

# **SANTA BARBARA COUNTY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

## **TRUSTEE TRAVEL POLICY**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Trustee Travel Policy is to encourage and facilitate the pursuit of relevant educational and business-related initiatives by Board of Retirement (the "Board") Trustees of the Santa Barbara County Employees' Retirement System (the "System"). The policy is designed to assist them in meeting fiduciary duties to administer the System and to ensure that expenditures incurred in the process are prudent and cost-effective, to mitigate the risk of improprieties arising from Trustee travel or business-related activities, and to set parameters for Trustees to follow when traveling on System business.

### **II. ASSUMPTIONS AND PRINCIPLES**

1. Prudent oversight of a public pension system requires that Trustees occasionally travel to System related business meetings and educational conferences or seminars, held in or outside of California. Travel and related costs incurred in doing so not only represent legitimate expenses of the System but are a sound investment in the ongoing success of the System in meeting the needs of the members.
2. Notwithstanding the above, any expenditures relating to travel and reimbursement of Trustees must support and comply with the Board's fiduciary responsibilities and reflect sensitivity to the members and beneficiaries on whose behalf the Board serves.
3. The appropriateness of travel expenditures incurred by Trustees will be guided in accordance with the travel and travel reimbursement guidelines of the County of Santa Barbara, as those guidelines are updated from time to time. A copy of the current guidelines is attached.
4. Eligible Trustees will be compensated in accordance with Government Code Section 31521 and all Trustees shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary travel expenses.

### **III. POLICY GUIDELINES**

#### **A. PAYMENT OF TRAVEL & RELATED EXPENSES BY THE SYSTEM**

1. The System will only pay for or reimburse travel or business-related expenses incurred in compliance with the Trustee Travel and Trustee Education Policies or on other Board of Retirement authorized business.

2. SBCERS shall reimburse travel related expenses incurred by trustees engaged in activities on behalf of the State Association of County Retirement Systems (“SACRS”) and may seek recovery of such expenses from SACRS to the extent that such expenses are subject to reimbursement by SACRS pursuant to its Bylaws and implementing policies. Such policy shall not preclude reimbursement of travel related expenses reasonably incurred by trustees in SACRS activities which are not subject to reimbursement by SACRS pursuant to its Bylaws and implementing policies.
3. The System will only pay for or reimburse travel or business-related expenses incurred directly by the Trustee. All other expenses (e.g. for a spouse) are the responsibility of the Trustee.
4. Travel arrangements will be coordinated with the CEO or their delegate on staff. Any costs associated with last minute cancellation may be charged to the Trustee without reimbursement.
5. When traveling by air, Trustees will have the option to extend their trip (e.g. over a Saturday night) if it will result in a net savings or no additional cost to the System.
6. Although not an exhaustive list, the following are business related expenses that may be reimbursed to Trustees or paid on their behalf by the System subject to guidelines and limitations contained in the County of Santa Barbara Business Expense Policy.
  - A. Airfare.
  - B. Fares relating to taxis, ride share, luggage fees, airport transportation, trains, and subways.
  - C. Personal automobile mileage.
  - D. Rental cars.
  - E. Hotel accommodations including internet connectivity and parking.
  - F. Meal per diems.
  - G. Telephone calls and business services (photocopies, faxes, computer services).
7. When deciding among similar educational programs, or identical programs offered in different locations, Trustees agree to make every attempt to attend those programs that minimize travel and related expenses.
9. Trustees will document all expenditures except meal per diem and submit receipts to the Clerk of the Board.

- B. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS FOR TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES FROM THIRD PARTIES
1. When a Trustee attends an educational conference, seminar or similar event, but does not participate as a speaker, panel member, or in a similar capacity, the Trustee may accept free or reduced-price admission and educational materials in connection with the event. A Trustee may not accept a gift of meal, lodging or transportation expenses used by the Trustee, whether or not directed as a gift to the System, unless (i) the value of the gift is within statutory limits and (ii) the gift is reported on the Trustee's Form 700 statement of economic interests as required by law.
  2. When a Trustee participates within the United States in an educational conference, seminar or similar event as a speaker, panel member or in a similar capacity, the Trustee may accept gifts, including payment of meal, lodging or transportation expenses, subject to the following:
    - a. The Trustee may receive free admission to the event, refreshments and similar non-cash nominal benefits provided during the entire event. The value of admission to the event, or of the refreshments provided, is not subject to gift limits and not reportable, wherever the event is held.
    - b. When a Trustee travels within the United States to attend the event, the Trustee may receive reimbursement for travel expenses, as well as necessary food and lodging to participate in the event, provided that the engagement is reasonably related to a legislative or governmental purpose or to an issue of public policy. Lodging and meal expenses are limited to the day immediately preceding, the day of and the day immediately following the speaking engagement. Amounts received in reimbursement are exempt from gift limits but must be reported as a gift on the Trustee's Form 700 statement of economic interests. Reimbursement of such expenses may disqualify the member from participating in any vote with respect to any matters involving the entity reimbursing the expenses for a period of 12 months.
  3. To the extent that expenses are not paid by the sponsoring entity or group consistent with conflict of interest rules, the Trustee shall pay such expenses or may request that the System pay such expenses to the extent that payment of such expenses are appropriate pursuant to the Trustee Travel and Trustee Education policies.
  4. A member shall not accept any fees or honoraria for making a speech or participating in a panel or seminar, other than the reimbursement of expenses described in this policy.

**C. BOARD APPROVAL**

Except as provided for in the Trustee Education Policy, or where prior Board approval is not feasible, expenses for travel in excess of \$150 shall be approved by the Board before the expenses are incurred.

**IV. POLICY REVIEW**

The Board shall review this Policy at least every five years to ensure that it remains relevant and appropriate.

**V. AMENDMENT HISTORY**

This Policy was adopted by the Retirement Board on October 24, 2001, and revised April 13, 2005, November 19, 2008, July 1, 2008, October 26, 2011, May 28, 2014, June 27, 2018, April 28, 2021, and April 24, 2024.