



## **Guidelines for Arbitrator Reimbursement**

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**Revised January 2018**

Thank you for agreeing to serve as an arbitrator for FINRA Office of Dispute Resolution. To better serve our users, we are continuing our efforts to reduce the costs of case administration. Accordingly, please be conscientious regarding any expenses you may incur while performing your duties.

### **FINRA Arbitrator Expense Reports**

All FINRA Arbitrator Expense Reports must be submitted within 30 calendar days of the date the expense was incurred. Additional copies of the Arbitrator Expense Report are available at FINRA's Arbitration and Mediation website or you can contact your case administrator.

All reimbursable expenses should be itemized on the FINRA Expense Report. Original receipts (not copies) for all reimbursable expenditures over \$25 must be attached. You are not required to submit receipts for expenses of \$25 or less. In completing the expense report, you must include the following in the space provided:

- your Arbitrator ID number;
- the case number (include in "Overall Business Purpose" section); and
- the case name (include in "Overall Business Purpose" section).

Failure to properly complete the expense report will delay reimbursement.

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

First, you must determine your arbitrator category. This will determine which expenses are reimbursable.

## Category A Arbitrators

**Category A: Arbitrators who live or work within 75 miles of their primary hearing location.**

Category A arbitrators will be reimbursed for:

**Local Transportation:** You will be reimbursed for mileage (up to 75 miles each way), parking, and toll charges incurred traveling to and from the hearing location. Effective January 1, 2018, the mileage rate is 54.5 cents per mile (per IRS Regulation). Actual miles driven should be entered on the expense report. Commuter trains, subways, buses, or other forms of convenient, low-cost public transportation should be used whenever possible.

**Meals:** You will receive lunch at the hearing provided by FINRA, or be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$25 for expenses (including any gratuities). Arbitrators can use their \$25 allowance to purchase any food they wish (i.e., coffee, breakfast, lunch, snack, etc.), as long as they remain within the \$25 daily allowance. You will need to submit receipts for expenses over \$25.

## Category B Arbitrators

**Category B: Arbitrators who live more than 75 miles from their primary hearing location.**

Category B arbitrators will be reimbursed for reasonable reimbursable expenses when serving in their primary hearing location.

### **Air and Rail Travel**

FINRA will reimburse panelists for coach class air travel and fees for one piece of checked luggage. Rail service may be ticketed on Amtrak Northeast Regional or Acela business class trains.

The following expenses are **not** reimbursable:

- airline/rail upgrades to first class or coach preferred seating;
- the use of frequent flyer reward points in lieu of the purchase of a ticket, or to upgrade seating; and
- fees for early boarding.

Please note that while all meals, pillows, and blankets purchased in-flight **are** reimbursable, all other items – such as alcoholic beverages, headsets, movie rental, and air phone – are **not** reimbursable.

**FINRA has negotiated corporate rates with a number of travel providers. As such, it encourages panelists to contact FINRA's corporate travel management provider, ADTRAV, for assistance in making all travel arrangements. FINRA will pay for travel and lodging booked through ADTRAV directly; arbitrators do not have to provide a payment method when booking through this service.**

**Please note:** Once a hearing location has been confirmed, FINRA staff will complete a Non-Employee Travel Request Form on their behalf and email it to ADTRAV. The information will be loaded into the travel system within 48 hours of receipt.

**Arbitrators should call ADTRAV at the completion of this 48-hour period at (855) 764-2777 or (205) 949-4200 during regular business hours: Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. Eastern Time.**

When they call, arbitrators must provide the case name and date of the hearing. This will enable the agent to locate the panelist's name and hearing information and provide better, more detailed service.

If arbitrators choose not to use ADTRAV to book their air or rail travel, in order to ensure that the reservation is fully refundable, arbitrators should book airfare/rail tickets directly through the airline/Amtrak rather than through third party booking agents (e.g. Expedia, Travelocity, and Orbitz, etc.).

**Airport Ground Transportation:** You may be reimbursed for airport taxis, buses, or other forms of convenient, low-cost public ground transportation whenever traveling to and from the airport and hearing location. The costs of taxis are only reimbursable to the extent that other lower cost alternatives (such as hotel courtesy vans) are not available.

**Rental Cars:** The costs of rental cars are only reimbursable to the extent that other lower cost alternatives (such as hotel courtesy vans) are not available. Rental cars will be reimbursed for economy size cars only. You should decline the car insurance option. As independent contractors working on behalf of FINRA, arbitrators are covered by FINRA's corporate-wide insurance policy.

**Automobile Use:** Should you choose not to fly, or if no flights are available, or if it is more economical to drive than to fly, FINRA's policy is to reimburse you for mileage, parking, and toll charges incurred in traveling to and from the hearing location. Effective January 1, 2018, the mileage rate is 54.5 cents per mile (per IRS Regulation). Actual miles driven should be entered on your expense report. FINRA will also reimburse you for per diem meal expenses incurred while traveling to and from the hearing location in amounts not to exceed those listed above.

**Lodging:** You may be reimbursed for your lodging on the night before the hearing. The lodging must be at the hotel where the hearing is scheduled or at a reasonably priced hotel nearby. Arbitrators staying in a private residence with family or friends will be reimbursed for a hostess gift to extend appreciation to friends or relatives for their hospitality not to exceed \$100 per stay.

FINRA encourages panelists to contact ADTRAV for assistance in booking hotel stays. When staying at a hotel booked by FINRA, the room and tax charges will be direct billed to FINRA. Panelists are responsible for payment of all incidental charges (e.g., mini-bar, room service, telephone calls) incurred at the hotel, and may submit meal expenses and telephone call expenses to FINRA for reimbursement within the policies described below.

If arbitrators choose not to use ADTRAV to book their air or rail travel, in order to ensure that the reservation is fully refundable, arbitrators should book lodging directly through the hotel rather than through third party booking agents (e.g., Expedia, Travelocity, and Orbitz, etc.).

**Meals:** You may be reimbursed for meal expenses incurred while at the hearing, up to a maximum of \$75. These amounts include any gratuities added to the bills. Arbitrators can use their \$75 allowance to purchase any food they wish (i.e., coffee, breakfast, lunch, snack, etc.), as long as they remain within the \$75 daily allowance. If serving at a FINRA location, lunch may be provided at the hearing. If so, your daily food allowance will be reduced by \$25.

You will need to submit receipts for expenses over \$25.

**Telephone Calls:** You may be reimbursed for reasonable telephone calls that are necessary for business and personal reasons (such as to immediate family members).



## Category C Arbitrators

**Category C: Arbitrators who are asked by FINRA to serve in a hearing location in addition to their primary hearing location.**

Category C arbitrators will be reimbursed for reasonable reimbursable expenses.

### **Air and Rail Travel**

FINRA will reimburse panelists for coach class air travel and fees for one piece of checked luggage. Rail service may be ticketed on Amtrak Northeast Regional or Acela business class trains.

The following expenses are **not** reimbursable:

- airline/rail upgrades to first class or coach preferred seating;
- the use of frequent flyer reward points in lieu of the purchase of a ticket, or to upgrade seating; and
- fees for early boarding.

Please note that while all meals, pillows, and blankets purchased in-flight **are** reimbursable, all other items – such as alcoholic beverages, headsets, movie rental, and air phone – are **not** reimbursable.

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**Airport Ground Transportation:** You may be reimbursed for airport taxes, buses, or other forms of convenient, low-cost public ground transportation whenever traveling to and from the airport and hearing location. The costs of taxis are only reimbursable to the extent that other lower cost alternatives (such as hotel courtesy vans) are not available.

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You will need to submit receipts for expenses over \$25.

**Telephone Calls:** You may be reimbursed for reasonable telephone calls that are necessary for business and personal reasons (such as to immediate family members).

### **Category D Arbitrators**

**Category D: Arbitrators who have a secondary hearing location in close proximity to their primary hearing location will receive the same reimbursement arrangement as in Category A (see above) for their secondary hearing location.** (For example, an arbitrator may have his/her primary HLC as New York City, NY and his/her secondary HLC as Newark, NJ. The arbitrator would be reimbursed for services on the same basis when serving either in New York City or in Newark.)

## **Gratuities For All Arbitrator Types**

All gratuities must be reasonable. You should include the gratuity in the total amount you request for a particular expense and itemize it in your expense report. Because the amount allowed for meals needs to include the amount of your gratuity, the gratuity must appear in the receipt provided by the food vendor. Any non-meal gratuity of \$10 or more requires a receipt. Additional supporting documentation may be requested at the discretion of FINRA. FINRA provides the following guidelines for tipping:

- Cab fare: 20 percent
- Meals: 15 – 20 percent
- Housekeeping services: up to \$2 per night
- Baggage assistance: \$2 per bag
- Car valet: \$2 per driver

## **Non-Reimbursable Expenses<sup>1</sup> For All Arbitrator Types**

The following expenses are considered personal. Under **no** circumstances will arbitrators be reimbursed for the following:

Hotel amenities such as hotel spas, recreational sports, in-room movies, mini-bar, and hotel room refrigerator charges.

Expenses of anyone accompanying an arbitrator to a hearing or while traveling. Combined charges should be adjusted to exclude expenses incurred by the accompanying person. In addition, any difference between single and double room rates because of an accompanying person should be deducted from the total expense.

Airline headsets and any other items for personal use. If charges for reimbursable items and personal items are combined, the charges should be adjusted to exclude personal items.

Any alcoholic beverage.

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<sup>1</sup> Expenses not considered as “business expenses” by the IRS.