA funds may be provided as three types: VA Headquarters, Station-to-Station and On-Station. When **VA Headquarters** requests that a person attend a meeting supported by VA funds, a 'Travel Authority' (often referred to as a 'TWX') that authorizes travel is sent to PVAMC giving the following information: travel dates, purpose of travel, program number for the funds sent, and intended use of funds. **Station-to-Station** funded travel is also justified through a Travel Authority sent to PVAMC. This is common in the case of travel for a Cooperative Studies Program. Typically, the use of **On-Station** funds (funds administered here at PVAMC) does not require a Travel Authority. Travel support is not provided for travel less than sixty (60) miles from the PVAMC.

The traveler must have advanced approval for authorized absence when using VA funding. VA employees are responsible for submitting an SF 71 in addition to entering their AA in VISTA. See Requesting Authorized Absence or Annual Leave for additional information.

The traveler must submit the required documentation to the R&D Travel Coordinator and the Travel Coordinator prepares and submits the appropriate paperwork:

1. **OP 165: Request for Travel/Tuition** form

### PVAMC Pre-Trip Arrangements

#### **Airfare**

Federal employees should use the **government-rate airfare** scheme when traveling on official government business. There are clear advantages to this program:

- PVAMC Employee Travel purchases the ticket.
- Tickets are fully refundable and there is no charge for cancellations or changes.
- Tickets are generally cheaper than those with comparable benefits.
- Government-rate tickets are e-tickets.
- Fares are priced on one-way routes permitting travelers to plan multiple destinations.

There are specific conditions and qualifications that a traveler must meet to be eligible for government-rate airfare.

- Only VA employees (and authorized non-VA employees utilizing VA travel support) are entitled to request government-rate.
- A VA employee must be on authorized absence to receive the government-rate.
- Government-rate fares must be purchased with VA funds.
- A traveler may request a check from a PVARF account to pay the PVAMC for government-rate fares.
- A traveler may not share the cost of a ticket with the PVAMC.

- A traveler may only extend his/her stay at the beginning or end of a trip if it is of no additional cost to PVAMC.
- A traveler must fly standard coach unless he/she has received advanced written authorization from the funding source.

If the traveler qualifies, and decides to request government-rate airfare, he/she may contact the PVAMC travel agent, **TQ3 Navigant** at **1-888-811-8129**. The agent should be informed of the following:

- The ticket is for a traveler from the Portland VA Medical Center, station #648.
- The PVAMC Employee Travel Office will supply the travel authorization number.

The agent will make the reservation and send it to the PVAMC Employee Travel Office for purchase. It is the traveler's responsibility to stay in contact with TQ3 Navigant for updates and changes to travel arrangements.

As soon as the reservation is made, the traveler must notify the R&D Travel Coordinator in order to prepare and submit the appropriate paperwork. The PVAMC Employee Travel Office purchases the ticket seven days prior to departure. The traveler is asked to make any changes to the itinerary or cancellations of the trip prior to this time. The traveler will be contacted at least two days prior to his/her departure when the **travel orders packet** is ready for pickup at the Agent Cashier window in the PVAMC Building 100 by the pharmacy. The packet contains the itinerary with an e-ticket reference number and the PVAMC Travel Reimbursement Policy & Procedures. If the traveler purchased government-rate airfare via a check from PVARF to PVAMC, and will not be receiving reimbursement from VA funding, the R&D Travel Coordinator will provide the flight itinerary with e-ticket reference number to the traveler.

If a person travels frequently, and has been issued a **government travel credit card**, he/she should charge the airline ticket to the card when making reservations with TQ3 Navigant. The PVAMC Employee Travel Office maintains travel credit card information and authorizes the use of a card once their office has received the appropriate paperwork from the R&D Travel Coordinator.

A traveler may choose to personally purchase airfare through another travel agency, the Internet or directly from an airline. However, PVAMC is not responsible for any changes to the itinerary, cancellations, or corresponding fees. PVAMC Fiscal Service will only reimburse the traveler up to the price that TQ3 Navigant quotes for a ticket for the same destination.

### **All Other Travel Expenses**

See OP 165: Request for Travel/Tuition for details on receiving advanced written authorization for special requests (i.e. reimbursement for actual lodging expense, rental car, etc.). Refer to the PVAMC post-trip reimbursement section below for details on reimbursable expenses.

### **PVAMC Post-Trip Reimbursement**

The PVAMC Travel Reimbursement Policy and Procedures are included in the pre-trip travel orders packet from the Employee Travel Office. At the completion of travel, the traveler is responsible for sending all information requested in the travel orders packet to PVAMC Fiscal Service – Employee Travel Office (P4-FISC-T). The packet should be sent within three business days after travel concludes (date marked on outside of travel orders packet) to ensure timely reimbursement. PVAMC Fiscal Service–Employee Travel Office reimburses for authorized expenses only.

#### **Airfare**

PVAMC Fiscal Service – Employee Travel Office provides reimbursement as authorized for airfare purchased via a means other than TQ3 Navigant. A receipt is required. PVAMC Fiscal Service reimburses the traveler up to the price that TQ3 Navigant quotes for a ticket for the same destination.

#### **Other Transportation Expenses**

Reimbursement for additional transportation-related travel expenses including taxi, limousine, airport shuttle, and parking may also be provided. Receipts are required for reimbursement. PVAMC reimburses for mileage on a privately-owned vehicle (POV) at a rate of \$0.485/mile for travel to and from the airport. A traveler wishing to use a motor vehicle as their mode of transportation to and from their destination may apply to utilize a government vehicle. If the traveler chooses to use a POV when a government vehicle is available, the traveler will be reimbursed \$0.125/mile. In the event that a government vehicle is not available, the traveler will be reimbursed \$0.485/mile for use of their POV. If the traveler requires reimbursement for a rental car and is using VA funding, the request must have been included on the OP 165 and supported by advanced written authorization from the funding source. The rental car should be reserved through the PVAMC travel agency, TQ3 Navigant.

#### **Lodging**

Itemized lodging receipts are required by the PVAMC. Currently, federal travelers may choose accommodations that do not exceed per diem rates. Per diem rates for lodging expenses are established annually by the General Services Administration (GSA) for travelers on official government business. See [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov) for current GSA per diem rates according to destination and season. If a traveler requires reimbursement for actual lodging expense (not to exceed 150% of the per diem rate), the request must have been included on the OP 165 and supported by advanced written authorization from the funding source.

Effective September 2002, the GSA will start requiring travelers to stay in hotels that are part of the Federal Premier Lodging Program (FPLP). Travelers but will be required to choose an accommodation that is participating in FPLP. Exceptions will be made when a room is not available, if there are no participating hotels at a destination, or if a federal agency has its own contract to use certain hotels. Identify hotels on the GSA website at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov).

### **Meals**

Meal receipts are not necessary for reimbursement. GSA establishes per diem rates for meal/incidental expenses annually for travelers on official government business. See [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov) for current GSA per diem rates according to destination. Meals that are provided to the traveler at the conference should be declared and should not be requested as reimbursable expenses.

### **Registration**

Request for conference registration reimbursement must be made in advance of travel by the conference attendee. The reimbursement is issued after the conference upon submission of receipt.

### **Miscellaneous Expenses**

Reimbursement for additional travel related expenses including telephone, computer and fax services may also be provided. Receipts are required for reimbursement. Telephone receipts must be identified as business, personal or home contact calls in order to receive reimbursement. Business-related telephone calls may be reimbursed. Telephone calls home are limited to one at \$5/day.

Once the traveler has turned in his/her reimbursement request with receipts to PVAMC Fiscal Service, the Employee Travel Office will produce a **travel voucher**. The travel voucher itemizes the reimbursement to be granted to the traveler. The R&D Travel Coordinator reviews the travel voucher for accuracy, collects the traveler's and ACOS/R&D's signature, and returns the travel voucher to PVAMC Employee Travel. The traveler then receives reimbursement via electronic funds transfer to his/her chosen bank account. An authorized non-VA employee receiving reimbursement from VA funding receives a reimbursement check via mail at his/her home address.

## **TRAVEL SUPPORTED BY PORTLAND VA RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

PVARF funds may be used to support domestic or foreign travel expenses to bona fide scientific meetings or for other activities that are directly related to conducting research or educational projects. Investigators who have accounts in PVARF may use their funds for travel, provided this is allowed by the funding source. It is advised that a traveler discuss these matters with the PVARF.

No prior authorization is needed from PVARF for travel that is obviously linked to an investigator's research or educational program (e.g., a national meeting or scientific conference). If the link is not readily apparent, the traveler will need to obtain approval prior to the trip by submitting a **PVARF Travel Authorization/Reimbursement** form. This form should be accompanied by documentation that provides dates, location and purpose of trip. Obtaining prior approval helps ensure that the traveler will be able to receive reimbursement for the costs of the trip. All travel that is outside of the United States requires prior approval from PVARF.

### *VA Employees*

#### **Traveling on Authorized Absence**

If the travel relates to the traveler's official VA duties, and the travel is supported with PVARF funds, he/she may request authorized absence from the PVAMC. VA employees are responsible for submitting an **SF 71** in addition to entering their AA in **VISTA**. See Requesting Authorized Absence or Annual Leave section for additional information.

PVARF is considered a non-Federal source of funding because it is a corporation organized under state law. VA General Counsel has advised that a VA employee need not submit a Memo to Regional Counsel and 10-0101B for ethics review when requesting funding from PVARF. This is an exception to the general rule, and it applies because of the PVARF's mission and its status as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. However, if a VA employee is accepting funds from PVARF to travel on AA, PVAMC Employee Travel Office requires the Memo & 10-0101B for their semi-annual report to VAHQ. See Memo to Regional Counsel & 10-0101B for additional information.

The traveler must submit the required documentation to the R&D Travel Coordinator, and the Travel Coordinator prepares and submits the appropriate paperwork.

#### **1. Memo & 10-0101B**

Post-trip, the PVAMC Employee Travel Office must be notified, via the **Part V of the 10-0101B**, of any external support offered to PVAMC employees on AA.

### **Traveling on Annual Leave**

If the travel does not relate to the traveler's official VA duty, but meets PVARF approval for the use of funding, the VA employee should request AL in **VISTA**. He/she may request reimbursement for travel expenses from the PVARF as long as documentation that provides dates, location, and research-related purpose of travel is provided.

### **Government-Rate Airfare**

When using PVARF funding on AA, only VA employees are eligible for government-rate airfare as long as the purpose of travel is related to their VA research duties. The PVARF must write a check to the Portland VA Medical Center in order for the PVAMC to purchase the ticket. This process is explained below.

The traveler may contact the PVAMC travel agent, **TQ3 Navigant** at **1-888-811-8129**. The agent should be informed of the following:

- The ticket is for a traveler from the Portland VA Medical Center, #648.
- The PVAMC Employee Travel Office will supply the travel authorization number.

The agent will make the reservation and send it to the PVAMC Employee Travel Office for purchase. It is the traveler's responsibility to stay in contact with TQ3 Navigant for updates and changes to travel arrangements.

As soon as the reservation is made, the traveler must notify the R&D Travel Coordinator of the dates and cost of airfare, including the Travel Management Center (TMC) transaction fee. The Travel Coordinator prepares and submits the necessary paperwork so that the traveler may receive government-rate airfare:

1. **OP 165**
2. **PVARF Check Request**

PVARF requires two weeks to produce a check to PVAMC for airfare. PVARF sends the R&D Travel Coordinator a check for the cost of airfare plus the TMC transaction fee. The Travel Coordinator submits the check to the PVAMC Agent Cashier for payment of the ticket. The PVAMC Employee Travel Office purchases the ticket and processes the paperwork seven days prior to departure. The traveler is asked to make any changes to the itinerary or cancellation of the trip prior to this time. The traveler is emailed or faxed the flight itinerary with an e-ticket reference number at least two days prior to departure.

### **Other airfare**

The traveler may otherwise set up reservations with the travel agent of his/her choice or directly with the airline. The traveler is responsible for payment of the ticket and may request reimbursement from PVARF after the trip.

## *VA and Non-VA Employees*

Non-VA employees utilizing PVARF travel funding are not eligible for government-rate airfare. The traveler may set up reservations with the travel agent of his/her choice or directly with the airline. The traveler is responsible for payment for the ticket and may request reimbursement from PVARF after the trip.

### **PVARF Pre-Trip Advance Payments**

PVARF may provide advance payments for business travel, if necessary, to pay lodging, conference registration and per diem meal expenses. Advance payment for lodging and conference registration are made directly to the hotel or conference. Per diem meal expenses may be paid in advance to the traveler. Per diem rates for meals are set at \$60 per day. Per diem rates are calculated from the rates of \$10 for breakfast, \$15 for lunch and \$35 for dinner. Any advance payment request must be submitted to the PVARF at least ten (10) working days prior to departure. If the traveler needs advance payment for airfare, he/she may purchase government-rate tickets through the VA travel agency if eligible.

The traveler is responsible for submitting cost quotes and appropriate documentation on dates, location, and purpose of travel to the R&D Travel Coordinator. The PVAMC R&D Travel Coordinator may help the traveler complete the necessary paperwork for an advance payment request to PVARF.

1. **PVARF Travel Authorization/Reimbursement** form
2. **PVARF Check Request** form

Upon return, actual expenses for lodging and/or other reimbursable expenses must be submitted using a **Travel Authorization/Reimbursement** form, a **Check Request** form and receipts. If the actual expenses are greater than the prior advance, additional costs are reimbursed as appropriate. If the actual expenses are less than the prior advance, the traveler is asked to pay back the excess amount. If the excess amount has not been repaid by January 15<sup>th</sup> of the following year, the excess amount becomes taxable income to the traveler, and notification is forwarded to the IRS. After an advance payment for either per diem meals or government rate tickets has been made, no further payments are made for these items.

### **PVARF Post-Trip Reimbursement**

The traveler is responsible for submitting original, itemized receipts and appropriate documentation on dates, location, and purpose of travel to the R&D Travel Coordinator. The PVAMC R&D Travel Coordinator will help the traveler complete the necessary paperwork for reimbursement from PVARF.

1. **PVARF Travel Authorization/Reimbursement** form
2. **PVARF Check Request** form

All acceptable travel expenses, except meals and ground transportation, that are appropriately documented (original receipts, etc.), are reimbursed in full, unless there are insufficient funds in the account to cover the reimbursement. In that case, the reimbursement is made up to the amount of available funds. Reimbursable travel

expenses DO NOT include expenses incurred for travel costs of spouse, dependents, or anyone other than the traveler. Nor do they include social or sightseeing costs, liquor, hotel mini-bar charges, flight insurance, movies, laundry, hair care, shoeshines, or other personal grooming.

**The acceptable travel expenses and required documentation are:**

Personal car mileage	Reimbursed at \$0.485 per mile. Record pre and post trip odometer readings.
Airline travel	Original airline ticket receipt is required. First class travel is not permitted.
Bus, rail	Actual expense, receipts required if over \$25 per leg of trip.
Taxi, bridge or ferry	Actual expense, receipts required if over \$25 per leg of trip.
Car rental	Actual expense, receipts required. Include a justification of why car rental was used instead of public transportation.
Parking	Actual expense, receipts required if over \$25 per leg of trip.
Registration	Actual expense, receipts or copy of registration form required.
Hotel	Actual expense (not to exceed \$300 per night), receipts required.
Meals	Per diem only of \$60 per day, calculated from \$10 for breakfast, \$15 for lunch and \$35 for dinner. Travel days to and from Portland will be prorated.
Phone calls/Fax	Actual expense, receipts required.

If travel costs are to be divided among the PVARF and another organization (such as the PVAMC or OHSU), a copy of the other organization's travel report and a letter outlining payment arrangements must be included.

## **PVARF TRAVEL STIPEND FOR FUNDED VA INVESTIGATORS**

PVARF provides each funded “VA investigator” with support to attend one scientific meeting per calendar year where an abstract submitted by the investigator has been accepted for presentation (talk or poster). A “VA investigator” is defined as being eligible to receive VA research funds from Medical Research, HSR&D, RR&D or Cooperative Studies. The following conditions must be met:

1. The investigator is principal investigator (PI) on a peer-reviewed grant from the VA or NIH that is active during the calendar year in question. For VA Cooperative studies, PI is the study chair.
2. At no time during the calendar year in question has the investigator submitted a grant from an institution other than the PVARF unless prohibited by the granting agency (examples of funding sources not allowing use of the PVARF include VA, NIH, and the national branch of the American Cancer Society).
3. At no time during the calendar year in question has the investigator deposited research funds from industrial sources in any institution other than the PVARF.

All legitimate expenses related to the meeting are covered up to a maximum of \$1,700. These include abstract submission fee, registration, airfare, hotel, meals, and other expenses related to travel as described in the section above. Cash advances for travel are not provided. Prior to committing personal resources, the investigator should forward a copy of the notification that the abstract has been accepted to the PVAMC R&D Service Administrative Officer and confirm that the investigator is eligible to have the trip in question reimbursed under this policy.

This program for support of VA investigators will be reviewed each year by the PVARF Board of Directors and extended only if the Board concludes that sufficient reserve funds are available to continue it. No commitments can be made that this current program will be continued in future years.

Guidelines for Travel Supported by PVARF should be followed.

**TRAVEL SUPPORTED BY A 501(c)(3) TAX-EXEMPT  
(NON-PROFIT) ORGANIZATION**

*VA Employees Only*

**Traveling on Authorized Absence**

Federal ethics standards and travel regulations generally allow a VA employee traveling on authorized absence to directly accept gifts of travel support from a non-Federal, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt (*non-profit*) organization. A gift is defined as anything having monetary value. The traveler must disclose to the VA the type and amount of support from the non-profit organization. A traveler may contact the PVAMC Employee Travel Office to verify that the donor organization is 501(c)(3) tax-exempt.

If the travel relates to the traveler's official VA duties, he/she may request authorized absence from the PVAMC. VA employees are responsible for submitting an **SF 71** in addition to entering their AA in **VISTA**. See Requesting Authorized Absence or Annual Leave section for additional information.

The traveler is responsible for providing the R&D Travel Coordinator with appropriate documentation on dates, location, and purpose of travel. The Travel Coordinator prepares and submits the appropriate paperwork:

**1. Memo & 10-0101B**

Upon approval of the 10-0101B, the traveler may accept the support directly in 'cash' or 'in kind.' The traveler is eligible for government-rate airfare when travel is supported by a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. The employee may not accept an honorarium or consultant fee while on AA.

The traveler may handle reimbursement directly with the organization. A copy of the reimbursement request should be submitted to the R&D Travel Coordinator. The PVAMC Employee Travel Office must be notified, via **Part V of the 10-0101B**, of any external support offered to PVAMC employees on AA.

**Traveling on Annual Leave**

If the travel does not relate to the VA employee's official VA duty, he/she should request AL and enter it in **VISTA**. No other VA forms or approvals are needed.

**TRAVEL SUPPORTED BY A NON 501(c)(3) TAX-EXEMPT  
(FOR-PROFIT) ORGANIZATION**

***VA Employees Only***

**Traveling on Authorized Absence**

Federal ethics standards and travel regulations generally prohibit a VA employee traveling on authorized absence from directly accepting gifts of travel support from non-Federal organizations, unless the organization is 501(c)(3) tax-exempt (*for-profit*). A gift is defined as anything having monetary value. *Only the VA may accept gifts from a non-501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization to support the official travel of its employees on authorized absence. These gifts may be in kind or by check payable to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Portland, Oregon.*

If the travel relates to the traveler's official VA duties, he/she may request authorized absence from the PVAMC. VA employees are responsible for submitting an **SF 71** in addition to entering their AA in **VISTA**. See Requesting Authorized Absence or Annual Leave section for additional information.

The employee is responsible for providing the R&D Travel Coordinator with appropriate documentation on dates, location, and purpose of travel. The Travel Coordinator will prepare and submit the appropriate paperwork:

1. **OP 165** (for cash/check reimbursement process: from the for-profit organization via the PVAMC to the traveler)
2. **Memo & 10-0101B**
  - a) Support from a for-profit organization may only be for travel expenses such as transportation expenses, lodging, meals and reasonable miscellaneous expenses.
  - b) Benefits that are provided 'in kind' must be made available by sponsors to all attendees incident to and for use at the meeting.

**Travel support 'in kind'**

With VA approval on the **Memo & 10-0101B**, it is appropriate for a non-501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization to pay for travel expenses. The organization may purchase such items 'in kind' for the traveler.

**Travel support 'in cash'**

With VA approval on the **Memo & 10-0101B**, it is appropriate for a non-501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization to pay for travel expenses. *However, cash/checks cannot be paid directly to the traveler from a non-501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Rather, the 'gift' must be sent (attn: R&D Travel Coordinator) as a check payable to the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Portland, Oregon.* In order to facilitate this process, the R&D Travel Coordinator provides a **letter to the organization** explaining the VA reimbursement procedures. The traveler is responsible for submitting this letter to the donor organization along with his/her reimbursement request. The traveler must provide the R&D Travel Coordinator with a **copy of the reimbursement request**. The Travel Coordinator processes the post-trip paperwork needed by the PVAMC Employee Travel

Office to arrange for the traveler's reimbursement. Once the R&D Travel Coordinator receives and deposits the reimbursement check, the Employee Travel Office produces a **travel voucher**. The travel voucher itemizes the reimbursement to be granted to the traveler. The R&D Travel Coordinator reviews the travel voucher for accuracy, collects the traveler's and ACOS/R&D's signature, and returns the travel voucher to PVAMC Employee Travel. The traveler then receives reimbursement via electronic funds transfer to his/her chosen bank account.

The PVAMC Employee Travel Office must be notified, via **Part V of the 10-0101B**, of any external support offered to PVAMC employees on AA.

**Traveling on Annual Leave**

If the travel does not relate to the VA employee's official VA duty, he/she should request AL and enter it in **VISTA**. No other VA forms or approvals are needed.

**TRAVEL SUPPORTED BY OHSU**  
*VA Employees Only*

The following procedure should be followed if the travel is supported by OHSU; i.e., when grant funding administered by OHSU is used.

**OHSU Process**

The traveler may contact **OHSU Corporate Financial Services-Travel Office** at (503) 494-2164 or visit [www.ohsu.edu/finance/travel](http://www.ohsu.edu/finance/travel) for assistance with the OHSU travel policies and procedures. OHSU travel forms are available on the OHSU web site. OHSU has its own contracted travel agency.

**Traveling on Authorized Absence**

If the travel relates to the traveler's official VA duties, he/she should request authorized absence from the PVAMC. VA employees are responsible for submitting an **SF 71** in addition to entering their AA in **VISTA**. See Requesting Authorized Absence or Annual Leave for additional information.

The employee is responsible for providing the R&D Travel Coordinator with appropriate documentation on dates, location, and purpose of travel. The Travel Coordinator will prepare and submit the necessary paperwork:

1. **OP 165** (for cash/check reimbursement process: from OHSU via the PVAMC to the traveler)
2. **Memo & 10-0101B**

Procedures for accepting support from OHSU are identical to those for accepting support from a non 501(c)(3) tax-exempt (*for-profit*) organization. See Travel Supported by a Non 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt (For-Profit) Organization for additional information.

**Traveling on Annual Leave**

Applicable ethics standards generally prohibit VA employees from accepting travel benefits directly from non-Federal sources that do business with VA. There is an exception which permits an employee to accept travel benefits (meals, lodging, transportation, and other benefits) resulting from the employee's outside business or employment activities when the benefits are not offered or enhanced because of the employee's VA status. If the traveler is utilizing OHSU travel support while on annual leave, and traveling as an OHSU employee or on outside business not related to his/her VA employment, the traveler may accept gifts of reimbursement for travel expenses directly from OHSU. AL should be entered in **VISTA** Time and Attendance prior to travel.

## **TRAVEL SUPPORTED BY ANOTHER FEDERAL SOURCE (i.e., NIH)**

### ***VA Employees Only***

It is appropriate for a traveler to directly accept travel support from another Federal source such as NIH. The Federal funding source should provide instructions for travel arrangements and reimbursement procedures.

#### **Traveling on Authorized Absence**

If the travel relates to the traveler's official VA duties, he/she may request authorized absence from the PVAMC. VA employees are responsible for submitting an **SF 71** in addition to entering their AA in **VISTA**. See Requesting Authorized Absence or Annual Leave for additional information.

Regional Counsel's recommendation is not necessary because travel regulations require an ethics review only when the outside support is from a non-Federal source. However, the Employee Travel Office needs the Memo to Regional Counsel & 10-0101B so that the information may be included in a semi-annual report to VAHQ.

The employee is responsible for providing the R&D Travel Coordinator with appropriate documentation on dates, location, and purpose of travel. The Travel Coordinator prepares and submits the necessary paperwork:

#### **1. Memo & 10-0101B**

The PVAMC Employee Travel Office must be notified, via **Part V of the 10-0101B**, of any external support offered to PVAMC employees on AA. After the trip, the traveler should submit a copy of the reimbursement request to the R&D Travel Coordinator. The Travel Coordinator utilized the traveler's reimbursement request to complete the Part V. It is not acceptable for the traveler to accept a consultant fee while on AA.

#### **Traveling on Annual Leave**

If the travel does not relate to the VA employee's official VA duty, he/she should request AL and enter it in **VISTA**. No other VA forms or approvals are needed.

## FOREIGN TRAVEL

### *VA Employees Only*

#### Official Government Passport

An official Government passport is required for VA employees traveling on official Government business to foreign countries, including Canada and Mexico. This applies to any VA employee traveling on authorized absence regardless of the funding source. This has been implemented for the protection of VA employees traveling on official Government business. For trips that combine official and personal travel, the traveler must have both an official Government passport and a personal passport. Also note that some foreign countries will require an entry visa. The Travel Policy Division at VA Central Office can advise the traveler of countries requiring entry visas and will assist the traveler in obtaining visas.

Because of the time required to process a Government passport, the Travel Policy Division at VA Central Office must receive applications at least 45 days in advance of the departure date. The R&D Travel Coordinator needs the following items at least 12 (twelve) weeks in advance of the departure date so that he/she may submit them to the Travel Policy Division:

- 1) Name, title and grade of traveler
- 2) Countries to be visited and length of stay
- 3) Date of departure from, and return to, the United States
- 4) Purpose of trip
- 5) For individuals who have never had a passport issued (official or personal):
  - A completed **Form DS-11** signed and certified by a local Clerk of the Court, Passport Agent, or authorized postal employee
  - Two 2x2 passport pictures (front facing with light background)
  - Birth Certificate (must be original with official seal), Naturalization Certificate or other approved proof of citizenship
  - Copy of drivers license or other identification documentation (may be photocopied), and
  - Country Clearance Form

Or

For individuals who have had a passport issued within the last 15 years and their name is the same as on the passport:

- A completed and signed **Form DS-82**
- The current passport
- Two 2x2 passport pictures (front facing with light background)
- Country Clearance Form

The Travel Policy Division will return all documentation provided with the official Government passport application upon issue of the passport.

Upon return from authorized travel, the official Government passport should be returned to the R&D Travel Coordinator and he/she will return the passport to the Travel Policy Division as required. For future travel, the R&D Travel Coordinator will request the traveler's official Government passport from the Travel Policy Division one week prior to the date of departure.

### **Travel to a Foreign Country ( *including Canada or Mexico* )**

A VA employee using research funding to travel to a foreign country (including Canada or Mexico) must obtain VA approval in advance of the travel. With the assistance of the R&D Travel Coordinator, the traveler needs to complete general travel paperwork and foreign travel paperwork. The information procedures outlined in this section are specific to gaining approval for foreign travel. In addition to the foreign travel procedures, see the appropriate travel support section for procedures for accepting support. Note that travel support from a foreign organization should be handled through the procedures outlined in Travel Support from a Non 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt (For-Profit) Organization.

### **Traveling on Authorized Absence**

If the travel relates to the traveler's official VA duties, he/she may request authorized absence from the PVAMC. VA employees are responsible for submitting an **SF 71** in addition to entering their AA in **VISTA**. See Requesting Authorized Absence or Annual Leave for additional information.

The employee is responsible for providing the R&D Travel Coordinator with the following information.

1. Documentation on dates, location, and purpose of travel
2. Letters of invitation/acceptance confirming activities while in foreign country
3. Complete typed itinerary of trip
4. Approved SF 71
5. A cover letter to the Undersecretary for Health detailing a) reason for request for foreign travel, b) current salary allocation per hour with calculation of total amount of funding necessary for AA, c) cost being requested from appropriated funding (if applicable), d) who will provide coverage for patient care issue while the traveler is away and e) whether or not there will be clinics cancelled as a result of the travel. This document must include signature from the direct supervisor, service chief and have signature lines for Facility Director, and VISN Director.
6. Completed Country Clearance Form
7. A memo to the PVAMC Foreign Travel Review Committee documenting the "compelling programmatic reasons" for multiple travelers (if traveler is aware that more than one employee is requesting foreign travel approval for the same meeting or activity).

The Travel Coordinator will prepare and submit the necessary paperwork:

1. **10-5504: Foreign Travel Briefing Slip**
2. **OP 165** (if VA, for-profit organization, or foreign organization is supporting the travel)

3. **Memo & 10-0101B** (if the VA employee will be receiving travel support from an outside source)

### **VAHQ Approval**

If the traveler meets one or more of the following circumstances, he/she must receive approval from VA Headquarters.

1. VA funding will be used to support foreign travel expenses, including travel, per diem, and registration fees.
2. The requestor's cumulative foreign travel for the calendar year will exceed twenty calendar days away from the facility.
3. The requestor's cumulative authorized foreign travel exceeds three trips in the calendar year, including the trip for which the request is made.

In addition to submitting the required paperwork for foreign travel, the requestor and Service Chief should submit a **cover letter** signed by the facility Director to VAHQ.

The PVAMC Education Service – Foreign Travel Committee must receive the completed foreign travel paperwork *90 days prior* to the date travel begins. This same request must be in VAHQ *60 days prior* to date travel begins. Requests not meeting the time plan may be automatically returned “disapproved – not received with sufficient time for consideration.”

### **PVAMC Approval**

If the traveler does not require VAHQ approval (as outlined above), the request must be submitted to the PVAMC Education Service – Foreign Travel Committee *90 days in advance* of travel.

### **Traveling on Annual Leave**

If the travel does not relate to the VA employee's official VA duty, he/she should request AL and enter it in **VISTA**. No other VA forms or approvals are needed.