

## **SSA Travel Guide**



### **Payment of travel expenses:**

When representing an SSA disability case, Social Security has created a policy that will allow for the reimbursement of travel costs. Generally the agency that requests you to travel will also be the one who reimburses you. No later than when you are notified of a hearing or examination, the requesting agency must supply you with all information associated with your right to travel reimbursement, rules of payment and the right to advance payment.

You will also be given specific instructions on how to request payment from that particular agency. All information associated with the rules and regulations controlling travel can be found in the Code of Federal regulations. Specifically, 20 CFR #416.1495. The rules for SSI and SSDI cases are the same.

### **Who may be reimbursed?**

The claimant may be reimbursed for travel to and from medical examinations, Social Security requested meetings or hearings associated with the pursuit of a claim. No travel is reimbursable unless Social Security requests it. That is, if travel is required by Social Security in order to complete a case, that travel cost is reimbursable. The representative and all non-subpoenaed witnesses that the State or Federal agency determines to be reasonably necessary at a hearing. That is, you and any witnesses needed to prove the claimant's case may be eligible for travel to an administrative law judge hearing.

### **What expenses are reimbursable?**

Social Security reimbursement for in-state travel expenses including the ordinary expenses associated with the use of private or public transportation as well as unusual cost due to special circumstances. For example, if the claimant can only travel by ambulance, that expense is reimbursable.

Reimbursement is limited to the use of the most cost efficient mode possible. A representative and the claimant may be reimbursed for travel by air, rail, bus or rented vehicle. Social Security will not pay for a ride to a hearing in a limousine. Unusual travel cost must be authorized in advance by the requesting agency. Other reimbursable travel expenses include but are not limited to:

**Meals**

**Lodging**

**Taxicabs**  
**Private vehicle**  
**Attendant services**  
**Ambulance services**

If your private vehicle is used to travel to a requested hearing, you will be reimbursed at the current Federal or State mileage rate plus the cost of tolls or parking. Reimbursement is limited to travel within the United States as defined under CFR 416.1209 (c)(10). The travel mileage to and from the hearing must exceed seventy five miles to be reimbursable as a travel expense.

Generally, you are reimbursed after the travel. However, you may request a travel advance if you can show that the advance is reasonable and necessary. So if you are asked to attend a hearing across the State, and you do not wish to pay out of pocket, you can request and show the expected cost of the total trip for reimbursement.

**Requesting reimbursement:**

To acquire reimbursement, you must submit to Social Security or the State agency (the agency that requested the travel), an itemized list of what you spent and supporting receipts. A request can be made by either the claimant or the representative. The claimant would then have to request reimbursement of that cost from Social Security.

Both the claimant and representative cannot request reimbursement from Social Security of the same exact travel cost. However, both the claimant and representative can request reimbursement for their own specific costs of attending the hearing.

When attending a Social Security requested hearing that will require travel, keep good records of all reasonable costs incurred and make a claim for reimbursement of those costs as soon as possible. Do not allow Social Security to intimidate you into taking travel losses that could not be avoided. You do have a right to appeal if Social Security refused to pay what is felt to be a reasonable travel expense.

**Accepting Out-of-State Cases:**

There is no Social Security rule prohibiting an advocate from representing cases outside of their state. However, if you plan to do so, we recommend that you partner with an advocate in the state you plan to accept cases from. That way, if you're required to attend a hearing out-of-state, you can transfer the case to your advocate partner in that state. The advocate partner can attend the hearing, allowing you to avoid any non-reimbursable travel expenses. See Partnership training option.

What travel expenses are reimbursed? View these online SSA references at [ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov).



## Payment of Certain Travel Expenses

416.1495 \_Payment of certain travel expenses - general.

416.1496 \_Who may be reimbursed.

416.1498 \_What travel expenses are reimbursable.

416.1499 \_When and how to claim reimbursement.

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