

Guidelines for Covenant Group Meeting Arrangements

Lodging and Meeting Room Arrangements

You will be responsible for contacting an appropriate facility to arrange for lodging and/or meeting space, and for negotiating price with the retreat or conference center.

Please try to:

- ◇ Keep per person cost under \$160 per day, including meals
- ◇ Keep meeting room costs at a minimum

Have the following information ready before you contact a retreat facility:

- ✓ How many rooms you'll need.
- ✓ How many nights you'll be staying.
- ✓ What kind of needs you'll have for meeting space.
- ✓ How the meeting space needs to be set up (classroom style, U-shaped, etc.).
- ✓ Whether you will need meals catered (if they are not otherwise available).
- ✓ Either a rooming list or a clearly understood plan for group members to make their own reservations. (Use whatever is easiest for you. If you use a rooming list, most lodges request submission one month prior to the reservation; if participants make their own reservations, have a cut-off date by which they must call in).
- ✓ Your plan for how you will pay for the rooms. (We prefer to use Direct Bill for the gatherings paid for by CNP funds).

When you are ready to enter into a contract with a retreat or conference facility, please:

- ◇ Send a copy of the contract and credit application for direct billing to Catherine Reuning, Administrative Assistant in the Office of Theology and Worship. **Do not sign these contracts/applications yourself** – contracts **must be** approved by PC(USA)'s Legal Department. Direct Billing applications must be routed through PC(USA)'s Accounting Department for signature. This process can take up to two weeks.
- ◇ Contracts for which we are issuing payment must be name "Presbyterian Church (USA), a corporation." You should be the primary contact for housing lists, while Catherine Reuning will be the primary contact for billing.

If a meeting participant must cancel after reservations have been made, please:

- ◇ Notify your retreat or conference facility contact **and** the catering department of the cancellation, otherwise we'll be charged for their room and meals.

Please do NOT:

- ◇ Sign a retreat center contract, direct billing application, or catering contract if these are to be paid from grant funds. These **MUST BE** signed by the PC(USA)'s Legal and Accounting Departments, otherwise the contracts will be invalid.
- ◇ Cancel the conference after entering into a contract with the retreat or conference facility. Many contracts have language stating that, should you cancel, the retreat or conference facility holds us responsible for lost revenue, which could be substantial depending on the size of the meeting.

Please DO:

- ◇ Be aware of deadlines for deposits, rooming lists, catering menus.
- ◇ Contact Catherine Reuning or Karen Russell if you have any questions.

Catering

You should contact the Catering Manager of your event venue soon after entering into a contract with the retreat or conference facility (your contact can put you in touch with him/her). The Catering Manager will send you menus from which to choose meals and coffee breaks, and will work with you on meeting room setup. Depending on the language in your contract, catering arrangements must be finalized anywhere from a few days to a few weeks prior to your meeting.

Please DO:

- ◇ Try to keep meal cost under \$15 per person per meal.
- ◇ Keep break cost at a minimum (we normally only provide coffee/tea/soft drinks/water in order to hold cost down).
- ◇ Fax Banquet Event Orders (which the Catering Manager will send to you after you've made meal/break selections and decided on room setup) to Catherine Reuning. These **MUST BE** signed by the program staff if they are to be paid from grant funds. After the contract has been reviewed, approved and signed, Catherine will send it to the retreat or conference facility and send you a copy.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

In order to reimburse for meals, **we must have original receipts**, with the *complete listing of orders*, **not just the credit card summary**. The receipt should list those present at the meal. This applies to meals purchased individually or for the group as a whole. Reimbursements are to be requested using the current Travel Reimbursement form, which is available on the CNP website:

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/theologyandworship/whatwedo-new-pastors/>.

~~~ PC(USA) policy prohibits us from reimbursing or covering expenses for alcoholic beverages, personal phone calls, or in-room movies. Please have these expenses on a different receipt to avoid delays in reimbursements! ~~~

## Travel Arrangements

The PC(USA) adopted a new travel policy effective January 1, 2010. Most air travel paid for by the church must be planned through our travel agent, Azumano. This means *Company of New Pastors* mentors or participants may not purchase their own flights and submit for reimbursement for national gatherings.

All Flights for national gatherings must be direct billed to PC(USA) using the contracted travel agent, Azumano.

For Covenant Group gatherings, the policy is slightly different. **If you need to fly to a Covenant Group gathering, please contact program administrative staff!**

For those who are driving to gatherings, we will reimburse for mileage at the current IRS rate. Reimbursements must be requested using the Travel Reimbursement form, which is available on the CNP web site:

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/theologyandworship/whatwedo-new-pastors/>.

**Rental car expenses are not reimbursed**, unless prior approval has been given by program staff.

*Cost saving tip:* If possible, begin meetings in the early afternoon on the first day, and end by noon on the last day. This allows participants to book connecting flights if necessary and still get home in the evening. Also keep in mind that it is generally less expensive to fly on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

For those who drive, note that the mileage reimbursement rate changes periodically. For some meetings, there may be a limit on the amount of mileage that can be reimbursed. **If participants will be driving more than 300 miles one way, contact program staff for approval of the extra mileage.**

## **Information to Participants**

Send out an Information Sheet to participants once all lodging and travel arrangements are in place. Include the following information (and anything else you think may be helpful):

- ✓ Meeting dates & times
- ✓ Meeting location with directions
- ✓ How to make flight arrangements
- ✓ Information on shuttle service between airport and retreat or conference facility
- ✓ Retreat or conference facility information
- ✓ Contact person

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

Please give each participant a Travel Expense Report. Also, an up-to-date electronic, printable reimbursement form can easily be emailed at any time. Travel Expense Reports should be completed and returned to us at the following address, immediately upon their return home from the meeting:

Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Catherine Reuning, Rm M05A  
100 Witherspoon St.  
Louisville, KY 40202

Participants will be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses related to the conference as outlined on the Travel Expense Report. **We process requests for reimbursement for everyone at the meeting once we receive all the expense reports or 45 days after the end of the meeting, whichever comes first.** After 45 days, we will be unable to process reimbursement requests.

As a sponsored program, *Company of New Pastors* is subject to the operational regulations and policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This applies especially to requests for reimbursement.

**Please stress that we are required to have original receipts to document expenses. We will not be able to process requests for reimbursements that are not accompanied by the appropriate receipts.**

For any group meals, please list each person's name on the back of the receipt and include both the itemized and credit card receipts when sending for reimbursement.

**We cannot process requests for reimbursements that are not accompanied by the itemized receipt.**

**We cannot reimburse expenses for alcoholic beverages, personal phone calls, or in-room movies. We also cannot reimburse for personal incidental expenses, which include snacks, drinks (except for food and drink in lieu of a meal while traveling), toiletries, over the counter medications. Reimbursement requests for parking, tolls, taxis or other travel-related expenses must be accompanied by a receipt.**

Reimbursement forms can be found on the CNP webpage:

[www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/company-new-pastors/](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/company-new-pastors/)

If you have any questions or run into any problems, please contact program administrative staff.