

# NON-FEDERAL PEER REVIEW TRAVEL GUIDELINES

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION.....	Page 2
2. WORLDTRAVELSERVICE CONTACT INFORMATION.....	Page 2
3. WTS PROCESSING FEES AND COST TO THE GOVERNMENT .....	Page 3
4. RESERVATIONS AND TICKETING THROUGH WTS .....	Page 3
5. CHANGES TO WTS ISSUED TICKETS.....	Page 4
6. CHANGES DUE TO UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND INCLEMENT WEATHER...Page 4	
7. CANCELING WTS ISSUED TICKETS.....	Page 5
8. ALTERNATE ROUTING AND PERSONAL TRAVEL.....	Page 5
9. PRE-EXISTING SELF PURCHASED TICKETS .....	Page 5
10. PREMIUM/BUSINESS CLASS TRAVEL ACCOMMODATION REQUEST DUE TO MEDICAL CONDITIONS.....	Page 6
11. TRAIN SERVICE.....	Page 6
12. FOREIGN TRAVEL.....	Page 7
13. WTS RESPONSE TIME.....	Page 7
14. TRAVEL INSURANCE BY WTS.....	Page 7
15. NON-FEDERAL TRAVEL FAQs.....	Page 7
16. SREA REIMBURSEMENTS RATES.....	Page 8
17. FOREIGN REVIEWER REIMBURSEMENT OF WEBCAM.....	Page 10

# NON-FEDERAL PEER REVIEW TRAVEL GUIDELINES

## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

For **NON-FEDERAL REVIEWERS** to avoid out-of-pocket cost or additional fees, travel reservations to attend a NIH Peer Review meeting must be made through **WorldTravelService (WTS)**.

**It is strongly encouraged that all non-federal reviewers use WTS in making their travel arrangements to attend an NIH Peer Review meeting. If reviewers choose to make NIH peer review travel reservations outside of WTS through a self-purchased ticket, reviewers will need to do the following:**

- 1) Request pre-approval (4 to 6 weeks from the date of the meeting) from the designated Scientific Review Evaluation Activities (SREA) Sr. Program Specialist or IC SREA Administrator.*
- 2) Provide (via e-mail, [CSRSREAHelp@mail.nih.gov](mailto:CSRSREAHelp@mail.nih.gov) or IC SREA Administrator) a justification as why WTS is not being used, flight itinerary, and cost of the ticket.*
- 3) The pre-approved request will be evaluated to determine whether the self-purchased ticket is justified, if it will be approved, and at what dollar amount, if any, a reimbursement will be allowed.*
- 4) Airline penalty fees for changes or cancellations to a self-purchased ticket will not be reimbursed to the reviewer.*

Note: For **FEDERAL REVIEWERS**, the CSR or the IC Review Branch Administrative Office will issue a federal travel order to be processed through the required government employee reservation contractor. Contact the NIH Scientific Review Officer of the meeting for further guidance and contact information on booking your travel arrangements for an NIH peer review meeting.

## 2. WORLDTRAVELSERVICE CONTACT INFORMATION

- WTS On-Line Booking <http://www.nihreviewer.com>
- Toll free number 1-800-638-8500
- Local number 301-816-8991
- Fax number 301-816-0715
- After Hours (7pm EST) 877-853-3648 (Use code WAS1S2115)
- After Hours Outside US/Canada 516-730-2648 (Use code WAS1S2115)
- E-mail travel/change requests: [nih@worldtravelservice.com](mailto:nih@worldtravelservice.com)
- E-mail to cancel a flight: [cancel@worldtravelservice.com](mailto:cancel@worldtravelservice.com)

## NON-FEDERAL PEER REVIEW TRAVEL GUIDELINES

### 3. WTS PROCESSING FEES AND COST TO THE GOVERNMENT

Period of Performance	3/15/2021 to 3/14/2022	3/15/2022 to 3/14/2023	3/15/2023 to 3/14/2024	3/15/2024 to 3/14/2025	3/15/2025 to 3/14/2026
On-line Self Service - Domestic	\$44.05	\$45.37	\$46.73	\$48.13	\$49.58
On-line Self Service - International	\$44.05	\$45.37	\$46.73	\$48.13	\$49.58
Full Service (phone, fax, email) Domestic	\$67.23	\$69.25	\$71.32	\$73.46	\$75.67
Full Service (phone, fax, email) International	\$83.47	\$85.97	\$88.55	\$91.21	\$93.95

NOTE: On-line booking is most cost effective to the government. Login page requires the following:

Username = reviewer's choice  
 Password = reviewer's choice  
 Corporate ID = NIH (not case sensitive)

### 4. RESERVATIONS AND TICKETING THROUGH WTS

- To maximize flexibility in reviewer's travel arrangements and cost savings to the government, reviewers are encouraged to make reservations by using the WTS on-line reservation system at a minimum of four weeks to maximum of eight weeks prior to departure.
- Reviewers who typically review for standing panels or special emphasis meetings may request reservations three months prior to the departure date. Reviewers must assure the travel dates and their itineraries are firm. Changes in travel itineraries are costly to the government.
- WTS will seek the lowest available non-refundable direct round trip air fare, at the time of booking, from the reviewer's domicile city to the destination where NIH is hosting the meeting.
- One-way airfares will not be issued by WTS without prior approval by SREA. Travel Request Approval (TAR) must be completed with justification or necessity as to why a one-way airfare is required and submit to the SREA Office for review and approval.
- WTS has expanded capability to book all commercial airlines and is authorized to issue non-refundable tickets for reviewers traveling within the domestic United States for NIH Peer Review meetings.
- WTS is authorized to make travel arrangements for reviewers on sabbatical, whose current residence is other than their domicile city.
- WTS will issue e-tickets and a confirmation will be sent via e-mail or fax. Paper tickets will not be used unless required by the foreign country or airline.

## **NON-FEDERAL PEER REVIEW TRAVEL GUIDELINES**

8. Airline baggage fees for check-in or carry-on luggage imposed by the airlines must be paid by the reviewer at the time of check-in. The reviewer receives a NIH flat rate stipend (\$235) per face-to-face peer review meeting for reimbursement of any imposed airline fees.

### **5. CHANGES TO WTS ISSUED TICKETS**

1. Reviewers making changes to WTS purchased tickets must make the changes through WTS.
2. Reviewers are encouraged to avoid changing travel plans after WTS issues the ticket because changes in travel itineraries are costly to the government. Changes typically require WTS to issue a new ticket and the fare, at the time of the change, is usually much higher. In addition, the government is required to pay WTS a processing change fee and the imposed automatic domestic airline change fee up to \$200.00 per change.
3. Reviewers have **limited flexibility** in making one (1) request to WTS without seeking prior NIH approval. The request for change has to meet the following criteria; otherwise prior authorization is required from the SREA Sr. Program Specialist:
  - a. See CHANGES DUE TO UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES
  - b. There has been no previous change request.
  - c. The change does not involve a personal leg or non-NIH business related leg of itinerary.
  - d. If the departure time is greater than 2 hours or more prior to the originally scheduled departing flight time, and
  - e. If the total change cost does not exceed \$600.00
4. Changes to itineraries due to personal medical emergencies during participation at a NIH peer review meeting must receive prior approval from NIH.
5. To change a WTS issued ticket, e-mail WTS at [nih@worldtravelservice.com](mailto:nih@worldtravelservice.com) or call WTS at 1-800-638-8500.

### **6. CHANGES DUE TO UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Reviewers making changes to WTS purchased tickets must make the changes through WTS. WTS is authorized to process change requests due to NIH altering the meeting schedule, severe inclement weather resulting in airport closures or airlines cancelling flights, or personal emergencies. If unusual circumstances (power outages) prevent WTS in making change requests to WTS issued tickets, reviewers can make the necessary changes (coach class) and will be reimbursed for any additional cost or change fees by NIH upon submission of receipts. Other circumstances, not listed below, involving changes will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and require prior NIH SREA approval.

1. If the peer review meeting is changed from a two-day meeting to a one-day meeting after the WTS ticket has been issued.
2. If the two-day or one-day peer review meeting ends early.
  - A. The reviewer can wait for the original booked flight.

## **NON-FEDERAL PEER REVIEW TRAVEL GUIDELINES**

- B. The reviewer may contact WTS to request a change to an earlier departure time. WTS is authorized to change the ticket if both of the following conditions apply:
- If the departure time is greater than 2 hours or more prior to the originally scheduled departing flight time, and
  - If the total change cost does not exceed \$600.00
- C. The reviewer can seek “same day stand by” availability. Any fee associated with seeking “stand by” availability will be reimbursed upon submission of receipts.
3. Inclement weather events resulting in airport closures, or airlines cancelling flights, or a personal emergency related to severe weather circumstances.

### **7. CANCELING WTS ISSUED TICKETS**

For WTS issued tickets that need to be canceled, the reviewer must e-mail WTS prior to the scheduled departure or original flight time at [cancel@worldtravelservice.com](mailto:cancel@worldtravelservice.com) or call WTS at 1-800-638-8500.

### **8. ALTERNATE ROUTING AND PERSONAL TRAVEL**

WTS is authorized to make reservations or bookings for a reviewer who may want to book alternate routings or personal travel unrelated to the NIH Peer Review meeting. WTS has the capability to access multiple airlines or travel reservation systems for the most cost and time efficient routing and scheduling options. The following guidelines will be used:

1. At time of initial booking, if the reviewer requests an alternate routing or alternate routing to include personal travel and the fare is the same or less than the lowest available direct round trip fare from the reviewer’s domicile city to the destination where NIH is hosting the meeting, the reviewer’s alternate routing will be booked at no additional cost to the reviewer.
2. At time of initial booking, if the reviewer requests an alternate routing or alternate routing to include personal travel which results in a higher fare than the lowest available direct round trip air fare, the reviewer will be responsible to pay, via personal credit card, for all additional costs. WTS will be responsible for identifying and applying those additional costs to the reviewer’s personal credit card.
3. At the time of initial booking, if a reviewer requests alternate routing to include a personal travel leg not associated or does not touch the meeting location and is requesting specific payment arrangements for any leg of the itinerary it will require prior approval from NIH via the Travel Approval Request Form.
4. Any cost incurred due to a change in the reviewer’s personal travel leg of the itinerary will be paid by the reviewer.

### **9. PRE-EXISTING SELF PURCHASED TICKETS**

The following guidelines will be used for reviewers who have previously purchased an airline ticket outside of WTS, and who subsequently receive an invitation by NIH to serve as a reviewer in an NIH Peer Review meeting.

## **NON-FEDERAL PEER REVIEW TRAVEL GUIDELINES**

1. The reviewer will be reimbursed any change fees, not cancellation fees, imposed by airlines to change their airfare ticket to be able to attend the NIH Peer Review meeting.
2. To receive reimbursement, reviewers are to submit the NIH/SRO's e-mail invitation, the original itinerary indicating the date the flight was booked, and the revised itinerary indicating the additional costs associated with the change.
3. Receipts are to be submitted to the NIH SRO within 10 business days from the date of the meeting.

### **10. PREMIUM/BUSINESS CLASS TRAVEL ACCOMMODATION REQUEST DUE TO MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

The following guidelines will be used for requesting authorization of Premium/Business Class travel Accommodations due to a medical condition or requesting authorization for a Travel Attendant due to the reviewers' medical condition.

1. Request should be made preferably 4-6 weeks in advance of the travel date.
2. Reviewer must complete the “**Request for Premium Class Common Carrier Travel Accommodations for Travelers with Medical Conditions**”. Detailed guidelines and the request form may be obtained by contacting the given IC Scientific Review Officer for IC reviewers or the CSR Scientific Review Officer or by sending an email [csrsreahelp@csr.nih.gov](mailto:csrsreahelp@csr.nih.gov) for CSR reviewers.
3. Upon NIH/OMS approval, the NIH SREA office or IC SREA POC Administrator will notify the reviewer and WTS. Subsequently, WTS will process the request.
4. If the need for a travel attendant to accompany a reviewer due to a medical condition is approved by the NIH Office Medical Service (OMS), reimbursements will be allowed as follows: Airfare, lodging and per diem for meals for the travel attendant.

### **11. TRAIN SERVICE**

Federal travel policy considers the use of Acela trains as a premium travel accommodation and is defined as an extra-fare that operates at an increased fare due to the extra performance of the trains (i.e., faster speed or fewer stops). Extra-fare train service is considered to be a higher cost and a class above the lowest class offered on any particular trains.

**New York/Washington, DC Corridor:** The rail infrastructure within the New York/Washington, DC corridor has numerous bends and turns which does not allow the Acela train to travel at high speeds. Therefore, there is minimum reduction in travel time (less than 20 minutes) in the Northeastern corridor between the regional trains and the extra-fare trains. Therefore, when traveling within the **New York/Washington, DC corridor**, WTS will issue only regional coach fares.

**Other Parts of the Northeastern Corridor:** When traveling **within other parts of the Northeastern corridor**, travel by extra-fare trains may be requested and approved by SREA with a reasonable justification. SREA will notify WTS to authorize the extra-fare train.

# NON-FEDERAL PEER REVIEW TRAVEL GUIDELINES

## **Reminders:**

1. Requests for approval to travel by extra-fare trains may be authorized and approved when justified, or if it is cost effective, or if it is more advantageous to the Government, or if it is required for security reasons.
2. Reviewers are to book 8 weeks in advance when possible and no less than 28 days in advance.
3. Reviewers must email **cancel@worldtravelservice.com** or call to cancel prior to the scheduled departure time or the entire ticket has no value. (Amtrak change effective March 1, 2014)

## **12. FOREIGN TRAVEL**

WTS is authorized to issue non-refundable coach class tickets on US Flag Carriers or carriers under the “Fly American Act” for foreign reviewers. Any request for a refundable coach class tickets for foreign travel due to extenuating circumstances must receive prior approval from the SREA Office.

## **13. WTS RESPONSE TIME**

1. Response to reviewer’s inquiry will be within 1 business day.
2. Arrangements by on-line bookings, e-mail, fax, or telephone will be processed within 1 business day.

## **14. TRAVEL INSURANCE BY WTS**

\$200,000 in travel insurance is provided for each issued ticket by WTS at no additional cost to the government or the traveler. Travel insurance coverage does not apply when reservations or changes are made through sources other than WTS.

## **15. NON-FEDERAL TRAVEL FAQs**

<https://shared.csr.nih.gov/SREA%20Documents/nonfederaltravelfaqs93011.pdf>

## NON-FEDERAL PEER REVIEW TRAVEL GUIDELINES

### 16. SREA REIMBURSEMENT RATES

#### ONLY FOR NON-FEDERAL SREA REVIEWERS

**Note:** The established honorarium is paid per day, not per meeting, government wide.

#### Non-Local Reviewer (non-federal)

# of Meeting Days	Total Reimbursement	Reimbursement Breakdown
1	\$515	Includes \$200 honorarium, \$80 per diem for meals, \$235 for miscellaneous expenses (taxis, shuttles, luggage fees, internet Wi-Fi, airport parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)
2	\$795	Includes \$400 honorarium, \$160 for meals, \$235 for miscellaneous expenses (taxis, shuttles, luggage fees, internet Wi-Fi, airport parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)
3	\$1075	Includes \$600 honorarium, \$240 for meals, \$235 for miscellaneous expenses (taxis, shuttles, luggage fees, internet Wi-Fi, airport parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)
4	\$1355	Includes \$800 honorarium, \$320 for meals, \$235 for miscellaneous expenses (taxis, shuttles, luggage fees, internet Wi-Fi, airport parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)

#### Local Reviewer (non-federal)-DRIVES to meeting each day

(Local Reviewer's home destination is within 50 mi. of the hotel meeting site and drives - Local no Lodging)

# of Meeting Days	Total Reimbursement	Reimbursement Breakdown
1	\$345	Includes \$200 honorarium, \$45 per diem for meals, \$100 for miscellaneous expenses (internet Wi-Fi, hotel parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)
2	\$690	Includes \$400 honorarium, \$90 for meals, \$200 for miscellaneous expenses (internet Wi-Fi, hotel parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)
3	\$1035	Includes \$600 honorarium, \$135 for meals, \$300 for miscellaneous expenses (internet Wi-Fi, hotel parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)
4	\$1380	Includes \$800 honorarium, \$180 for meals, \$400 for miscellaneous expenses (internet Wi-Fi, hotel parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)

#### Local Reviewer (non-federal)-STAYS at hotel meeting site

(Local Reviewer's home destination is within 50 mi. of the hotel meeting site and stays-Local with Lodging)

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## NON-FEDERAL PEER REVIEW TRAVEL GUIDELINES

# of Meeting Days	Total Reimbursement	Reimbursement Breakdown
1	\$380	Includes \$200 honorarium, \$80 per diem for meals, \$100 for miscellaneous expenses (internet Wi-Fi, hotel parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)
2	\$700	Includes \$400 honorarium, \$160 for meals, \$140 for miscellaneous expenses (internet Wi-Fi, hotel parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)
3	\$1020	Includes \$600 honorarium, \$240 for meals, \$180 for miscellaneous expenses (internet Wi-Fi, hotel parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)
4	\$1340	Includes \$800 honorarium, \$320 for meals, \$220 for miscellaneous expenses (internet Wi-Fi, hotel parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.)

### Mail Reviews

Reimbursement is **only for honorarium** based on the number of written critiques submitted and does not include a per diem reimbursement for meals or miscellaneous expenses (taxis, shuttles, luggage fees, internet Wi-Fi, parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.).

Reimbursement Breakdown	Honorarium
1-3 written critiques submitted, per meeting	\$100
4 more written critiques submitted, per meeting	\$200

### Electronic Reviews

Telephone assisted meetings (TAM), video assisted meetings (VAM), or internet assisted meetings (IAM). Reimbursement is **only for honorarium** based on the number of days of the meeting and does not include a per diem reimbursement for meals or miscellaneous expenses (taxis, shuttles, luggage fees, internet Wi-Fi, parking fees, tolls, mileage reimbursement to and from the home destination, etc.).

Reimbursement Breakdown	Honorarium
For a one-day meeting	\$200
For a two-day meeting	\$400
For a three-day meeting	\$600
For a four-day meeting	\$800

### Editorial Reviews

## NON-FEDERAL PEER REVIEW TRAVEL GUIDELINES

Stage	Reimbursement
1	Honorarium for a reviewer is \$100.00 <u>per meeting</u> for 1-3 written critiques submitted Honorarium for a reviewer is \$200.00 <u>per meeting</u> for 4 or more written critiques submitted
2	<b><u>One day meeting:</u></b> \$200 honorarium, \$80 per diem for meals, \$235 for miscellaneous expenses per meeting (taxis, shuttles, luggage fees, internet Wi-Fi, etc.) <b><u>Two day meeting:</u></b> \$400 honorarium, \$160.00 for meals, \$235.00 for miscellaneous expenses per (taxis, shuttles, luggage fees, internet Wi-Fi, etc.) <b><u>Three day meeting:</u></b> \$600 honorarium, \$240 for meals, \$235.00 for miscellaneous expenses per (taxis, shuttles, luggage fees, internet Wi-Fi, etc.)

Notes: 1) Honoraria will not be paid for pre-meetings that do not involve decisions or deliberations.

2) Honoraria paid for service days rendered as posted in the IMPAC system.

3) Reimbursement payments are for the dates of the scheduled meeting and do not include days of travel to or from the meeting.

4) If a reviewer participates in multiple meetings using several review platforms (face-to-face, mail, TAM, or other electronic platforms) on the same day, only one honorarium based on highest level of participation will be reimbursed. An honorarium is paid per day, not per meeting, government-wide.

### 17. FOREIGN REVIEWER REIMBURSEMENT OF WEBCAM

Foreign Reviewers may purchase a webcam for their computer to participate in an NIH Peer Review electronic platform meeting.

- Foreign reviewers will be reimbursed up to \$50.00 U.S. Dollars and will be required to submit a receipt to the SRO.
- The foreign reviewer must register in NIH SPRS (Secure Payee Registration System) within eRA Commons with a current home residential address and indicate if they have or do not have a U.S. Bank account.

**Note:** Reimbursement can be processed in two ways:

- If the reviewer indicates in NIH SPRS they have a U.S. Bank Account, reimbursement will be electronically deposited.
- If the reviewer indicates in NIH SPRS they do not have a U.S. Bank Account, OFM will mail a check to the reviewer's residential home address via DHL.