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SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to provide helpful information and tips for those planning to attend a PPCDL Workshop. The guide provides workshop procedures and guidelines pertaining to registration, how to receive specific workshop details, how to make travel arrangements and how to request travel expense reimbursement. This guide includes the answers to the most frequently asked questions and common occurrences from past workshop seasons.

The workshop coordinators created this guide with the goal of providing one document which contains all the general information needed to learn about, and participate in, the PPCDL Workshops.

Each workshop participant should understand their institution's rules pertaining to travel arrangements and reimbursements. The workshop coordinators cannot override institution rules.

The workshop coordinators hope the information supplied in this document, coupled with the understanding of each participant's institution procedures, will result in a stress-free planning and reimbursement process.

Please read the entire document!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE REGISTERING FOR A PPCDL WORKSHOP:

WORKSHOP TOPIC SELECTION:

Each year a **Topics-Needed Survey** is sent to the NPDN membership via the members listserv and posted on the NPDN portal in the month of September. The topics offered the following spring are selected based on the responses to this survey.

NPDN members, partners and collaborators are asked to be on the lookout for the survey each year, so the planning of workshops reflects the true needs of those who will attend these workshops.

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNT

To demonstrate the collaboration between the NPDN and USDA-APHIS-PPQ, and to allow more to attend the workshops, the NPDN leadership set the travel expense reimbursement scholarship for the PPCDL Workshops at \$1,500. Participants attending two or more workshops may request up to \$2,000. Additionally, those willing to help by renting a car and driving participants to and from the workshop site get up to an additional \$500.

Workshop participants are reminded that lower expenses mean more diagnosticians can participate in the PPCDL Workshops. Those who make plans early often get better options that are less expensive. Please consider making plans quickly after receiving a workshop confirmation and travel planning notification letter. Choosing priced options that keep the total travel expenses low allows others to benefit from attending these workshops.

NPDN WORKSHOP POLICIES:

The ***NPDN Workshop Policies for PPCDL and MFIT Workshops*** document provides key rules and guidelines and covers the expectations related to workshop registration, attendance, requirements, and travel expense reimbursement. This policies document is available on the NPDN Portal Workshops page, under the tab named for policies.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AFTER REGISTERING FOR A PPCDL WORKSHOP:

How you will receive information. Details for each step below the steps listing:

STEP 1: Request & response-Those requesting registration will receive a successful submission screen.

STEP 2: Invitation & acknowledgment-After the registration request deadline, those selected will be invited to the workshop and must respond to confirm their workshop placement.

STEP 3: Planning details-After confirmation is received, receive Letter A containing all planning details.

STEP 4: Pre-Workshop details-A few weeks before the workshop, receive Letter B with pre-travel details.

Letter I is the invitation letter; the participant must respond to confirm they still want to attend.

Letter A is the first planning letter; **Letter AI** for in-person & **Letter AV** for virtual workshops.

Letter B is a pre-travel letter; **Letter BI** for in-person & **Letter BV** for virtual workshops.

STEP 1: Request & response.

The workshop registration method is developed by the planning team with input from the NPDN Professional Development Committee and is reviewed annually for needed revisions and updates. An announcement for the opening of registration will be posted using common NPDN tools such as the members listserv, the portal, and the newsletter. All workshop requests will be acknowledged with a successful submission screen. If you do not receive the successful submission screen, your request may not have been submitted and you should check your registration status with the workshop coordinators.

We encourage those registering to add back-up topics to their registration request. Workshops fill quickly. By adding additional choices, an alternate topic may be assigned during the initial review process, instead of after all the registration requests are reviewed. The requester is more likely to get an open space if an alternate topic is included with the initial submission before capacity is reached for that workshop.

The planning team members may work with a designated review team to determine the placement of workshop participants. This may take several weeks to complete.

STEP 2: Invitation & acknowledgment- Letter I.

After the registration request deadline is reached and the applications are reviewed, those selected for a workshop will be contacted by the workshop coordinators with an invitation to attend the workshop, with our Letter I. The potential participant must respond within **3 days** to confirm they are still interested in attending the training. If confirmation is not made within the **3-day period**, the coordinators will assume that person is no longer interested in attending and move to the next person in line.

STEP 3: Planning details - Letter A.

Once the participants are confirmed, the coordinators will develop a planning letter that signals it is safe to make travel plans. Popular topics may be increased with an additional session if funding and time permits. Topics with low numbers may be cancelled or if two dates originally offered, they may be combined. Because changes like these are possible, the coordinators ask that no one make any travel plans until they receive the Letter A. If a workshop is cancelled or combined, those registered are contacted as quickly as possible.

What is included in Letter A?

Letter AI-for those attending in-person workshops, confirms the dates and times of the workshop, provides the hotel name and address, the lodging group code, lists best airports, ground transportation options, how lunches

will be handled on workshop days and requests for volunteer drivers. It includes email addresses for instructors and participants so they can contact each other if needed.

Letter AV-for those attending virtual workshops, confirms the dates and times of the workshop, indicates the program used for the virtual session, lists any pre-workshop requirements, and where materials will be posted.

STEP 4: Pre-Workshop details - Letter B.

A few weeks before the workshop, **Letter BI and BV** are sent to the workshop participants to provide pre-workshop attendance details.

What is included in Letter B?

Letter BI-for those attending in-person workshops. It contains on-site details for the upcoming workshop, confirms first day meeting time and place, who to contact if delays and cancellations occur, directions to the workshop site, identification requirements for entering the building, the dress code, and how to handle lunch, snacks, and coffee, who will be driving and an updated participant listing.

Letter BV-for those attending virtual workshops. It serves as a reminder of the upcoming virtual workshop. The letter will confirm the times, list any required materials such as hardware and software programs, provide storage location of handouts, and provide Zoom link(s) and password(s). It will also contain an updated participant and instructor listing.

WHO GETS REIMBURSED and HOW:

Cornell University will reimburse **YOUR HOME INSTITUTION**. The travel expenses for each workshop participant are submitted as an **Institution Travel Reimbursement Request Letter**. An easy-to-follow template is available on the NPDN Portal, PPCDL Workshop page.

Participants must follow their home institution travel procedures and policies. **PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR REIMBURSEMENT TO YOUR INSTITUTION FIRST.** When a participant submits their travel expense letter to the Cornell coordinators and their institution representatives at the same time, we often receive an email containing a corrected letter at a later time, after the institution has reviewed the submission. The institution reviewers may find problems with the participants submitted materials that requires a change. When this happens Cornell must cancel the request and re-submit the request again, causing a duplication of effort and a longer processing time to get the reimbursement back to the institution.

The sole use of the institutional letter streamlined the travel reimbursement process. Using the direct reimbursement of the institution allows participants to get reimbursed sooner through their home institution for items like earlier purchasing of airline tickets. Cornell could not offer this reimbursement prior to traveling due to the cooperative agreement terms with Cornell University. Therefore, to simplify the overall process, the institution reimbursement method was put in place. The participants must follow their home institution rules regardless of where the funds originate. All original receipts stay with the home institution.

To review...the reimbursement **MUST** go to the institution, **NOT** directly to the participant. The participants must follow their institution's rules **AND** have the letter reviewed by their institution **BEFORE** submitting it to Cornell for processing.

See details regarding travel expense reimbursement in Section III.

SECTION II. PLANNING and TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Each participant is responsible for making their travel arrangements and paying the charges for travel-related services up front. The participant's institution will be reimbursed after completion of the trip.

WHEN TO MAKE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS:

DO NOT make travel arrangements until you have confirmed your placement by responding to the LETTER I and you receive the LETTER A. Letter A is the signal telling you it is OK to begin your travel planning. A minimum number of participants is required for each workshop. When the planning team members confirm they have the minimum number needed for the workshop, LETTER A is sent. It confirms the workshop will proceed as planned and provides the details needed to begin making travel arrangements.

DO NOT PLAN to leave before the completion of the workshop. If attending an in-person workshop and hoping to return home the final day, do not book a return flight before 8:00pm, you will need at least 3 hours of time to comfortably get to the airport. The airports in this area are very busy around the clock, so plan for lengthy ground travel times and long lines at check-in and getting through security.

IDENTIFICATION

Workshop participants should bring at least one form of picture ID with them, as may be needed when signing-in at the PPCDL's USDA Building 580.

DESIGNATED HOTEL

The workshop coordinators will provide a group code and/or link and address for a designated hotel in Letter A. Be sure to use the group code supplied to receive the prearranged rate. Grouping participants at one hotel makes traveling to and from the workshop site easier for everyone.

We understand some participants may have family and friends residing near the workshop site and may prefer to stay with them. That is up to the participant and fine with the workshop coordinators. If a participant plans to stay at a different location other than the designated hotel, they should inform their fellow workshop participants and instructors, so they are aware and do not wait for them at the hotel.

When planning various hotel activities, be aware that some items are not reimbursable. They include:

- Hotel fitness room fees,
- Saunas and massages,
- Pet care, kenneling and hotel pet charges.

Those not given the rate indicated in Letter A need to contact the hotel and request a correction. If not fixed, contact Barb Riker, so she can try to correct the problem.

AIRLINES-FLIGHTS

There are no restrictions on airline companies and airports used or the amount you spend on airfare. However, there is a reimbursement cap, and participants will be reimbursed for expenses up to that cap. Please make flight plans quickly after being given the green light to do so. Those that make plans early often get better rates and better rates keep participants under the cap and allow more people to attend the workshops.

Common airports used for the PPCDL Workshops:

- Baltimore/Maryland Airport-BWI
- Reagan National Airport-DCA
- Washington Dulles-IAD

Airline fees that are **not reimbursable** include:

- Upgrades,
- Airline clubs,
- Frequent flyer miles,
- Helicopter fees for airport transfer.

FLIGHT CHANGE FEES

If you need to change your flight due to an emergency, the change fee and difference in airfare is reimbursable, as long as you remain under the reimbursement cap.

TRAVEL INSURANCE IS NOT COVERED

Any type of travel insurance is **NOT** a reimbursable expense through Cornell University.

Insurance **not covered** include:

- trip cancellation insurance,
- personal accident or property insurance,
- baggage insurance and non-compulsory health insurance.

If you prefer to purchase travel insurance for personal reasons, you will not be reimbursed for it, under any conditions. It is your choice but understand it is not a reimbursable expense.

GROUND TRANSPORTATION

It is the responsibility of the traveler to make arrangements for travel from the airport to the hotel and vice versa. Most common ground transportation services are reimbursable. Examples of reimbursable methods include taxi, rideshare, airport shuttle service, metro/subway/train, and shuttle bus.

RENTAL CAR

In hopes of keeping expenses down and minimizing the number of rental cars for each workshop, the workshop coordinators will request two volunteers willing to rent a car and drive their fellow workshop participants to and from the meeting site each day. Often drivers also drive groups to dinner each night. However, there are numerous restaurants within walking distance of the hotel.

The workshop coordinators will request volunteer drivers in **Letter AI**. The workshop coordinators encourage participants to reach out to each other to coordinate rides, meeting times, if a delay in their arrival occurs, etc. If interested in driving, please respond as soon as possible. **Letter BI** will contain the volunteer driver's information again so participants can converse with each other about plans.

What happens if no one volunteers to be a driver? The group will need to find an alternative method of transportation to get to and from the workshop site each day. The participants will need to make alternate arrangements, such as reserving a Taxi or Uber. Taxis and Ubers are allowable expenses.

Rental car details:

- Allowable expenses associated with rental cars include parking fees, fuel, and tolls.
- Items such as GPS, satellite radio, child car seats and other additions are not allowable expenses.
- Only TWO types of insurance are allowed. They are...
 - Collision (CDW)
 - Loss Damage Waiver (LDW)

NOTE: If the insurance code differs from those listed (CDW, LDW), it is **NOT** a reimbursable expense. If an attendant says their code is the same as CDW or LDW, **IT IS NOT**, and past drivers have been burned.

- Many past participants have shared with us that they were insured through a personal car insurance provider, a credit card company or through a university/employer-rental car company arrangement. Participants who volunteer to drive should look into these established insurances before renting a car.

USE OF A PERSONAL OR BUSINESS VEHICLE

Mileage expenses will be reimbursed for those traveling to the workshop using a personal or business vehicle and those using these vehicles to drive to the airport, train station or other transportation. The current mileage rate can be found at the GSA travel website, [Privately owned vehicle \(POV\) mileage reimbursement rates | GSA](#)

Personal vehicle details:

- If the workshop participant is using a personal vehicle at the workshop location, they should include the mileage driven while onsite, from hotel to workshop site and to restaurants for meals.
- Drivers submit the number of miles driven in the institution travel reimbursement request letter.
- Fuel is not reimbursable for personal/business vehicles; the per/mile rate covers fuel costs.

NOTE: Mileage reimbursement does not apply to rental cars; the rental charge and gas are covered.

TOLLS AND PARKING

All tolls and parking fees are reimbursable expenses for rental cars and personal vehicles.

The PPCDL Building 580 parking lot is quite small, therefore, parking space is limited. When possible, carpooling is strongly encouraged to minimize the number of cars taking parking spaces. Drivers should check with the instructors to learn if they need a parking pass or need to register the vehicle when signing into the building.

MEALS-PER DIEM

All meals are covered using the workshop participants' institution policies or the federal GSA per diem rate. Participants should ask their institution representative which rate applies to them when receiving a reimbursement from a source other than their home institution. In all cases received to date, the participant has been required to use their institution's rates.

More details and examples of a typical trip's per diem request are provided in Section III.

SECTION III. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST SUBMISSION

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNT

To demonstrate the collaboration between the NPDN and USDA-APHIS-PPQ, and to allow more participants to attend the workshops, the NPDN Leadership set a travel reimbursement scholarship. Rates may vary by year and will be posted on the NPDN Portal Workshop page. Often there is one rate for those attending one workshop and a slightly higher rate for those two or more workshops and those willing to be a driver and rent a car.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN THE INSTITUTION REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST LETTER

Cornell University provides one type of reimbursement method, reimbursement that goes to the participant's home institution. This was selected as the approved method for reimbursement because it simplifies the process. The workshop participants must follow their home institution rules and guidelines and the reimbursement are provided to the institution in the form of a check or electronic deposit. Be sure to check with your institution to learn how this process will work for you, doing so will result in a smooth planning and reimbursement process.

Be sure to follow these steps to submit the **Institution Travel Reimbursement Request Letter**. An easy-to-follow template is available on the NPDN Portal Workshop page. All the information listed below is on the template.

The request letter must be on **the participant's institution letterhead**,

1. The request letter must contain the **participant's name, workshop name and dates attended**,
2. Each expense should be listed with the **type of expense and the amount of that charge**, common categories include...
 - a. Lodging
 - b. Airfare
 - c. Rental car
 - d. Rental car fuel
 - e. Private or institution vehicle mileage
 - f. Tolls
 - g. Parking
 - h. Baggage Fees
3. To ensure the reimbursement goes to the correct recipients and contains the references needed, include the following in your letter.
 - a. Check should be made payable to: **(name of institution-department)**
 - b. Referencing: **NPDN-PPCDL Workshop-Travel Expense Reimbursement for (PARTICIPANT NAME)**
 - c. For attending: **(name of workshop attended)**
 - d. Send reimbursement check to: **Contact Person Name
(Institution)
Street Address
City, State, zip code**

In the past, where the receipts go has been confusing. Use of the **Institution Travel Reimbursement Request Letter** makes it quite simple; the home institution retains all original receipts and copies are not needed with the request letter. You simply email the completed letter to the contacts listed at the end of this document.

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT:

- To determine the reimbursement per mile current rate, go to the GSA travel website.
- [Per diem rates | GSA](#)

MEALS-PER DIEM REIMBURSEMENT:

All meals are covered using your institution or the federal GSA per diem rate. Each institution's business office or travel representative can provide which rate applies to you when receiving reimbursement of your travel expenses. In most cases, the traveler is required to follow their institution's policies regarding per diem rates.

- The per diem meal allowance rate is either following the institutions policies or using the GSA rate.
- Meals are calculated according to the number of days traveled.
- The rate depends on the physical location of the hotel and the time of year.
- The per diem meal rate can be found on GSA website, [FY 2025 Per Diem Rates for Maryland | GSA](#)
- When calculating meals, the per diem rate is broken down into four parts:
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Incidental Expenses
- If any meals are paid for by those organizing or hosting the workshop, refer to the GSA page for the amount that should be removed for that day.

An example of calculation of per diem for a workshop:

The traveler attended a 2-day workshop in March of this year. The hotel used is frequently located in Bowie, Maryland, so according to the GSA website, the per diem meal allowance is \$92.00/day. The GSA rates change frequently. Be sure to check them after your workshop.

The traveler arrived the evening before the workshop and returned the day after, making the entire trip 4 days. The travel days are calculated at 75% of the daily rate.

The hotel provided some breakfast options but was not utilized by the traveler.

<u>Day 1 (travel day)</u> \$92.00 x 0.75	= \$69.00
<u>Day 2 (workshop day 1)</u> \$92.00 x 100%	= \$92.00
<u>Day 3 (workshop day 2)</u> \$92.00 x 100%	= \$92.00
<u>Day 5 (travel day)</u> \$92.00 x 0.75	= \$69.00
Total per diem reimbursed=	\$322.00

If you depart the evening of the last day of the workshop, Day 3's per diem will be 75% of the allowable rate, or \$69.00, because it is a travel day.

Note: Always check with your institution before submitting your travel reimbursement request through Cornell University. They may find items that need to be changed prior to submitting your request, which will avoid delays and re-submissions for corrections.

CONTACTS:

If you have ANY questions about any of these items, please contact the primary reimbursement coordinator, Barb Riker, or Karen Snover-Clift, before making your arrangements and/or submitting your travel reimbursement. This may avoid delays in the reimbursement process.

Primary Reimbursement Coordinator:

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