

Travel and Professional Development Guide

Air Force Science and Technology Fellowship Program

Army Research Laboratory Distinguished Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

NRC Research Associateship Programs

NRL Research Transition Postdoctoral Program

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The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine is a private, nonprofit organization that provides independent advice and expertise to policymakers, the private sector, and the public. The Office of Fellowships within the National Academies offers and administers opportunities for postdoctoral and senior researchers to conduct research in a variety of fields.

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Introduction

Congratulations on your award! Your award is administered by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (National Academies). It includes an allowance for professional travel and may also include relocation assistance to the vicinity of the laboratory. Your allowance for professional travel supports various professional development activities such as presenting at conferences, attending workshops, or conducting field research. To utilize your professional travel allowance and relocation assistance (if eligible), you will need a Travel Authorization **prior to** traveling, incurring costs, and claiming reimbursement. This Guide outlines the processes related to requesting Travel Authorizations and reimbursements for eligible and approved expenses.

Your travel is governed by three levels of laws, regulations, and policies: these are federal, institutional, and program. This Guide should not be considered all-inclusive as it is not possible to cover every scenario that you may experience as you plan and take a trip. Under limited circumstances, the Office of Fellowships may seek approval from the sponsoring laboratory for an exception subject to a timely request and written approval from the appropriate level at the applicable sponsoring laboratory.

You are required to use the National Academies travel agency, Vai Travel, for all air travel, long-distance train travel, and rental car arrangements. Use of Vai Travel allows your airfare to be direct billed to the National Academies, reducing your out-of-pocket expenses; ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies; and avoiding possible disqualification of reimbursable expenses.

If you have travel-related questions or concerns that are not covered in this Guide, you may reach out directly to raptravel@nas.edu or to one of the contacts listed at the end of this document.

1. Types of Travel and Professional Development

1.1. Relocation Travel

If you are located more than 50 miles from your assigned laboratory before you start tenure, your award includes relocation assistance to the vicinity of your assigned laboratory for you and your family, which includes spouse or domestic partner and/or eligible dependent(s) (generally under age 21) who will reside with you. For further details, refer to Section 5: Relocation Assistance.

1.2. Professional Travel (Including Professional Development)

Professional travel is defined as travel to or participation in a professional meeting or other event that is considered part of your career development. Your award includes funding for these activities to afford you the opportunity to present results of your research and to learn about other current research in your field.

Professional travel may include:

- 1) Long-distance travel to destinations more than 50 miles from your laboratory location
- 2) Local travel to destinations within 50 miles from your laboratory location
- 3) Professional development activities, such as scientific meetings, conferences, workshops, training events, and field work, that may involve long-distance travel, local travel, or no travel (virtual/online)

2. Travel Authorization

- 2.1. **All** expenses related to relocation, professional travel, and professional development activities must be requested *in advance* through a Travel Authorization Request in order to incur costs and claim reimbursement. This also includes expenses associated with online or virtual events for which no travel is required.
- 2.2. Foreign nationals on an F- or J-visa must have a Travel Authorization in advance of international travel, whether it is for professional or personal purposes.
- 2.3. Any personal travel that is done as part of professional travel will require more time, specific details on the personal travel itinerary, and additional administrative steps. If personal travel is being added to professional travel, please start the Travel Authorization Request process as early as possible, especially if travel is international.

- 2.4. You will be able to submit a Travel Authorization Request for approval once the following award-related contingencies have been satisfied:
 - (a) The Office of Fellowships has approved your doctoral degree proof (not required for Senior Research Awardees) sent directly to the Office of Fellowships by your academic institution
 - (b) The laboratory has officially notified the Office of Fellowships of a successful security review, if applicable
 - (c) Immigration has been approved, if a non-U.S. citizen
- 2.5. After you submit a Travel Authorization Request, it is first sent to the Research Adviser/Mentor for approval (with the exception of relocation). If approved by the Adviser/Mentor, the Office of Fellowships will determine the additional approvals required before expenses can be incurred. To allow adequate time for the approval process, you should submit a Travel Authorization Request at **least four weeks in advance of domestic travel** and **at least six weeks in advance of international travel**. If adding personal travel to a professional trip, please allow even more time.
- 2.6. You should submit a Travel Authorization Request only after you have added all of the following details: travel type, travel purpose, travel itinerary for all stops (including any personal travel), and cost estimates for all items that will be requested for reimbursement.
 - 2.6.1. You must describe any personal travel taken while on professional travel in the Travel Authorization Request with a clear delineation of the dates that are personal and professional travel. You will be financially responsible for any additional costs that result from combining personal travel with professional travel.
 - 2.6.2. Foreign nationals undertaking international personal travel also require a Travel Authorization Request (refer to Section 6 for more information about requirements for traveling when on a visa).
 - 2.6.3. Estimates of costs for all expenses should be as accurate as possible. Include all expenses that will be requested for reimbursement and will be direct-billed to the National Academies (except for movement of household goods by the National Academies contracted movers). Expenses not included in a Travel Authorization or estimated costs that are too low could prevent you from receiving full reimbursement when the Travel Expense Report is submitted (refer to Section 7).
 - 2.6.4. Include the name of the event and a link to the event's website for any conference, meeting, and/or training.
 - 2.6.5. A workshop that requires an additional fee beyond the registration costs for a connected event should be added as a separate cost in the "Other Costs" section of the Travel Authorization Request. A justification for the workshop expense should be provided in the "Justification for Other Costs" text box.

- 2.6.6. A rental car may be requested with a justification and must be approved in advance.
 - 2.6.6.1. A justification should include the reason a rental car is required to achieve the professional goals of the travel and be entered in the "Justification for Rental Car" section of the Travel Authorization Request. Expenses for gasoline, tolls, and parking for a rental car should also be taken into account when determining if the costs of using a rental car are more cost-effective than air travel and should also be included in the Travel Authorization Request.
 - 2.6.6.2. Any approved rental car must be reserved through Vai Travel to guarantee the rental car is insured by the National Academies at no additional cost to you. Any additional insurance may be purchased at your own expense and will not be approved for reimbursement.
 - 2.6.7. Use the "Additional Comments" section of the Travel Authorization Request to describe any unusual circumstances or expenses connected to your travel or any travel costs that will be provided by another organization.
- 2.7. You will receive an email notification from the Office of Fellowships once your Travel Authorization Request has been approved at all levels. This email confirms that the expenses included in the Travel Authorization are allowable, you can move forward with the trip planning, and you can incur the approved expenses.
 - 2.7.1. Vai Travel will also receive a copy of the Travel Authorization if it includes airfare, long-distance train fare, or a rental car.
 - 2.7.2. It is your responsibility to review all the cost amounts listed in the Travel Authorization and to contact Vai Travel to make any travel arrangements (refer to Section 3).
- 2.8. A Travel Authorization entitles you to incur costs for the travel described up to the approved amounts and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
 - 2.8.1. All expenses must adhere to federal, institutional, and program laws, regulations, and policies. Expenses that do not comply with any of these stipulations will not be reimbursed.
 - 2.8.2. Any changes to a Travel Authorization – including cancellations, changes to the travel dates, destinations, and/or increases in cost estimates – should be communicated by email to the Office of Fellowships as soon as possible. Substantial changes may require a revised Travel Authorization that may need to be re-approved. You may be required to cover additional costs for any voluntary change.

- 2.8.3. Changes to the Travel Authorization cannot be made after travel has been completed.

3. Required Use of Vai Travel

- 3.1. You must use Vai Travel for both domestic and international travel to ensure that the itinerary conforms to all relevant laws, regulations, and policies.
- 3.2. A Travel Authorization that includes travel airfare, long-distance train fare, or a rental car will be made available to Vai Travel. You must contact Vai Travel to make the travel arrangements.
- 3.3. Airline tickets, long-distance train tickets, and/or rental car booked with Vai Travel will be billed directly to the National Academies.
- 3.4. Vai Travel can also assist you in locating and/or booking lodging that is within federal per diem rates; however, reservations made through Vai Travel for lodging may come with additional fees and may not be the most economical. Any lodging reservations made through Vai Travel must be guaranteed with a personal credit card. Lodging reservations cannot be direct billed to the National Academies.
- 3.5. Vai Travel's hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm Eastern Time at:

Phone: 1-800-552-6425 or 301-948-2448
Email: NAS@VaiTravel.com
Emergency after-hours number: 1-888-565-9174
Access code: DCA352100
- 3.6. When communicating with Vai Travel by email, include "Associate Travel Request," "Fellow Travel Request," or "Postdoc Travel Request" in the subject line.
- 3.7. Vai Travel will email you an itinerary to document necessary travel information such as flights, long-distance train, and/or rental car reservations (if applicable).
- 3.8. An airfare constructive cost must be requested from Vai Travel before booking any flights for trips that combine personal and professional travel. Any constructive cost obtained elsewhere will not be accepted and may limit the reimbursement of incurred costs.
- 3.9. For changes in travel itinerary due to missed connections, cancellations, or scheduling changes, contact Vai Travel using the contact information above. If the itinerary change was non-voluntary, please also reach out to the Office of Fellowships for further guidance as soon as possible.

4. Cost Estimates

4.1. **Air Travel**

- 4.1.1. All travel should be the most expeditious and economical route when traveling between two points.
- 4.1.2. Travel by another mode of transportation when air is the most expeditious requires justification and must be supported by constructive costs issued by Vai Travel.
- 4.1.3. For both domestic and international travel, travel must be coach-class accommodations; however, you may request approval for other than coach-class accommodations if any of the following apply:
 - 4.1.3.1. No coach class is reasonably available.
 - 4.1.3.2. When use of other than coach class is necessary to accommodate a medical or other special need.
 - 4.1.3.3. When exceptional security circumstances require other than coach-class airline accommodations.
- 4.1.4. The Fly America Act requires that you travel on United States flag carriers whenever such carriers exist between points of travel.
- 4.1.5. Travel on non-United States flag carriers will not be allowed – regardless of cost, routing, convenience, or preference – if a United States flag carrier serves the route.
- 4.1.6. When personal travel is combined with professional travel, Vai Travel will provide a constructive cost. If the airfare is higher due to the addition of personal travel, you will be required to pay the difference in airfare with your personal credit card.

4.2. **Long-Distance Bus and Train Travel**

Bus and train service transportation charges may be reimbursed if they are determined to be the most expeditious and economical route when traveling between two points or do not exceed the cost of the lowest available airfare.

4.3. **Baggage Fees**

- 4.3.1. The cost for one checked bag is allowable.
- 4.3.2. If justified and approved in advance, costs for additional checked bags may be allowable.

4.4. Subsistence (Lodging, Meals, and Incidental Expenses)

- 4.4.1. The per diem rate is the maximum daily amount that can be reimbursed for subsistence (lodging, meals, and incidental expenses) for a specific location and time of year. The location is determined by the address of the overnight lodging within the United States (i.e., domestic), outside of the continental United States (i.e., OCONUS: Alaska, Hawaii, U.S. territories), or outside of the United States (i.e., foreign).
- 4.4.2. Per diem can be claimed only when on approved travel and more than 50 miles from your laboratory location.
- 4.4.3. Per diem is not a reimbursable expense *within* 50 miles from your laboratory location.
- 4.4.4. Per diem is not a reimbursable expense on any personal travel days when combined with professional travel.
- 4.4.5. You are eligible to receive per diem one day before and one day after the official dates of an event, meeting, conference, or field research.
- 4.4.6. The per diem for meals and incidentals for the first and last days of travel (i.e., Travel Days) is 75% of the per diem rate.
- 4.4.7. Per diem rates may change at the start of the federal fiscal year and can vary over the calendar year for a location. Travel Expense Reports in the Workday Expense system will populate the per diem rate in effect for the dates of travel, which may be a different rate from the Travel Authorization.
- 4.4.8. Domestic per diem rates can be found on the [U.S. General Services Administration \(GSA\) website](#).
 - 4.4.8.1. If your domestic lodging is in a city that is not listed for the corresponding state, use the per diem rates for the county or zip code in which the city is located. If neither the city nor the county of the domestic lodging is listed, use the current standard per diem rates that apply for all locations without specific rates.
 - 4.4.8.2. Lodging taxes on domestic lodging are not included in the maximum per diem rate and should be entered as a separate expense item on the Travel Authorization Request.
- 4.4.9. Per diem rates for Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. territories can be found on the [Defense Travel Management Office website](#).
 - 4.4.9.1. Use the per diem rates listed for Maximum Lodging, Local Meals, and Local Incidental.

4.4.9.2. If your lodging is in a city or province that is not listed, use the rates prescribed for "Other."

4.4.10. Foreign per diem rates can be found on the [U.S. Department of State website](#).

4.4.10.1. If your foreign lodging is in a city or province that is not listed, use the rates prescribed for "Other."

4.4.10.2. Lodging taxes on international lodging *are* included in the maximum allowable per diem rate for international lodging.

4.5. **Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs)**

4.5.1. Travel by POV is reimbursable up to the constructive cost of a comparable airfare. A POV may also be used for transportation to and from local off-site professional activities (including the airport as a departure point) within a 50-mile radius of your host laboratory without constructive costs.

4.5.2. Eligible travel by POV will be reimbursed at the [current government mileage rates](#) plus any applicable tolls and/or parking expenses. Gasoline costs for POV are included in the government mileage rates and will not be reimbursed separately.

4.5.3. Trip mileage will be verified by determining the distance between the start and end locations using an online map.

4.6. **Rental Car**

4.6.1. Approval for the use of rental cars is considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.6.2. A rental car can be justified when circumstances make it impractical or more costly to use other modes of commercial and/or public transportation. You must include the justification in the "Justification for Rental Car" section of the Travel Authorization Request.

4.6.3. You must make rental car reservations through Vai Travel. Insurance will automatically be provided. Any additional insurance expenses incurred will not be approved for reimbursement.

4.7. **Local Transportation**

Local transportation such as shuttles, buses, subway, light rail, taxi, Uber, etc. to and from points of departure as well as local transportation at the destination for professional activities will be reimbursed based on actual cost. Receipts are required.

4.8. Registration Fee

- 4.8.1. The National Academies can provide advance payment for professional meetings, conferences, training events, or workshops with registration fees of \$250 or more. Direct billing of your conference registration can be requested by checking the box next to “I would like the National Academies to process my registration fee” and providing information on the event in the relevant section of the Travel Authorization Request.
 - 4.8.1.1. Any direct billed registration fee will be deducted from your award travel balance even if you do not attend the event for any reason.
 - 4.8.1.2. Any direct billed registration fee that is partially refunded due to cancellation must be communicated to the Office of Fellowships as soon as possible along with proof of refund.
- 4.8.2. The National Academies will direct bill only the eligible and approved expenses for the meeting, conference, training event, or workshop registration fee. Additional costs, such as membership dues, are not allowable.

4.9. Other Expenses

Some other travel expenses not described above may be requested with justification and reviewed for allowability (e.g., abstract fee, self-move expenses, etc.).

4.10. Non-Allowable Expenses

- 4.10.1. Non-allowable expenses typically pertain to personal conveniences, non-essential items, and services that exceed the primary purpose or basic requirements of the travel or event, and they will not be approved.
- 4.10.2. The following list provides some examples of generally non-allowable expenses, but please note that this list is not all-inclusive:
 - (a) Membership dues/fees (refer to Section 4.8.2.)
 - (b) Publication fees
 - (c) Books, including bound abstracts and proceedings
 - (d) Equipment and/or tools
 - (e) Labor or assistance of any kind
 - (f) Fax and/or copy machine use
 - (g) Materials, supplies, or printing associated with a poster or presentation
 - (h) Shipment/Postage of meeting materials
 - (i) Purchase of personal items
 - (j) Cellphone bills
 - (k) Tours, excursions, and optional attractions
 - (l) Expenses of a spouse or domestic partner and/or dependent family member(s), except for relocation (refer to Section 5.5.4.)

- (m) Airline upgrade fees (refer to Section 4.1.3.)
- (n) Priority check-in
- (o) Excess baggage fees (refer to Sections 5.5.3. and 7.9.)
- (p) Foreign transaction fees or credit card fees

5. Relocation Assistance

- 5.1. If eligible, assistance is available for the relocation of yourself (and eligible family members, if applicable) and your personal belongings to the vicinity of the laboratory. Relocation assistance is defined as transportation (i.e., airfare, POV mileage), subsistence (lodging, meals, and incidental expenses) for up to seven days (six nights), and the movement of household goods. In addition, relocation assistance for returning to the originating location may be available for eligible Awardees (refer to Section 5.8.).
- 5.2. You cannot request relocation assistance unless the following criteria are met:
 - 1) Reside more than 50 miles from the laboratory. If relocating from a different home address than provided in the application, you must update the home address in the online award management portal or email the Office of Fellowships.
 - 2) Have satisfied all the contingencies of the award (refer to Section 2.4.), including obtaining a visa if relocating from outside the United States and not a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. More information can be found in [Visa Options for International Associates](#). If your contingencies are still pending but your start date or relocation date is in less than two weeks, please reach out to the Office of Fellowships for guidance, as you may be advised to consider delaying your start date to allow time for relocation.
 - 3) Have an award tenure that is at least six months. If you voluntarily terminate your tenure prior to completing six successive months, you will be required to repay the relocation expenses to the National Academies. Exceptions may apply to eligible Senior Awardees. For example, Senior Awardees moving to the vicinity of the laboratory for a tenure period of less than six successive months will be reimbursed for transportation and subsistence but not for the movement of household goods. This also applies to return relocation for Senior Awardees (refer to Section 5.8.).

5.3. Options for Relocation Assistance

If eligible for relocation assistance, several options are available. These include;

5.3.1. House hunting and/or relocation to the vicinity of the laboratory

- 5.3.1.1. To secure housing in and/or to move to the vicinity of the laboratory, you may choose one of the following options:

1) Request a house hunting trip as an initial round trip visit to the vicinity of the laboratory *and* request a separate one-way relocation trip for a later date. You may request subsistence expenses and use of a rental car for a separate house hunting trip in advance of relocation. Transportation expenses (e.g., airline flights, long-distance bus or train, taxi, POV, etc.) are non-allowable expenses for the separate house hunting trip.

2) Request one-way house hunting *combined* with the relocation to the vicinity of the laboratory in the same trip.

3) Request a one-way relocation trip only if you have already secured housing without a house hunting trip and will move into your new housing upon arrival in the vicinity of the laboratory.

5.3.1.2. A maximum of seven days (six nights) of subsistence (i.e., lodging and meals) may be used for any of the three options above.

5.3.1.2.1. For the first option above, any time spent house hunting will reduce the number of days available for subsistence at the time of relocation. For example, if three days are spent on an initial house hunting trip, only four days of subsistence would remain available at the time of relocation to the vicinity of the laboratory.

5.3.1.2.2. Any days traveled en route to the vicinity of the laboratory are counted towards the maximum seven days (six nights) of subsistence. For example, if three days are spent driving a POV from your home to the vicinity of the laboratory, only four days of subsistence would remain available for house hunting in the vicinity of the laboratory.

5.3.1.2.3. If housing has been secured prior to the official relocation (house hunting is not needed), you are expected to move in to your new accommodations upon your arrival in the vicinity of the laboratory and will not be eligible for further subsistence once you have moved into your new accommodations.

5.3.2. **Movement of household goods**

To move your belongings from your home to the vicinity of the laboratory, you may choose one of the following options:

1) National Academies contracted commercial moving company (within the 48 contiguous states)

2) Self-move

3) Shipment of unaccompanied baggage (if living outside of the 48 contiguous states)

- 5.4. Expenses for subsistence while relocating cannot be incurred while also serving on tenure. If tenure has started before relocation, please reach out to the Office of Fellowships for guidance.

5.5. **Considerations for Relocation Expenses**

- 5.5.1. Please refer to Section 4 for information regarding allowable expenses during travel, which includes relocation travel.
- 5.5.2. One-way coach/economy class tickets (air or long-distance train) to the vicinity of the laboratory must be purchased through Vai Travel to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, rules, and policies.
- 5.5.3. Fees for two checked bags during relocation are allowable. A justification for additional checked bags can be provided in the Travel Authorization Request.
- 5.5.3.1. Excess baggage weight up to 25 pounds (11.4 kg) additional for each traveler is allowable. Baggage charges beyond the allowable weight limits are your financial responsibility and is not allowable for reimbursement.
- 5.5.3.2. Excess baggage and accompanied baggage are usually insured by the airline. Additional insurance is your financial responsibility and is not allowable for reimbursement.
- 5.5.4. Relocation expenses of a spouse or domestic partner and/or eligible dependent(s) accompanying and residing with you can also be requested. A spouse or domestic partner shall be reimbursed at 75% of the allowable per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses, and each eligible dependent shall be reimbursed at 50% of the allowable per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses. Expenses that exceed per diem are not allowable.
- 5.5.5. If relocating by POV:
- 5.5.5.1. Mileage will be reimbursed at [the current government mileage rate for relocation](#), which differs from the professional travel mileage rate, plus any applicable tolls and/or parking expenses.
- 5.5.5.2. You should cover at least 350 miles within at least a 12-hour period using the most direct route to qualify for lodging along the route.
- 5.5.5.3. If the most direct route is not followed, you may be reimbursed based on the shortest distance calculated from the home location to the destination location using an online map.

- 5.5.6. Additional subsistence in the vicinity of the laboratory cannot be claimed for a spouse or domestic partner and/or eligible dependent(s) if they relocate separately.
- 5.5.7. Please contact the Office of Fellowships with any questions prior to relocating, especially if there are unusual circumstances around the relocation.
- 5.5.8. Any deviation from relocation policies must have prior approval from the Office of Fellowships and be accompanied by supporting documentation.

5.6. Options for Movement of Household Goods

- 5.6.1. If eligible, you may request the movement of your household goods. If your originating address before relocation is different from what was provided in your application, please follow the guidance in Section 5.2.
- 5.6.2. You may choose between using the **National Academies contracted commercial moving company** (within the 48 contiguous states), a **self-move**, or the **shipment of unaccompanied baggage** (if living outside of the 48 contiguous United States).

5.6.2.1. Use of the National Academies Contract Moving Company (48 contiguous states)

- 5.6.2.1.1. A national moving company contracted by the National Academies can be used to pack and ship items domestically that would normally be considered household goods. A minimum of 1,000 lbs. of household goods is suggested.
- 5.6.2.1.2. You can indicate the use of the moving company in your Travel Authorization Request. You and the moving company will receive an email from the Office of Fellowships once your Travel Authorization Request has been approved. The moving company will then contact you directly to make arrangements, or you may contact the moving company using the information provided in the Travel Authorization email notification.
- 5.6.2.1.3. All allowable household moving expenses will be paid directly by the National Academies to the moving company. Any non-allowable expenses will be your financial responsibility.
- 5.6.2.1.4. You should make every effort to coordinate your arrival in the vicinity of the laboratory with the arrival of your household goods.
- 5.6.2.1.5. Pickup of household goods will be from one location only. You will be billed directly by the carrier for any additional pickups regardless of mileage between pickups.

- 5.6.2.1.6. The following services relating to the movement of household goods are not allowable:
- (a) Any poundage in excess of 11,000 lbs. for Regular Awardees or 13,500 lbs. for Senior Awardees.
 - (b) Storage of household goods.
 - (c) Shipment of pianos, automobiles, boats, trailers, motorized vehicles, animals, or frozen foods.
 - (d) Removal of all curtain rods, draperies, window cornices, mirrors, and other items attached to walls, as well as the removal of attached floor coverings.
 - (e) Dismantling or installation of plumbing or electrical connections for appliances, clothes dryer ventilation pipes, stereos, televisions, or television or radio antennae.
 - (f) Maid service or other comparable special services.
 - (g) Installation of attached floor coverings.
 - (h) Exclusive use of a moving van or expedited service.
 - (i) Articles such as documents, valuable papers, collector's items, money, jewelry, or other items of high value, are not covered by the carrier's insurance. These items should be carried with personal luggage.
 - (j) Fresh fruits, plants, and flammables, including paints and ammunition, cannot be transported by the commercial moving company. Personal arrangements must be made to transport these items.
- 5.6.2.1.7. If there is any loss or damage during shipment, you should make annotations on the carrier's inventory at the time of delivery. These annotations provide initial documentation but do not constitute a formal written claim. Any subsequent damage claims will be handled directly by you and the mover.
- 5.6.2.1.8. Claims for loss or damage must be filed in writing with the destination agent as the driver is not responsible for reporting damage. The carrier is required to acknowledge claims within 30 days and to either pay, decline, or make a firm compromise settlement offer within 120 days of receipt of the claim. If some reason beyond the carrier's control delays action on the claim for an extended period, the carrier is required to notify you each 30 days thereafter until final action is taken.
- 5.6.2.1.9. In most cases of loss or damage, the carrier's destination agent, if immediately notified by telephone, can assist in making an equitable adjustment as quickly as possible and with minimal delay. This action is recommended especially when an item necessary to everyday living is involved.

5.6.2.1.10. To file a claim:

- (a) Send a letter reporting a claim to the destination agent as soon as possible after delivery. The agent will send the necessary claim documents.
- (b) Return claim documents with complete information on all items claimed.
- (c) Maintain regular contact with the agent until a mutually satisfactory settlement has been reached.
- (d) Report any difficulties or concerns in the claims processes to the Office of Fellowships. All correspondence concerning the claim for loss or damage should be between you and the moving company.

5.6.2.2. **Self-Move**

- 5.6.2.2.1. You may choose to rent a moving truck, van, trailer, or POD to move yourself. A self-move must be included on the Travel Authorization Request with a cost estimate and must be approved prior to the move.
- 5.6.2.2.2. You are responsible for making all arrangements, paying all expenses, and requesting reimbursement of approved expenses associated with a self-move.
- 5.6.2.2.3. Self-move expenses are included on the relocation Travel Expense Report and must be submitted within ten days of your tenure start date (refer to Section 7 for information about Travel Expense Reports for travel, including relocation travel).
- 5.6.2.2.4. Detailed receipts for costs associated with a self-move must be provided on the Travel Expense Report. Only allowable and approved expenses will be reimbursed (refer to Section 4).
- 5.6.2.2.5. The following expenses are allowable for a rental vehicle self-move:
 - (a) Cost of a one-way truck, van, or trailer rental
 - (b) Gasoline and tolls for the rental truck only
 - (c) Packing supplies
 - (d) A temporary tow hitch to transport your POV, if applicable
 - (e) Insurance on a rental truck, van, or trailer is allowable if you are not covered by your personal auto insurance policy or by a credit card that you use to rent the truck, van, or trailer. You should always verify any existing coverage with your personal, auto, home, credit card, or AAA insurance. If you are not covered and must purchase insurance from the rental company, include the cost in the Travel Authorization Request.

- 5.6.2.2.6. If another family member drives your POV, you may request mileage reimbursement for this vehicle in addition to the expenses of the rental truck, van, or trailer. Expenses associated with a second personal vehicle are not allowable.

5.6.2.3. **Unaccompanied Baggage (Outside 48 contiguous states)**

- 5.6.2.3.1. If you are relocating from a destination outside of the 48 contiguous states and ship unaccompanied baggage, you must submit an original receipt or Bill of Lading to be reimbursed. The total allowable cost for shipment of unaccompanied baggage is limited as follows:
 - (a) Awardee - \$4,000
 - (b) Spouse or Domestic Partner - \$2,000
 - (c) Dependent - \$1,000 (each)
- 5.6.2.3.2. You must make all arrangements for shipping unaccompanied baggage and provide paid receipts to be reimbursed. If the cost of shipping exceeds the allowances indicated above, those additional costs will be your responsibility. All documentation of expenses should be included on the Travel Authorization Request and on the Travel Expense Report.
- 5.6.2.3.3. Unaccompanied baggage insurance is an expense allowable for reimbursement with an original receipt or Bill of Lading and if the total cost of shipping and insurance does not exceed the limits indicated above.

5.7. **Travel Authorization Request for Relocation**

- 5.7.1. You must have met all contingencies required for relocation and have a Travel Authorization prior to house hunting and relocation. Please refer to Section 2 for information regarding the Travel Authorization process.
- 5.7.2. Relocation travel can begin no earlier than 30 days prior to tenure start date.
- 5.7.3. You should submit a relocation Travel Authorization Request no later than four weeks before your proposed relocation travel date.
- 5.7.4. Your Travel Authorization Request should be as specific as possible and should include the name of your spouse or domestic partner and/or the name(s) and age(s) of any eligible dependent(s) traveling with you.
- 5.7.5. You must submit a separate Travel Authorization Request if a spouse or domestic partner and/or eligible dependent(s) will relocate at a different time from you.
- 5.7.6. You should note any unusual circumstances surrounding your relocation in the "Additional Comments" section.

5.7.7. Travel advance requests are not allowed for relocation.

5.8. Return Relocation

5.8.1. Eligibility

- 5.8.1.1. Senior Associates/Fellows on leave from a permanent position of employment within the United States can request return relocation to their original location.
- 5.8.1.2. J-1 visa status holders who relocated from their home country or country of legal residence and who will return to their home country or country of legal residence.
- 5.8.1.3. Associates/Fellows who are returning to a permanent position of employment outside the United States from which they were on leave during their award.
- 5.8.1.4. Check with the Office of Fellowships for questions regarding eligibility for return relocation.

5.8.2. Travel Authorization for Return Relocation

- 5.8.2.1. If eligible, you must submit a return relocation Travel Authorization Request no later than four weeks before the travel start date. A Travel Authorization is required in advance for return relocation travel.
- 5.8.2.2. Return relocation must be completed within 30 days of your last day of tenure.
- 5.8.2.3. The return relocation Travel Authorization Request should be as specific as possible and should include the name of your spouse or domestic partner and/or the name(s) and age(s) of any eligible dependent(s) traveling with you. Prior approval is required for return relocation of a spouse or domestic partner and/or eligible dependent(s) who were not included in the initial relocation Travel Authorization Request.
- 5.8.2.4. Any unusual circumstances surrounding your return relocation should be noted in the "Additional Comments" section of the return relocation Travel Authorization Request.
- 5.8.2.5. Once a return relocation Travel Authorization email notification from the Office of Fellowships has been received, you must reserve pre-paid one-way airline or long-distance train tickets through Vai Travel if relocating by air or long-distance train.

5.8.3. Considerations for Return Relocation

- 5.8.3.1. Return relocation policies and procedures are the same as initial relocation for transportation and subsistence (lodging, meals, and incidental expenses) as

described in Section 4 and for the movement of household goods as described in Section 5.6. You may not claim reimbursement for subsistence in the vicinity of the laboratory or once you return to your originating location.

5.8.3.2. Associates/Fellows are limited to the same amount of accompanied, excess, and/or unaccompanied baggage as for their initial relocation.

5.8.3.3. The use of a rental car, whether in the vicinity of the laboratory or in the home country, is not an allowable expense.

5.9. Reimbursement for Relocation

5.9.1. Reimbursement for house hunting and/or relocation cannot be processed until you have officially started tenure and have an approved Travel Expense Report.

5.9.2. The process for reimbursement of relocation expenses is the same as for travel expenses described in Section 7.

5.9.3. Timelines for submitting a Travel Expense Report for relocation

5.9.3.1. A Travel Expense Report for relocation to the vicinity of the laboratory must be submitted within ten days of starting tenure.

5.9.3.2. A Travel Expense Report must be submitted within ten days of domestic return relocation.

5.9.3.3. A Travel Expense Report must be submitted within five days of international return relocation.

6. International Travel and Visas

6.1. The following is intended as general guidance for Associates/Fellows and does not constitute legal immigration advice. For specific questions not covered below, please contact [OSEC EVP@nas.edu](mailto:OSEC_EVP@nas.edu).

Most federal agencies have their own policies regarding international travel that supersedes the Office of Fellowships travel policy. You should contact your Adviser and Laboratory Program Representative (LPR) prior to planning international travel.

6.2. U.S. Citizens

6.2.1. If you are planning to travel abroad, you must carry a valid U.S. passport and a visa to the country you will visit, if required. Some countries require that your passport be valid for at least six months beyond the length of your visit.

6.2.2. For information on entry requirements and other travel topics, refer to information provided [by the U.S. Department of State](#).

6.2.2.1. If you are planning to travel within the Western Hemisphere (Canada, Mexico, Caribbean, Central and South America), please refer to guidelines set by the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#).

6.3. U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents

6.3.1. If you are a U.S. permanent resident, you must carry your U.S. Resident Alien Card (green card) and passport to re-enter the United States.

6.3.1.1. The country you plan to visit may additionally require you to carry visa for entry. You can obtain information on visas and how to apply for them by contacting the relevant embassy and [U.S. Department of State Country Information](#).

6.3.2. If you are not yet a permanent resident, but have applied for adjustment of status, you must obtain advance parole before traveling. Advance parole will enable you to travel abroad without abandoning your application for adjustment of status. Prior to July 2025, your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) may include the notation "Serves as I-512 Advance Parole," which allows for employment and travel. After July 2025 advance parole and EAD's are separate documents.

6.4. Foreign Nationals (F-1, J-1, and their dependents)

6.4.1. If you are a foreign national in the United States, such as a J-1 exchange visitor or F-1 student, you must carry a passport valid for at least six months after your travel. You may also need a visa for the country you are planning to visit. To be readmitted to the United States after your trip, you must carry your passport, valid DS-2019 or I-20 form, and a valid J-1 or F-1 visa stamp. J-1 exchange visitors must have a valid DS-2019 form, endorsed for travel by your J-1 Responsible Officer (RO). F-1 students must carry a valid I-20 form, endorsed for travel by your university's Designated School Official (DSO). Dependent DS-2019 and I-20 forms also must be endorsed for travel.

6.4.2. Travel endorsement signatures are valid for 12 months for J-1 research scholars and F-1 students, and 6 months for J-1 short term scholars.

6.4.2.1. If the signature on your form is missing or has expired, send it to OSEC_EVP@nas.edu before you depart with the address and phone number where it should be returned to you by FedEx.

6.4.3. If your F-1 or J-1 visa stamp has expired and you will travel outside North America, you must plan extra time abroad to apply for a new U.S. visa to return to the United States. Though you can apply for a visa at any United States

embassy or consulate abroad, it is advisable to apply for a visa in your home country if possible.

- 6.4.3.1. Be aware that visa application and processing may take days or weeks to be completed, especially if you are subject to background checks. For specific information on application procedures at United States posts, refer to the [U.S. Department of State Visas page](#) and the website of the consulate where you will apply for your new visa.
- 6.4.4. If you have changed status from F-1 or another status to J-1, you will need a J-1 visa stamp to return to the U.S., even if your current visa is still valid.
 - 6.4.4.1. It is recommended that you carry a copy of your I-797 approval notice and a copy of your SEVIS fee receipt.
- 6.4.5. International travel for a duration of 30 days or more is not recommended for individuals under J-1, J-2, F-1 or F-2 programs. If travel of 30 days or more is required, you must notify your RO or DSO prior to travel and provide additional information regarding the nature of your travel. Failure to do so may negatively impact your immigration status. These reporting requirements apply to dependents as well.
 - 6.4.5.1. For information and conditions, please refer to the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#). Some travelers may be ineligible for automatic revalidation and must apply for a new visa before returning to the United States.
- 6.4.6. If you have had a child during your stay in the United States, you must obtain a U.S. passport for them as soon as possible after birth to ensure that they can travel with you. Information can be found [here](#).
- 6.4.7. It is recommended that you carry a copy of your I-94 and appropriate travel documents on their person.
- 6.4.8. Automatic revalidation may not be used for travel from a contiguous territory to a non-contiguous territory (e.g., from the U.S. to Canada to Ireland). The use of automatic revalidation after travel to a third country is a violation of immigration law that can lead to deportation. Travelers to third countries must apply for a new U.S. visa before returning to the United States.
- 6.4.9. When you have been readmitted to the United States, please notify [OSEC EVP@nas.edu](mailto:OSEC_EVP@nas.edu) and send a scan of your electronic arrival record (Form I-94) and your new visa.

6.5. Useful Resources for International Travel

- (a) [U.S. State Department Travel Information](#)
- (b) [CIA World Factbook](#)

(c) [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#)

7. Travel Reimbursement

- 7.1. Unless the only expenses incurred are a registration fee or rental car fee that were direct-billed to the National Academies, you must account for expenses for relocation, professional, and local travel by submitting a Travel Expense Report.
- 7.2. You are expected to ensure your reimbursement claims accurately reflect the facts. Submitting accurate and truthful reports helps maintain trust, avoids complications, and will allow for quicker reimbursement.
- 7.3. **Travel Expense Report**
 - 7.3.1. You must contact the Office of Fellowships for online access to Workday Expense to complete a Travel Expense Report with all required receipts.
 - 7.3.2. All entries on your Travel Expense Report must be reported in U.S. dollars at the [official exchange rate](#) of the day of the expenditure if paid in foreign currency.
 - 7.3.3. Claims for unauthorized or unallowable expenditures will delay the reimbursement process.
 - 7.3.4. You are advised to keep a copy of the completed Travel Expense Report and receipts for your records.
- 7.4. **Receipt Requirements**
 - 7.4.1. To be reimbursed for expenses incurred during travel, you must submit required receipts with your Travel Expense Report. Receipts with handwritten notations, corrections, or changes will not be accepted.
 - 7.4.2. All expenses must be converted to U.S. dollars if paid in foreign currency, and foreign receipts must be accompanied by an English translation. Receipts without an English translation will delay the reimbursement process.
 - 7.4.3. Except for meals and incidentals expenses, any other single expense of \$75 or more requires an itemized receipt. Regardless of expense amount, receipts are required for lodging, registration and abstract submittal fees, unaccompanied baggage, excess baggage, and rental vehicle gasoline expenses. Any missing or incomplete receipts will delay the reimbursement process.
 - 7.4.4. Third party payments (when another person or entity pays the expense on your behalf, and you reimburse that party) are not allowable and will not be reimbursed.

7.5. **Meals and Incidental Expenses**

The fixed meals and incidental expenses per diem configuration in Workday Expense will automatically populate the per diem for the meeting location once you enter the itinerary. You must mark first and last travel days.

7.6. **Lodging**

7.6.1. Receipts are required for lodging expenses regardless of cost. A valid lodging receipt includes the following:

- (a) Your name
- (b) Provider and date(s) of service
- (c) Room rate and taxes
- (d) Total expense
- (e) Form of payment
- (f) Zero balance or other notation indicating full payment was made

7.6.2. Even if lodging is booked through a third-party vendor, an acceptable receipt is a folio from the hotel upon check-out with all the elements listed above rather than a reservation confirmation from the third-party vendor. An incomplete receipt submitted may delay reimbursement.

7.6.3. When sharing lodging, your name is required to be listed on the receipt.

7.7. **Transportation**

An official paid invoice is required showing train or bus travel.

7.8. **Rental Vehicle**

7.8.1. The use of a rental car must be pre-approved, must be booked by Vai Travel, and will be direct-billed to the National Academies.

7.8.2. A valid rental vehicle receipt is required for rental trucks, vans, or trailers and includes the following:

- (a) Your name
- (b) Rental rate and applicable taxes and fees
- (c) Date(s) of rental
- (d) Total cost
- (e) Form of payment
- (f) Zero balance or other notation indicating full payment was made

7.9. **Checked Baggage including Excess Baggage**

You may request for authorization for the fee dealing with the first checked bag, which will be treated as an airline fee on the Travel Expense Report. You may request for authorization for the fee from a second bag if included on the Travel Authorization with a justification. Receipts for checked baggage fees must include the following:

- (a) Your name or that of any dependent family member(s) traveling during relocation
- (b) Total weight
- (c) Total cost
- (d) Form of payment
- (e) Zero balance or other notation indicating full payment was made

7.10. **Unaccompanied Baggage**

Receipts for unaccompanied baggage must include the following:

- (a) Your name or that of any dependent family member(s) traveling
- (b) Departure and destination locations
- (c) Weight or volume of shipment
- (d) Cost of insurance (if applicable)
- (e) Total expense
- (f) Form of payment
- (g) Zero balance or other notation indicating full payment was made

7.11. **Alternate Proof of Payment**

In the absence of an original receipt, please contact the Office of Fellowships to discuss alternative forms of proof of payment.

7.12. **Travel Reimbursement Process**

- 7.12.1. The reimbursement process takes approximately four to six weeks from the time the Travel Expense Report is submitted in Workday Expense. Missing and/or incomplete receipts and/or travel documentation will delay reimbursement.
- 7.12.2. The Travel Expense Report will be audited to verify that the expenses claimed were included on the Travel Authorization, match the receipt(s) submitted, and are in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

8. Contact Information

8.1. RAPTravel@nas.edu

- 8.1.1. Relocation and return relocation (if eligible)
- 8.1.2. Professional travel
- 8.1.3. Cancellations and/or changes to itinerary and/or Travel Authorizations
- 8.1.4. Difficulties with securing conventional lodging
- 8.1.5. Refunded fees that were directly paid by the National Academies
- 8.1.6. Access to Workday Expense and travel reimbursements

8.2. NAS@VaiTravel.com

- 8.2.1. Air, long-distance train, and rental car reservations
- 8.2.2. Reservation changes and cancellations
- 8.2.3. Expense estimates for air, long-distance train, and rental car for entering in the Travel Authorization Request

8.3. FOAwards@nas.edu

- 8.3.1. Address updates
- 8.3.2. Tenure start date changes
- 8.3.3. Extended absence from the laboratory