

United States Department of Agriculture  
Research, Education, and Economics

# ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

## *Bulletin*

**Title:** Non-Travel Related Employee Reimbursements

**Number:** 04-303

**Date:** March 9, 2004

**Expiration:** October 30, 2004

**Originating Office:** Fiscal Operations Branch  
Financial Management Division, ARS/AFM

**Distribution:** All REE Employees  
ARS Operations, NFC

This bulletin replaces 04-301, Non-Travel Related Employee Reimbursements, dated January 9, 2004. This bulletin incorporates guidance for ARS, NASS, ERS, and CSREES for reimbursements to employees for non-Purchase Card procurements.

Within the past year, greater restrictions have been placed on the use of convenience checks and the Travel Card. Except on a documented and approved emergency basis under \$500, we are no longer allowed to reimburse employees using convenience checks for purchases they make using their personal funds. Additionally, we are no longer able to use the Travel Card to pay for meeting registration fees or be reimbursed for these fees through the travel system. These controls and restrictions were deemed necessary to curtail misuse of the privileges these resources provided. The following provides interim guidance regarding Agency policy on making purchases and employee reimbursement.

Our policy is to maximize use of the Government Purchase Card for all purchases under \$2,500. The card is available for purchasing all types of supplies and materials as well as payment of registration fees. Therefore, we must rely more heavily on the Government Purchase Card. In the event the Purchase Card cannot be used, the convenience check may be used in accordance with existing policies. The convenience check may be used as follows:

- 1) Payment to vendors who do not accept credit cards;
- 2) Emergency payments to employees under \$500; and
- 3) Honoraria

Purchasing needs should be referred to a cardholder or Purchasing Agent for procuring. Only as a last resort should employees make purchases using their own personal funds. This may require additional advance planning to ensure that the requirement is identified with sufficient time to allow the cardholder or Purchasing Agent to satisfy the need. This is particularly true in the case of registration and/or conference fees.

In rare, extraordinary circumstances when a Purchase Card or convenience check cannot be used, an employee may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses. A reimbursement may be made to the employee by using an SF-1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business.

To ensure employees are reimbursed in a timely manner and that adequate internal control is maintained, please follow these steps:

- Complete the SF-1164 with the name, social security number, and address of the person to be reimbursed, a complete description of the item purchased, and a valid accounting code.
- Attach an original receipt for the item.

ARS:

- Have the SF-1164 signed by the employee (“Claimant Sign Here”) and the fund holder (“Approving Official Sign Here”).
- Forward to your Area Budget and Fiscal Officer (ABFO) (Headquarters offices should forward to the Fiscal Operations Branch (FOB), FMD) who will sign on the “Authorized Certifying Officer Sign Here” line.

- ABFO/FOB forward to ARS Operations for processing (except for Pacific West and Southern Plains Areas who process their own payments).

CSREES:

- Have the SF-1164 signed by the employee (“Claimant Sign Here”) and the Deputy Administrator or fund holder (“Approving Official Sign Here”).
- Forward to your servicing Accounting Technician, Fiscal Operations Branch, Operations Section II, Financial Management Division, located in the Portals Building, for processing.

NASS:

- Have the SF-1164 signed by the employee (“Claimant Sign Here”) and the Division Director or Associate Deputy Director (“Approving Official Sign Here”).
- Forward to the Budget and Administrative Services Office (BASO) for processing.

ERS:

- Have the SF-1164 signed by the employee (“Claimant Sign Here”) and the Division Director or fund holder (“Approving Official Sign Here”).
- Forward to the Administrative Office for processing.

**Please Note:** Although the SF-1164 has provisions for identifying local travel costs, our policy is that local travel reimbursements (mileage, parking fees, metro fares, etc.) will be processed through the travel system using Type L authorizations.

Professional Liability Insurance reimbursements will continue to be processed using the SF-1164 (See Bulletin 98-401) and processed through your servicing financial management office.

The above is interim guidance. The Financial Management Division, in conjunction with the Acquisition and Property Division and the Area Budget and Fiscal Offices (for ARS), is developing guidance that will further clarify and expedite the above processes.

S. M. HELMRICH  
Director  
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