

Section 1. Travel Expenses of Judges for Meetings.

The following definitions shall apply to the terms used in Section 1:

(a) Definitions:

- (i) The terms "per annum" or "per year" mean "fiscal year" which begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.
- (ii) The term "public funds" means legislatively appropriated funds, judicial expense funds, self-generated funds, funds of federal, state, local, parish or municipal governments, and any other sources of public funds.
- (iii) The term "meeting" means legal seminar, legal convention, judicial business meeting, and ceremonial or other functions attended by a judge in a judicial capacity away from his or her court.
- (iv) The term "judge" means a justice of the supreme court; a judge of a court of appeal; a judge of a district court; a judge of a juvenile court; a judge of a family court; a judge of a parish court; a judge of a city court; a judge of a municipal court; a judge of a traffic court; and a judge of any other court of limited or special jurisdiction, unless otherwise indicated.
- (v) The term "Judicial Administrator" means the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court of Louisiana.
- (vi) The term "international travel" shall be defined as travel to destinations outside the fifty United States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, the Virgin Islands, Canada and Mexico.

(b) Travel Expenses for Meetings. Whenever a judge, as defined in this section, requests reimbursement of or payment for travel expenses incurred or to be incurred in attending a meeting, as defined in this section, from any source of public funds, as defined in this section, the amount of reimbursement or payment shall be limited according to the following provisions:

(i) **Transportation Expenses.** Transportation expenses for meetings shall be reimbursed or paid from any public funds under the following rules:

(a) Travel by Airplane . Reimbursement or payment from any public funds for airfare shall be limited to actual cost of coach or economy class airfare, including fees imposed for ticket changes, and the request must be supported by an original receipt. A judge should purchase airline tickets well in advance of the meeting, whenever practical, so as to obtain the lowest airfare. A baggage allowance of \$2.00 per item of luggage handled upon arrival and departure during air travel shall be reimbursable.

(b) Travel by Private Vehicle . Mileage reimbursement or payment from any public funds for travel by private vehicle shall be limited to actual mileage at a rate not to exceed the IRS Federal Mileage Rate. Mileage reimbursement or payment for out of state travel by private vehicle shall not exceed the cost of travel by economy or coach class air rates. A judge must provide dates of travel and destination with each reimbursement or payment request.

(c) Rental Vehicle . Reimbursement or payment from any public funds of expenses of a rental vehicle shall be limited as follows:

(1) Travel to and from Meeting Site .

A judge may not rent a vehicle for travel to and from the city which is the site of the meeting unless a rental vehicle is the only or the most economical means for accomplishing the purposes of the trip; or unless there are extraordinary circumstances necessitating travel by rental vehicle. This provision does not apply to a vehicle leased by a judge pursuant to statutory authority.

Reimbursement or payment of expenses of a rental vehicle for travel to and from the city which is the site of the meeting shall be limited to the

rental cost of a mid-size automobile, plus the cost of gasoline used in traveling to and from the meeting city; nevertheless, such reimbursement or payment shall not exceed the cost of coach or economy airfare to the meeting city. A judge who obtains reimbursement or payment of such rental vehicle expenses from any public funds shall not be additionally entitled to any mileage allowance as in the case of use of a personal vehicle.

(2) Travel While at Meeting Site . When a judge rents a vehicle in the city which is the site of the meeting, reimbursement or payment of expenses of such rental vehicle shall be limited to the rental cost of a mid-size automobile, plus the cost of gasoline used.

(3) Collision Deductible Waiver . Collision Deductible Waiver (CDW) is not reimbursable for domestic travel. CDW costs may be reimbursed for international travel. Should a collision occur while on official state business, the cost of the deductible should be paid by the traveler and reimbursements claimed on a travel expense voucher. The accidents should also be reported to the Office of Risk Management.

(d) Other Transportation Expenses . Actual expenses of taxicabs, airport transportation, ferry fares, road and bridge tolls, and other expenses incurred with using public transportation during travel for meetings shall be reimbursable.

Individual transactions in excess of \$15.00 must be supported by original receipts.

(ii) Lodging. Reimbursement or payment from any public funds for lodging expenses for meetings must be supported by an original receipt, under the following rules:

(a) Except as provided in Section 1(b)(ii)(c), reimbursement or payment from any public funds for a judge's lodging while attending a meeting shall be limited to the special group rate charged at the hotel of the meeting site. If lodging at the special group rate at the hotel of the meeting site is not available, the amount of reimbursement shall be based on reasonableness. Reimbursement for lodging without adequate supporting documentation, as required by the IRS, shall be made at a rate not to exceed the applicable IRS Federal Lodging Rate. When appropriate, the hotel charge for automobile parking shall also be reimbursable.

(b) Reimbursement or payment from any public funds for lodging expenses shall be limited to expenses incurred during the official days, including the closing day, that the meeting is held, plus one day of lodging for early arrival. Lodging expenses incurred beyond official meeting days, plus one day for early arrival, shall be reimbursed on cost-efficiency basis only when the request includes documentation that the extended stay resulted in a saving of public funds.

(c) On an annual basis, the Supreme Court shall set the reimbursable rate for lodging for both the Louisiana State Bar Association Annual Meeting and the Summer School for Judges sponsored by the Louisiana Judicial College.

(iii) Meals, Tips and Miscellaneous Expenses .

Reimbursement or payment from any public funds of meals, tips and miscellaneous expenses shall be limited either to the flat per diem rate promulgated annually and approved by the Supreme Court, or to the actual and reasonable cost of such expenditures which are supported by an original receipt, not to exceed the per diem rates. On or about January 15 of each year, the Judicial Administrator shall mail to every judge the flat per diem and partial per diem rates approved by the Supreme Court for the year.

In accordance with Internal Revenue Service regulations, payments of per diem for travel that does not require an overnight stay will be reported to the IRS as income on form W-2 or 1099 on a calendar year basis. Payments of per diem in excess of IRS Federal Standard Rates will be reported to the IRS as income on form W-2 or 1099 on a calendar year basis if and as required by the Internal Revenue Service.

(iv) **Registration Expenses.** Reimbursement or payment from any public funds for registration fees for a judge for attendance at meetings shall be limited to the fee actually paid or to be paid. Requests for reimbursement or payment shall include a copy of the completed registration form and the meeting agenda or program.

(c) International Travel. Reimbursement or payment for international travel for a meeting, as defined in this section, shall be limited to the annual and/or semi-annual official business meetings, including related continuing legal education meetings, of the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, and the Louisiana State Bar Association. **[Amended effective May 28, 2003]**

(d) Limitation of Reimbursement or Payment of Travel Expenses.

The judges of each court of appeal, judicial district court, juvenile court, family court, parish court, city court, municipal court, and traffic court may otherwise adopt more restrictive travel regulations to control the reimbursement or payment of public funds for travel expenses for meetings. Each court's travel regulations shall be submitted for information purposes to the Supreme Court and to the auditor(s) of relevant public funds. No reimbursement or payment of travel expenses from any public funds will be permitted unless reimbursement or payment is in compliance with this Section or with the travel regulations of the court on which that judge is presiding.

Whenever federal or private funds are available for the expenses of a meeting, as defined in this Section, whether such funds are in the form of payment for or reimbursement of the expenses or an honorarium for participation in the meeting, the judge should seek to obtain such funds. Thereafter, the judge may either (1) apply these funds first to the expenses and then seek reimbursement from other public funds only to the extent that the expense reimbursement under this Section exceeds the amount already received, or (2) may seek partial or full payment or reimbursement first from other public funds and then, upon receipt of the federal or private funds, remit the federal or private funds to the administrator of the pertinent public fund. In no event shall a judge obtain duplicate reimbursement or payment for the same travel expense from more than one source, public or private.

The requests for reimbursement or payment of travel expenses shall provide an itemized voucher for the actual travel expenses incurred, together with the required original receipts, invoices, and other required supporting documentation.

Effective June 1, 2000