

# SERSCA Travel Grants

## *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*

### **Application**

When should I submit an application for a SERSCA travel grant?

Students traveling domestically (within the U.S.) should submit an application *at least* three weeks prior to the event date. For international travel/conferences, students should apply *at least* six weeks prior to departure.

Example: Conference dates are September 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>; student should apply before August 11<sup>th</sup>.

My conference is in the summer – does SERSCA support that?

SERSCA travel grants are offered on an academic year (AY) competition basis. Applications are accepted for travel occurring from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the fall semester to June 1<sup>st</sup>. For example, the 2021-22 AY competition accepts applications for conferences from August 23, 2021 – June 1, 2022.

SERSCA *may* be able to offer a competition to support summer travel, but due to the nature of our funding, we cannot promise that summer travel grants will be available in a given year. If available, summer travel grants will be for travel occurring from June-August.

Can any faculty serve as a sponsor for my application?

Faculty may sponsor up to 5 students per AY competition, and your sponsor should be someone who is familiar with both you and the proposed conference event, as they will be making a recommendation that this particular event will be valuable to your academic/degree progress.

How many applications may I submit for a travel grant? I want to travel to a lot of conferences this year!

The maximum amount that you can receive to *attend* a conference is \$800, and to *present* at a conference you can receive up to \$1,200. If you will be attending one local conference for \$400, and presenting at another conference later in the year, you could apply for a 2<sup>nd</sup> travel grant but only for \$800 (maximum presentation award of \$1,200 - \$400 already received).

There are other funding options on campus for students, and you can combine funding sources to support your travel. Ask your faculty member and college for more information on possible grant opportunities.

### **Lodging**

Are there limits on how much I can spend on lodging?

Yes. The CSU maximum rate for in-state and out-of-state travel is \$275 per night, excluding taxes. While you may choose to stay in a hotel option that exceeds \$275 per night (i.e. a major city on a Friday often has higher rates), you may only be reimbursed up to \$275 per night.

Can I share a hotel or AirBnB with another student or group of students?

Yes. Students may reserve their own rooms or choose to share a room with someone else. However, per Financial Services policy, only the student who pays for the room may be reimbursed for the cost of lodging.

Example A: you and 3 fellow students attend the same conference and decide to share an AirBnB. While you plan to split the total cost of the AirBnB 4 ways, only the student who paid for the lodging on their credit card may be reimbursed for the full cost of the travel.

Example B: You split a hotel room with another student. You both split the bill at the front desk, and use your credit card to pay your half. You can be reimbursed for your portion of the bill, as you paid for lodging and have a hotel receipt.

### **Meals**

How much can I spend on meals each day?

The daily allowance for meals is limited to \$55. Meals should be based on actual expenses up to \$55 per calendar day. This is not a per diem, but is for actual expenses incurred. Tips may be included in the daily maximum, but are not to exceed 20%. Alcohol is not eligible for reimbursement.

### **Mileage**

I've completed all pre-travel paperwork required to claim reimbursement for driving my personal or rental vehicle. Do I need to save gas receipts?

No, you do not need to save gas receipts. The university will calculate your mileage reimbursement using the \$0.585/mile rate and will calculate the cost accordingly. For example, if you drove 200 miles roundtrip, your reimbursement would be \$117 (200 x \$0.585).

I'm carpooling with another SERSCA student to the event location. Will I get mileage reimbursement too?

Only one student may claim mileage reimbursement if carpooling. This should be the student who (a) owns the car or (b) signed the rental vehicle agreement and (c) completed all pre-travel requirements\* for approval to drive on university business.

*\*Defensive driver training completed and a form STD 261 on file with SERSCA.*

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

I plan to make the most of my travel to the conference by visiting some local attractions that have an entrance fee. Can I use some of my travel grant to support those costs?

No, SERSCA can only support your direct travel costs, like: airfare, transportation, lodging, meals, registration fees, etc. While you are welcome to engage in other activities outside of your conference, that would be a personal purchase (as would buying swag at the conference, souvenirs, etc.).

## Concur

What is a Concur request?

All sponsored travelers must be approved by the university in order to claim university funds for travel. Stan State uses Concur travel software to manage these travel approvals. The SERSCA team will serve as your delegates on Concur, and submit a travel request on your behalf.

Why am I getting emails from Concur? Do I need to take any action?

All travelers will have a Concur account created for them by Financial Services. As the SERSCA team is acting as your delegate, you do not need to login to Concur or take any action. In fact, we ask that you do not go into Concur and try to prepare your own reports. Please disregard emails asking you to take action in the system –the SERSCA team will handle all Concur items.

## Getting Paid

I received an email from the SERSCA team that they need my itemized receipts from my trip. What is an itemized receipt and why do they need it?

An itemized receipt is required to ensure that all costs are allowable prior to reimbursement. Itemized receipts will include the items purchased, not just the total paid.

Example:

**Acceptable Restaurant/Meal Receipts - Combination**

| Girasole<br>733 Copeland Street<br>Pittsburgh, PA<br>(412) 682-2130 |            |
|---|------------|
| Server: Christian   | 09/30/2010 |
| Table 6/1   | 8:34 PM    |
| Guests: 5   | 20079      |
| Dravello (2 @ \$9.00)   | 18.00      |
| parm. macinata  | 12.95      |
| chicken   | 3.00       |
| polenta   | 14.95      |
| potato gnocchi  | 14.95      |
| pumpkin ravi  | 17.95      |
| pollo   | 22.95      |
| Orzanti glass (2 @ \$9.25)  | 18.50      |
| Chocolate Cake  | 6.00       |
| Tiramisu  | 5.00       |
| parm. cutto   | 6.00       |
| Subtotal  | 241.25     |
| Tax Exempt CN   | 0.00       |
| Food Tax  | 5.29       |
| alcohol tax   | 9.56       |
| Total Tax   | 15.85      |
| Total   | 241.25     |
| VISA #XXXXXXXXXXXX5046  | 241.25     |
| Auth:033638   |            |

| Girasole<br>733 Copeland Street<br>Pittsburgh, PA<br>(412) 682-2130 |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Server: Christian   | DOB: 09/30/2010 |
| 08:34 PM  | 09/30/2010      |
| Table 6/1   | 2/20079         |
| VISA  | 1048612         |
| Card #XXXXXXXXXXXX5046  |                 |
| Magnetic card present.  |                 |
| Approval: 033638  |                 |
| Amount:   | \$ 241.25       |
| + Tip:  | 48.75           |
| Total:  | 290.00          |
| Customer Copy   |                 |

I had to purchase my conference registration and make a deposit for a hotel reservation, all before I traveled. These costs are on my credit card. Can I get reimbursed before I travel?

SERSCA cannot reimburse students for travel costs until after the student has returned from travel.

What is the timeline for receiving my grant funds after I've returned from travel?

After you have returned from travel, you should email all itemized receipts to [sersca@csustan.edu](mailto:sersca@csustan.edu). The SERSCA team will prepare an expense report on Concur on your behalf. The expense report will be submitted and reviewed by Financial Services. Once approved by Financial Services, the report will be sent for payment and a check will be issued to you within 10 days. It can take 2-3 weeks to receive your reimbursement check in the mail.