

Baltimore Research and Education Foundation, Inc.	BREF Meeting Support Policy	No.		3
		Effective Date		5/11/2009
		Revision Letter		B
		Final Approval Signature	Approved at the BREF Board meeting held 1/26/2011.	

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the terms whereby the Baltimore Research and Education Foundation, Inc. (BREF) will support meeting expenses for BREF Principal Investigators who organize and sponsor professional meetings.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to BREF investigators sponsoring meetings with BREF funds. Meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars, symposia and other similar meetings are accepted features of conducting research and education. Incidental to the business purpose of such meeting, it may be appropriate to serve moderately priced food and/or refreshments.

Various regulations, the federal ethics standards and the statute that authorizes BREF influence whether expenditures related to such events are appropriate for BREF support. Consequently, in order to be considered for BREF support by direct payment or reimbursement, BREF has established the following policy.

3.0 Policy

3.1 In order to be eligible for BREF support, a meeting must have a documented research, education or BREF business purpose. BREF will not support entertainment expenses such as social activities, parties, ceremonial occasions nor pay for alcohol.

3.2 For a **research related meeting**: A request for BREF 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, agenda or topic of discussion and a roster of attendees. When appropriate, the request should tie the meeting to an approved research project.

3.3 For an **educational program not related to research**: The education activity itself must first be approved by the VAMC Education Committee. Documentation should include an explicit statement of the purpose and how the program will further the VAMC's and/or VA's education and training mission, the agenda, program or topic of discussion, and a roster of attendees.

3.4 For other **BREF business events**: A request must include an explicit statement of how the meeting will further BREF's ability to facilitate research and education. Appropriate events would include Board of Director meetings.

3.5 The type of account that is the source of payment (project funds, residual funds or BREF’s administrative overhead account) is irrelevant in evaluating the appropriateness of support.

3.6 Factors that BREF will consider when evaluating a request to support a meeting include:

3.6.1 Whether the meal is incidental to a meeting that has a legitimate BREF research or education purpose.

3.6.2 Whether at least one speaker makes a research presentation or presents educational instruction.

3.6.3 Whether there is a non-VAMC speaker and/or non-VAMC personnel are among the expected attendees.

3.6.4 The frequency of similar meetings that may involve the same personnel. BREF will not support meal expenses for routine VAMC staff, committee or department meetings.

3.6.5 Whether the meeting involves at least one individual who is being recruited to conduct research or education at the VAMC.

3.6.6 Whether the meeting lasts more than two hours or lasts at least two hours and extends through a normal mealtime.

3.6.7 The cost of the meal and/or refreshment per attendee and if that amount is what a prudent person would expect to pay. Guidelines for maximum food meal costs are the prevailing federal per diem rates for meals.

3.6.8 Whether any aspect of the meeting could be construed as “entertainment.” BREF will not support meetings that include amusements, social activities, parties, ceremonials nor will BREF pay or reimburse for alcohol.

3.7 **Meeting organizers must obtain pre-approval in order to be considered for BREF support for a meeting.** BREF form “Pre-Authorization of Research/Education Meeting Expense Support” should be used for this purpose. Requests for BREF support will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. After receiving approval, BREF will provide direct payment or reimbursement for approved meeting costs based on submission of original receipts.

4.0 Revision History

Revision Date	Revision Letter	Name of Document Author	Description of Change
05/11/2009	A	Heather Riley	Put Policy in approved format

1/26/2011	B	Shirley Rutledge	Revised to use federal per diem rates for maximum food cost guidelines. Policy approved at BREF Board meeting, 1/26/2011.

Procedures:

1. PI completes BREF form “Pre-Authorization of Research/Education Meeting Expense Support. In addition to general information about the proposed meeting, the form requires:
 - a. Identification of individuals or groups that are expected to attend and estimates a total number of expected attendees.
 - b. Identification of all expected meeting costs. Guidelines for maximum meal costs are the prevailing federal per diem rates for meals.
 - c. Justification of the event.
2. PI attaches a meeting agenda to the completed form and submits it to the BREF accountant.
3. The accountant reviews the form and confirms expected costs. The accountant will contact the PI regarding any items in question. The form is then given to the Executive Director for signature.
4. The Executive Director reviews the form and signs if approved. The form is then returned to the accountant who notifies the PI that the meeting has been approved.
5. The PI and accountant coordinate any up-front deposits that might be required from vendors.
6. The PI makes all other meeting arrangements.
7. A meeting sign-in sheet as well as the final meeting agenda must be turned in to the accountant for all BREF funded meetings.
8. Any meeting invoices should be submitted to the accountant for payment.

Baltimore Research and Education Foundation, Inc.

**Pre-Authorization of
Research/Education Meeting Expense Support**

I wish to hold a research/education -related meeting and request authorization to use BREF funds from my _____ study account to support the meeting expenses.

Expected Date and Time of Meeting _____

Location of meeting _____

I expect the following to attend:
(Identify groups and their affiliation)*

What is the purpose of the event? Describe how the event relates to VA research or education.

Please itemize expected costs.

A meeting agenda must be attached, even if it is a draft.*

Signature of Investigator

Date

Approved:

David E. Johnson, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Date

*If BREF support is approved, a final detailed meeting agenda and a sign-in sheet or roster of attendees and their affiliation must accompany receipts for payment or reimbursement.