



Tuscaloosa Research & Education Advancement Corporation

VA Medical Center
3701 Loop Road East (151C)
Tuscaloosa, AL 35404

TREAC Policy

Support for Meetings and Conferences

Meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars, grand rounds, town halls, symposia, and other similar meetings are all accepted features of conducting research and education. Additionally, certain events, such in-services, retreats and board meetings, are necessary for the conduct of business. Incidental to the business purpose of such meetings, it may be appropriate to serve meals or refreshments (i.e., what an individual would pay with personal funds).

Various regulations, the federal ethics standards and the statute that authorizes Tuscaloosa Research & Education Advancement Corporation (TREAC) influence the extent to which expenditures related to such events are appropriate for TREAC support. Consequently, in order to be considered for TREAC support by direct payment or reimbursement, TREAC has established the following policy.

1. In order to be eligible for TREAC support, a meeting must have a documented research, education or TREAC business purpose. TREAC will not support meals or refreshments to boost employee morale or performance, "entertainment" expenses such as social activities, parties, ceremonial occasions or those that provide amusement.
 - For a **research related meeting**: A request for TREAC support must include an explicit statement about the research rationale for the event; that is, its research related purpose and how it will further VA research. Accompanying documentation should include the program, a copy of the slides, agenda or topic of discussion and a roster of attendees. When appropriate, the request should tie the meeting to an approved research project.
 - For an **educational program not related to research**: The Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center (TVAMC) Education Committee must first approve the education activity itself. Documentation should include an explicit statement of the purpose and how the program will further the TVAMC's and/or VA's education and training mission, the agenda, program or topic of discussion, and a roster of attendees.
 - For **other TREAC business events**: A request must include an explicit statement of how the meeting will further TREAC's ability to facilitate

research and education. Appropriate events include, but are not limited to retreats and board, annual membership and investigator meetings. Documentation should include the purpose, agenda, program or topic of discussion and a roster of attendees.

2. The types of meetings that may be eligible for TREAC support are too numerous to list and the characteristics of appropriate meetings may vary. However, factors that TREAC will consider when evaluating a meeting for support include:

- Whether at least one speaker makes a research presentation or presents educational instruction.
- Whether there is a non-VAMC speaker and/or non-VAMC personnel are among the expected attendees.
- The frequency of meetings that involve the same personnel.
- Whether the meeting involves at least one individual who is being recruited to conduct research or education at the TVAMC.
- Whether the meeting lasts more than two hours or extends through a normal mealtime.

Regardless of the type of meeting, the documentation required in #1 above is a prerequisite for TREAC support.

3. Requests for TREAC support will be reviewed and approved by the individual designated by the board, generally the executive director or the president of the board of directors. TREAC will provide direct payment or reimbursement for reasonable meeting costs based on submission of original receipts. In the event of disagreement, the request will be referred to president of the board of directors or to the full board as appropriate.

4. TREAC encourages meeting organizers to obtain pre-approval of TREAC support for meetings. Such approval is not mandatory, but events lacking pre-approval may be denied support or may receive only partial support.