

# **Committees' Congressional Handbook**



## **Committee on House Administration**

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*All citations to the House Rules refer to the Rules of the House of Representatives*

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# INTRODUCTION

Ordinary and necessary expenses incurred by Committee Members and employees in the United States, its' territories, and possessions in support of official Committee business are reimbursable in accordance with the regulations contained in this Committees' Congressional Handbook.

“Ordinary and necessary” means reasonable expenditures in support of official Committee business that are consistent with all applicable Federal laws, Rules of the House of Representatives, and regulations of the Committee on House Administration (CHA). The phrase “Committee funds” means funds made available to a committee pursuant to primary and supplemental expense resolutions or allocated from the reserve fund.

The Handbook is compiled of regulations meant to assist Committee Chairs in determining whether expenses are reimbursable. Therefore, the Handbook contains broad descriptions of reimbursable expenses, but is not an exhaustive list of such expenses. The Handbook provides Committee Chairs with the authority and flexibility to manage the Committee's budget. Questions about reimbursement of an expense should be directed to the CHA prior to incurring the expense.

For all questions relating to policies and procedures applicable to the acquisition, transfer, disposal, and maintenance of furnishings, equipment, software, and related services please, refer to the Guide to Outfitting and Maintaining an Office available from the CHA.

Routine administrative, financial and non-legislative support services (e.g., equipment purchases, technology standards and services, office supplies, room reservation and set-up) are acquired through the Office of the House Chief Administrative Officer (“CAO”). For further information about the CAO's services, please refer to HouseNet, the House intranet (<https://housenet.house.gov>) or the CAO's services office, First Call, at x58000.

## GENERAL

Only official expenses the primary purpose of which are for official committee business and which are incurred in accordance with the Handbook are reimbursable. In general:

1. Committee funds may not be used to defray any personal, campaign-related political party or campaign-related expenses, or expenses related to a Member's personal Congressional office.
2. Committee funds may not be used to pay a settlement or award in connection with a claim filed with the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights or in federal court for conduct prohibited under the *Congressional Accountability Act of 1995*.
3. The Committee Chair is personally responsible for the payment of any official expenses incurred that exceeds the authorized Committee funds or is incurred but not reimbursable under these regulations.

4. Campaign funds may be used to defray official expenses in certain limited circumstances where authorized by the Committee on Ethics. Pursuant to House Rule XXIV, clause 2, campaign funds cannot be used to defray official expenses for communications (including franked mail), compensation for services, office space, furniture, equipment, or information technology services. Contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103 for guidance on use of campaign funds for official purposes.
5. The Committee Chair and Members of the Committee may expend personal funds in support of official Committee business. However, a Committee Chair or a Member of the Committee may not expend personal funds to defray the Committee's franked mail allocation.
6. Unless specifically authorized by an applicable provision of federal law, House Rules, or Committee Regulations, no Member of the Committee, relative of a Committee Member, or anyone with whom a Committee Member has a professional or legal relationship may directly benefit from the expenditure of Committee funds.
7. Committee funds are available for services provided and expenses incurred from January 3 of one year through January 2 of the following year. All expenses incurred will be charged to the funds available on the date the services were provided, and the expenses were incurred.
8. Committee funds are not transferable between sessions.
9. At the beginning of a Congress, each Committee is authorized a specific amount for franked mail which may not be used for other purposes. Funds provided to Committees in the primary and supplemental expense resolutions may only be transferred into a Committee's franked mail account with prior approval from the CHA.
10. Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1913, unless expressly authorized by Congress, Committee funds may not be used to directly or indirectly fund grassroots lobbying activities designed to influence policy or officials. Contact the Communications Standards Commission for more information.

All expenditures must be part of an "arms-length marketplace transaction," which is an arrangement in which goods and/or services, including quality of and access to such goods and/or services, are acquired under the same terms and conditions as are available to the public.

## **BIENNIAL FUNDING**

Pursuant to House Rules, Standing and Select Committees of the House, excluding the Appropriations Committee, are funded on a biennial basis. At the beginning of each Congress, each Committee must submit a budget request to the CHA and introduce a primary expense resolution providing funds for the Committee's activities for each session of that Congress.

The CHA will provide each Committee with forms and instructions for drafting a budget request and an expense resolution.

Once an expense resolution is introduced, the Chair of the Committee requesting funds must submit a budget request with supporting documentation to the CHA for consideration.

The Chair and Ranking Minority Member of each Committee will be invited to testify before the CHA on behalf of the Committee's budget request.

House Rule X, clause 7, provides for interim funding of Committees for the period beginning on January 3 and ending at midnight on March 31 or the adoption of a Committee funding resolution, whichever is earlier, in each odd-numbered year. For each month during that period, Committees are entitled to 9 percent (or such lesser percentage as may be determined by the CHA) of the total annualized amount made available under expense resolution for such Committees in the preceding session. These amounts, however, may vary if the House acts differently.

## **BUDGETING AND DISCLOSURE**

Committees should establish a budget at the beginning of each session and monitor expenditures each month using the monthly financial statement. The expenditures reflected in the monthly financial statements are compiled and published online as the quarterly Statement of Disbursements.

## **INCIDENTAL USE**

Incidental personal use of equipment and supplies owned or leased by, or the cost of which is reimbursed by, the House of Representatives is permitted only when such use is negligible in nature, frequency, time consumed, and expense. For example, limited use of government resources to access the Internet, to send or receive personal e-mail or to make personal phone calls is permissible, so long as the use meets the above criteria, and otherwise conforms with the Regulations of the CHA and the Code of Official Conduct (House Rule XXIII).

Each Committee may adopt a more restrictive incidental use policy.

## **MONTHLY REPORTS**

Each Committee must submit to the CHA the later of, the 18th of each month, or five business days after the closing of the monthly financial statement for that respective month, a report signed by the Committee Chair on the activities of the Committee during the preceding month.

The monthly report must include the following:

- a. Summary of the progress of the specific investigations and studies for which funds were approved.
- b. Statement of expenses for the month and year to date (page 2 and 3 of the Monthly Financial Statement is acceptable) for the current session and, if applicable, the prior session. Committees must reconcile their figures with the Monthly Financial Statement prior to submitting the monthly reports.
- c. Report of travel performed using Committee funds.
- d. List of Committee employees, job titles and gross monthly salaries (a copy of the monthly Payroll Certification Form is acceptable).
- e. Certification by the Chair of the reporting Committee that the report is available to Members of the Committee for examination.
- f. A list of all Committee detailees with each detailee's effective start and end date of detail at the Committee.

The CHA may inform Committees of additional requirements for inclusion.

Monthly reports for each Committee will be available for public inspection on the CHA website.

## **RESERVE FUNDS**

Pursuant to House Rule X, clause 6(a), “a primary expense resolution may include a reserve fund for unanticipated expenses of Committees. An amount from such a reserve fund may be allocated to a Committee only by approval of the CHA.”

Contact the CHA for information on requesting an allocation from the reserve fund.

## **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES REPORT**

House Rule XI, clause 1(d)(1) requires that every Committee “submit to the House not later than January 2 of each odd-numbered year a report on the activities of that Committee.” Contact the CHA for information on submitting the Committee activities report.

## **COMMITTEE STAFF**

### **GENERAL**

For purposes of this Handbook:

- “Staff” refers to all individuals who serve in the committee office including employees, fellows, consultants, detailees, unpaid interns and volunteers.
- “Employee” refers to an individual appointed to a position of employment in the House of Representatives by an authorized employing authority including individuals receiving pay disbursed by the CAO and individuals on Leave Without Pay or furlough status. Only employees count against a committee’s employee ceiling.

The Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) also contains definitions of “employees” and “interns.” Nothing in this Handbook alters those statutory definitions as applied under the CAA.

A Committee Chair is an authorized employing authority and determines the terms and conditions of employment for Committee staff consistent with applicable federal laws and House Rules.

1. Personnel actions affecting employment positions in the House of Representatives must be free from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity) service in the military, disability, marital or parental status or age.
2. Pursuant to House Rule XXIII, clause 8(a), a Committee may not retain an employee on the Committee’s payroll who does not perform duties commensurate with the employee’s compensation.
3. Teleworking is entirely at the discretion of the Committee Chair, subject to the Telework Policy regulations, and a Committee Chair is under no obligation to offer a teleworking option to employees. Offices offering teleworking must establish a teleworking program and enter

into teleworking agreements with employees who are eligible to telework. The Telework Policy and a sample teleworking program and agreement are located on the CHA website.

## **EMPLOYEES**

The Speaker sets an employee ceiling for each Committee which may not be exceeded unless specifically authorized by the Speaker.

### **Paid Interns**

Paid interns must perform services for the Committee on a temporary basis as part of an educational plan. Examples of an educational plan include, but are not limited to, participation in the Intern Lecture Series, attendance at Committee hearings, or attendance at CRS internship training programs. Committee Chairs are responsible for ensuring that the activities of the Committee's interns are consistent with these requirements.

Paid interns may work for no more than 120 calendar days in a 12-month period per employing authority.

Committees can share a paid intern with only one Member office at a time and only if that intern is paid from the House Paid Internship Program. Pursuant to regulations promulgated by the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights, paid interns are not employees for purposes of compliance with the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The rate of pay is at the discretion of the Committee Chair but may not be less than \$1,200 annually or exceed the maximum rate of pay set for interns by CHA (contact CHA for the current maximum rate). For the current applicable rate, contact CHA.

Paid interns are ineligible to telework unless an office as part of its continuity of operations plan requires employees to telework due to a disaster (natural or man-made), pandemic or another emergency. All equipment issued to support telework must be returned to the employing Committee no later than thirty days from the end date of the internship and costs incurred to return such equipment are reimbursable.

Any Committee interested in employing a foreign national as an intern should contact the Office of General Counsel at x59700.

### ***Interns Paid from Committee Funds***

Interns paid from Committee funds at or below the maximum rate of pay do not count against the committee's employee ceiling. Interns paid from Committee funds are eligible for transit benefits on a reimbursable basis and are eligible for the following benefits:

1. Federal Employees' Retirement System
2. Federal life insurance
3. Federal health insurance
4. Thrift Savings Plan

## ***Paid House Committee Internship Program***

The Paid House Committee Internship is an allowance separate from committee funds for compensation of interns. Committees are authorized an allocation each year which is divided evenly between the majority and minority.

Interns compensated through the Paid House Committee Internship Program do not count against a Committee's employee ceiling.

Unlike interns paid with Committee funds, interns compensated through the Paid House Internship Program are ineligible for the following benefits:

1. Federal Employees' Retirement System
2. Federal life insurance
3. Federal health insurance
4. Thrift Savings Plan
5. Student Loan Repayment Program

The Chairperson (or Ranking Member, in the case of interns employed by the Committee's Minority) determines the terms and conditions of employment for an intern participating in this program, including provisions for leave (e.g., Annual, Administrative, and Sick).

See *Unpaid Interns*.

## **Shared Employees**

Individuals employed by more than one employing authority of the House of Representatives are considered a "shared employee."

Shared employees must work out of the office of an employing authority but are not required to work in the office of each employing authority. The primary duty station for any employee shared with three or more employing authorities is either Washington, D.C. or the District of one of his or her employing authorities, which is determined by the location of the employee's primary residence. If a shared employee's primary duty station is not in Washington, D.C., then all employing authorities must agree in writing to the designation of the shared employee's primary duty station to ensure they are aware of the potential cost to their individual official funds to cover travel expenses.

Employees may not be shared between a Member or Committee office and the office of an Officer of the House if the employee, in the course of duties for an Officer, has access to the financial information, payroll information, equipment account information, or information systems of Member, Committee, or Leadership offices.

Any shared employee employed by three or more House employing authorities is required to:

1. Inform each employing authority in writing of the employee's employment status and any change in employment status with other employing authorities.
2. File with the Office of Risk Management a signed Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding of the Shared Employee Manual and Certification of Continued Compliance upon becoming simultaneously employed by three or more employing authorities.

3. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C § 13101 et seq., each House employee who is simultaneously employed by three or more House employing authorities for more than 60 days during a calendar year must file a Financial Disclosure Statement by May 15 of each year. If an employee does not trigger the reporting requirements of the Ethics in Government Act by their salary amount, the employee need not file periodic transaction reports.
4. Comply with all the regulations set forth in the Shared Employee Manual.
5. Complete all financial training prior to gaining access to financial systems and must annually recertify.

### **Fair Labor Standards Act**

Employees are classified into one of the following two categories:

1. Employees who are Exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as incorporated by the Congressional Accountability Act, are those who are not required to be paid overtime for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in one workweek. Exempt employees are expected to work whatever hours are necessary to meet the job responsibilities and needs of the Office.
2. Employees who are Non-Exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as incorporated by the Congressional Accountability Act, are those who are required to be compensated for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours per workweek.

The employee classification determination is based on the actual job duties and responsibilities of the employee. For a detailed review of overtime pay and work requirements for Non-Exempt employees, at the request of a Chairperson/Ranking Member or his/her designee, the Office of House Employment Counsel can advise an office of the Fair Labor Standards Act as it pertains to that respective office.

### **CONSULTANTS**

Pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 4301, each Committee is authorized, with the prior approval of CHA, to obtain temporary or intermittent services of individual consultants or organizations, to advise the Committee with respect to matters within its jurisdiction.

1. The term of the contract agreement may not exceed 12 months or the end of a Congress, whichever occurs first.
2. The consultant is to act as an independent contractor and is not an employee of the Committee. The CHA will not approve a contract if the services to be provided by the consultant are the regular and normal duties of a Committee employee.
3. Individual contract agreements may not exceed the per diem equivalent of the maximum rate of compensation that pay set by the Speaker's Pay Order.

4. If the consultant receives federal retirement benefits during the term of the contract, the sum of all money paid to that consultant plus the federal retirement benefits for the calendar year may not exceed the Speaker's Pay Order.
5. A consultant may be reimbursed for the cost of transportation and travel-related expenses in accordance with the rates and regulations established for Members and employees of the Committee. Consultants may travel at the government rate when traveling on official Committee business.
6. Pursuant to House Rule XXIII, clause 18(b), consultants are subject to certain provisions of the House Code of Official Conduct, including the gift rule, the prohibition against use of one's official position for private gain, and the requirement to conduct oneself at all times in a manner that reflects creditably on the House. For information relative to the House Rules, contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103.
7. Committee Chair must submit a letter requesting approval of the CHA along with a signed contract agreement and resume of the proposed consultant, including, but not limited to, details of federal service either as an employee or pursuant to contract agreement with any Committee of the Congress.
8. The letter must specify that the proposed contract has been approved by a majority of the Members of the requesting Committee and that no services pursuant to the proposed contract will commence prior to approval of the contract by the CHA.

The CHA will make available for public inspection a copy of the qualifications of each consultant.

## **DETAILEES**

Pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 4301(f) a Committee may acquire on loan, with the prior written authorization of the CHA, experts or other personnel from a government department or agency.

1. The Committee Chair must submit a letter to the CHA requesting approval of the detailing agreement. The request must include the following:
  - a. Letter from the Committee Chair to the head of the particular Government department or agency explaining the need for the detail, the estimated period of the assignment, and the terms of reimbursement, if any, of the detail.
  - b. Written response from the Government department or agency agreeing to the detail request.
  - c. Resume of the candidate for detailee position.
2. Detailing agreements may not exceed a 12-month period or the end of a Congress, whichever occurs first.
3. Committees are not required to reimburse for detailees.
4. Detailees remain employees of the detailing department or agency and are not employees of the House. Therefore, any travel by detailees will be undertaken pursuant to the authority of the detailing department or agency. Reimbursement of travel to the department or agency is subject to the detailing agreement. The number of detailees per Committee may not exceed 10% of the

host Committee's permanent staff ceiling. (All decimals will be rounded down to the lowest whole number, e.g. 5.9 is rounded down to 5).

5. Personnel from the Congressional Research Service (CRS) may only be detailed to accompany an official Committee delegation in the conduct of official Committee business. CRS staff may only serve in a technical, nonpartisan capacity, and all travel costs are the responsibility of the Committee.
6. Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 734, the Comptroller General may assign or detail an officer or employee of the General Accounting Office to full-time continuous duty with a Committee of Congress for not more than one year.
7. Detailees may use existing resources but cannot be reimbursed from House appropriated funds. If a detailee incurs an expense as a result of work performed for the Committee, the detailee may either be reimbursed by the detailing agency, or the Chair may use personal funds as authorized in House Rules.

## **GREEN AND GOLD CONGRESSIONAL AIDE PROGRAM**

The Green and Gold Congressional Aide Program provides an opportunity for disabled veterans and members of Gold Star Families to work in a Committee office for two years in a paid position. Green and Gold Congressional Aides are placed in Committee offices but do not count against a Committee's staff ceiling as they are employed by the CAO, which provides the aide's compensation and reimbursement for most expenses. Positions in the two programs are divided evenly between the majority and minority.

Green and Gold Congressional Aides may accrue leave. Offices must approve the dates of leave, but all approved leave must be reported to the CAO for tracking purposes as the CAO will pay out any unused accrued annual leave upon the aide's separation from the program. Aides are eligible to receive transit benefits through the CAO. Committees may assign and provide parking from their roster.

Committee funds may be used to reimburse Green and Gold Congressional Aides for expenses incurred for official business, including travel expenses, during their employment that is not otherwise covered by the CAO. Committee Funds may be used for bonuses in addition to the compensation aides receive from the CAO.

Additional information about the respective programs, including application information, eligibility, and other details, is available from the CAO.

## **STAFF NOT EMPLOYED BY THE HOUSE**

Pursuant to House Rule XXIV, there is a prohibition on unofficial office accounts including "in-kind contribution of good or services for official purposes." The Committee on Ethics recognizes exceptions to this general prohibition including allowing offices, on a temporary basis, to accept the in-kind services of fellows and unpaid interns.

## **Fellows**

Per the House Ethics Manual, “Fellows” perform service in a House office on a temporary basis as part of an established mid- career education program while continuing to receive the usual compensation from his or her sponsoring employer.

Offices are strongly encouraged to enter into a written agreement stipulating the terms of the fellow’s service.

Fellows do not count against a Committee’s employee ceiling and are ineligible for benefits.

Fellows may use existing resources but cannot be reimbursed from committee funds for any expenses incurred, including travel expenses. If a fellow incurs an expense as a result of work performed for the Committee, the fellow may either be reimbursed by the fellow’s sponsoring entity, or the Chair may use personal funds as authorized under House Rules.

The use of fellows is subject to regulations established by the Committee on Ethics. Contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103 for more information.

## **Unpaid Interns**

Per the House Ethics Manual, unpaid interns “perform services in a House office on a temporary basis as part of an educational plan.” Each Committee Chair is responsible for determining the activities of unpaid interns consistent with these requirements.

Unpaid interns do not count against the Committee’s employee ceiling and are ineligible for benefits.

Unpaid interns may use existing resources (i.e., computer equipment, supplies, etc.) but cannot be reimbursed from committee funds for any expenses incurred, including travel expenses.

Unpaid interns are ineligible for benefits and are not eligible for reimbursement.

Unpaid interns are subject to House Ethics Manual regulations promulgated by the Committee on Ethics. Contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103 for more information.

## **PAY**

The Speaker sets the minimum and maximum rate of pay by issuance of a Speaker’s Pay Order consistent with Federal law.

Total compensation in one month, including regular pay and any lump sum payment, may not exceed 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the maximum rate of the Speaker’s Pay Order.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 5505, the monthly payroll is based on a 30-day pay period. Payment is made on the last business day of the month.

Government contributions to retirement, life insurance, Thrift Savings Plan, transit benefits, Retention through Educational Advancement Program and health benefits programs are not charged to Committee funds.

## **Dual Compensation**

The aggregate gross annual salary of an employee receiving payment from the House who is also receiving payment from the U.S. Senate, Architect of the Capitol, or any other department or agency of the U.S. Government, may not exceed the gross annual rate established by 5 U.S.C. § 5533. For the current applicable dual compensation rate, contact the Office of Payroll and Benefits at x51435.

## **Federal Civilian Annuitants**

If a Committee employs a federal civilian annuitant, the amount of the annual annuity, when added to the annual rate of pay at which the employee is to be paid by the Committee, may not exceed the highest rate of basic pay as authorized by the Speaker's Pay Order. The total of the federal civilian annuity and the amount of the salary will be charged to the Committee.

## **Outside Earned Income**

For the current applicable rate of basic pay, the amount of the limit and application of the House Rule, contact the Committee on Ethics, Office of Advice & Education, at x57103.

## **Overtime Wage Rate Compensation**

Employees who are classified as "non-exempt" must be compensated at a rate of time-and-a half for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours during any work week, either in pay or in time-off during the same pay period.

Contact the Office of House Employment Counsel at x57075 for assistance in establishing overtime and time-off policies.

## **Payroll Actions**

To appoint an employee a Payroll Authorization Form (PAF) signed by the Committee Chair, along with the completed onboarding packet, must be submitted to the Office of Payroll and Benefits no fewer than two business days prior to the effective date of hire.

All subsequent payroll transactions including salary adjustments, title changes, furlough or Leave Without Pay status, must be made on a PAF, signed by the Committee Chair, or submitted through the eForms application. PAFs submitted to the Office of Payroll and Benefits by the 15th day of the month in which the adjustment is effective, will be included in the monthly regular payroll cycle, which is paid on the last business day of the month. PAFs submitted after the 15th of the month will be processed in the off-cycle payroll. All PAFs must be submitted no later than the last business day of the month in which the payroll transaction is effective.

Committee Chairs may adjust, in any month, an employee's pay to reflect exceptional, meritorious or less than satisfactory service.

Retroactive pay adjustments are prohibited. Only corrections due to administrative errors are allowed within two months after the end of the month that the error occurred.

Terminations must be made on a PAF and submitted to the Office of Payroll and Benefits as soon as the date of termination is known. If the termination PAF is received after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month

during which the termination becomes effective, the payroll for that month may have already been processed.

### ***Lump Sum Payments***

Pursuant to 2 U.S.C. §4537, a Committee Chair may authorize a lump sum payment for accrued annual leave, a bonus, severance, or other purpose.

1. Payments must be consistent with House Rule XXIII, clause 8(a), which requires that employees perform official duties commensurate with the compensation received. Employees may not be compensated from public funds to perform non-official, personal, campaign-related political party or campaign activities on behalf of the Member, the employee or anyone else. Lump sums may be for services performed during more than one month.
2. A lump sum payment may not exceed the employee's monthly pay and total compensation in any month (lump sum and regular pay) may not exceed 1/12th of the maximum rate of pay specified in the Speaker's Pay Order.
3. Committee Chairs may provide lump sum payments for accrued annual leave only if such leave was accrued in accordance with written personnel policies established prior to the accrual of such leave. Lump sum payments are considered "supplemental wages" for taxation purposes.
4. Lump sum payments are not considered as part of "basic pay" for calculating Thrift Savings Plan, life insurance, and federal pensions.
5. Lump Sum Payments will be disclosed separately in the quarterly Statement of Disbursements.

Contact the Committee on Ethics x57103 for information on the treatment of lump sum payments with regard to financial disclosure, post-employment restrictions, and outside earned income limitations.

### **Payroll Certification Form**

Each month, Committees will receive a Payroll Certification Form from the Office of Payroll and Benefits that lists the annual salary and gross pay earned for each Committee employee. The Committee Chair must certify the information and return the form to the Office of Payroll and Benefits no later than the 15th day of the month. If an employee is a relative of a current Member of Congress, the nature of the relationship must be noted on the Payroll Certification Form.

## **EMPLOYMENT LAWS & REGULATIONS**

### **Congressional Accountability Act**

Pursuant to the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 ("CAA"), the following civil rights, labor, and workplace safety laws are applicable to House employing offices:

1. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938;
2. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
3. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
4. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967;
5. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993;

6. The Employee Polygraph Protection Act of 1988;
7. The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act;
8. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
9. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994;
10. Certain provisions of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute;
11. The public service and accommodations provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act;
12. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970; and
13. The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008.
14. The Federal Employee Paid Leave Act of 2019;
15. The Fair Chance to Compete for Jobs Act of 2019; and
16. The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act of 2022.

The Office of Congressional Workplace Right (OCWR) publishes the poster highlighting employee rights, responsibilities, and procedures under the CAA. The CAA requires that the poster be displayed in all Member offices (both DC and district offices). The poster is available on the OCWR website, at Room LA-200, John Adams Building, Library of Congress (202-724-9250) or Longworth Mailroom in B-240 (202-226-3764).

A Model Employee Handbook providing sample office policies to assist in developing an organization that complies with applicable laws and House Rules is available on HouseNet.

The Office of House Employment Counsel is available to provide advice and guidance to House management staff on employment matters generally, and on establishing office policies consistent with these laws. The Office of the House Employment Counsel can be reached at x57075 and [EmploymentCounsel@mail.house.gov](mailto:EmploymentCounsel@mail.house.gov).

## **Financial Disclosure**

Members and employees receiving basic pay at a rate equal to or greater than 120 percent of the minimum pay for GS-15 for at least 60 days during any calendar year must file a Financial Disclosure Statement upon appointment, termination, and annually on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Ordinary and necessary expenses incurred by employees, in support of the filing of reports consistent with the provisions of the Ethics in Government Act and the STOCK Act, are reimbursable at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee.

Contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103 for guidance concerning the current applicable rate of pay and other information regarding Financial Disclosure requirements.

## **Nepotism**

A public official may not appoint, employ, promote, advance or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement in or to a position in the office in which that public official is serving or over which that public official exercises jurisdiction or control any individual who is a relative of that public official. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 3110, the term “public official” includes a Member, an employee, and any other individual who has authority, or to whom the authority has been delegated, to appoint, employ, promote, or advance individuals, or to recommend individuals for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement in connection with employment in an office.

Every employee must certify a relationship to any Member of Congress on a certificate of relationship form available from the Office of Payroll and Benefits. If, at any time, the relationship of an employee to any current Member of Congress changes the employee must file an amended certificate of relationship form with the employing office. Contact the Office of Payroll and Benefits at x51435 for such forms.

Individuals with the following relationship to the Member may not be employed by the Chair or Ranking Minority Member of a Committee:

Aunt	Mother-in-law
Brother	Nephew
Brother-in-law	Niece
Daughter	Sister
Daughter-in-law	Sister-in-law
Father	Son
Father-in-law	Son-in-law
First cousin	Stepbrother
Granddaughter	Stepdaughter
Grandson	Stepfather
Half-brother	Stepmother
Half-sister	Stepsister
Husband	Stepson
Mother	Uncle
	Wife.

If a House employee becomes related to the Chair or Ranking Minority Member of a Committee or any of its Subcommittees (by marriage), the employee may remain on the Member's personal or Committee payroll. Similarly, if a Chair or Ranking Minority Member of a Committee or any of its Subcommittees becomes the employing authority of a relative who was hired by someone else (e.g., the Member ascends to the Chairmanship of a Committee or Subcommittee for which the relative is already working), the relative may remain on the payroll. However, the Chair or Ranking minority Member of a Committee or any of its Subcommittees may not then, give that individual further promotions or raises, other than cost-of-living or other across-the-board adjustments.

The statute does not prohibit a Chair or Ranking minority Member of a Committee or any of its Subcommittees from employing two individuals who are related to each other but not to the Chair or Ranking Minority Member. Contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103 for further information.

### **Non-Disclosure Oath**

House Rule XXIII, clause 13, requires Members and employees to execute an oath of non-disclosure before having access to classified information.

### **Post-Employment Restriction**

Members and employees paid at a rate equal to or greater than 75 percent of the basic rate of pay of a Member for at least 60 days in the one-year period preceding termination are subject to post-

employment restrictions. For the current applicable rate and information regarding the applicable restrictions, contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103.

## **LEAVE**

The Committee Chair determines the terms and conditions of employment, including provisions for leave (e.g., Annual, Administrative, and Sick) consistent with applicable Federal laws and House Rules.

The Model Employee Handbook, located on the CHA website, contains a model leave policy that complies with all applicable laws, House rules and Committee regulations.

Contact the Office of House Employment Counsel at x57075 with questions regarding model leave policies.

### **Family and Medical Leave Act**

Pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”), a person employed by a Congressional office is entitled to up to 12 weeks of paid, job protected leave for the following reasons:

- A. For the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child; or
- B. To adopt a child or to receive a child in foster care.

An individual employed by a Congressional office for at least twelve months (aggregate) and for a total of at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12-month period is entitled to up to a total of 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for the following family and medical reasons:

- C. To care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition; or
- D. For the employee’s own serious health condition which makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her job; or
- E. Because of a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on covered duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in the Armed Forces; or
- F. To take care of an injured covered service member for up to 26 weeks during a single 12-month period.

Offices may choose to pay some or all of FMLA leave for types C-E and Injured Servicemember Caregiver leave.

Employees on Family and Medical Leave remain eligible for all benefits. Please contact OHEC at x57075 with questions concerning FMLA leave.

## **Furlough**

Furlough is an absence without pay initiated by the Committee Chair. Placement in furlough status is at the discretion of the Committee Chair, unless a statute otherwise requires placement in such status.

To be eligible for appointment to furlough status, an employee must have been employed by the Committee Chair for the entire month prior to the effective date of furlough status.

An employee placed in a furlough status continues to fill an employee position. The name of such employees will be listed on the monthly payroll certification forms.

Furloughed employees may continue to receive employee benefits and are responsible for paying the employee portion of their benefits. Employees should contact the Office of Payroll and Benefits at x51435 for information on how to arrange payment for continuation of employee benefits while in a furlough status.:

## **Jury and Witness Duty**

Under 2 U.S.C. § 4503, the pay of an employee shall not be reduced during a period of absence with respect to which the employee is summoned as a juror; or as a witness on behalf of any party in connection with any judicial proceeding to which the United States or a state or local government is a party.

An employee may not receive fees for service as juror in a court of the United States or the District of Columbia; or as a witness on behalf of the United States or the District of Columbia. If an employee receives an amount (other than travel expenses) for service as a juror or witness in such a court, the employee must remit such amount to the Office of Finance for deposit in the general fund of the Treasury.

## **Leave Without Pay**

Leave Without Pay (LWOP) is an absence without pay initiated by the employee subject to the approval of the Committee Chair, unless statute otherwise requires placement in such leave status.

To be eligible an employee must have been employed by the Committee for the entire month prior to the effective date of the LWOP status. LWOP status should be requested in advance of the period of absence and may not exceed 12 months in a 24-month period.

As a basic condition for approval of LWOP status, there should be a reasonable assurance that the employee will return to duty at the end of the LWOP period. Committee Chairs are encouraged to contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103 prior to approving a LWOP status request to confirm that no conflict-of-interest issues exist.

To place an employee on LWOP status, a PAF must be submitted to the Office of Payroll and Benefits on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month in which the placement is to take effect. When an employee has been appointed to LWOP status, he or she continues to fill a payroll position. The name(s) of such employees will be listed on the monthly payroll certification form.

Employees on LWOP status may continue to receive employee benefits and are responsible for paying the employ portion of their benefits. Employees should contact the Office of Payroll and

Benefits at x54135 for important information on continuation of employee benefits while on LWOP status.

## **Military Leave**

Under 5 U.S.C. § 6323, an employee in the National Guard or Reserves is entitled to up to 15 days of paid military leave per fiscal year for active duty, as well as for other qualifying purposes (such as inactive-duty training).

Employees are also entitled to 22 days of paid leave per calendar year, offset by the employee's military salary, for performing military services as defined in that statute. In addition, under 5 U.S.C. §5538, an employee called to active duty in the uniformed services in support of a contingency operation, as defined under 10 U.S.C. §101(a)(13)(B), is entitled to up to five years of paid leave offset by the employee's military salary.

Please contact the Office of House Employment Counsel at x57075 for additional information on the rights, benefits, and obligations of individuals absent from employment for service in a uniformed service.

# **COMMUNICATIONS**

## **GENERAL**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to official communications that comply with the Communications Standards Manual are reimbursable.

The Chairperson or other Member of the Committee may not distribute a mass mailing or send an electronic communication to 500 or more recipients into any congressional district fewer than 60 days before an election where the Member representing that district is subject to the pre-election prohibition on mass mailings pursuant to 39 U.S.C. § 3210(a)(6)(A), except that this restriction does not apply to:

- a. Direct responses to inquiries or requests from the persons to whom the matter is mailed.
- b. Communications to colleagues in Congress or to government officials (whether Federal, state, or local).
- c. News releases to the communications media.

## **ADVERTISEMENTS**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to advertisements are reimbursable.

Advertisements must comply with all applicable Federal laws and House rules, including the Communications Standards Manual and disclosure requirements.

Committees must disclose, within a television and radio advertisement, the source of payment for the official advertisement. Committees may use any of the following:

- a. "Paid for with official funds from the Committee on [committee name]."
- b. "Paid for by funds authorized by the House of Representatives for the Committee on [committee name]."
- c. "Paid for by official funds authorized by the House of Representatives."

Certain advertisements may require an Advisory Opinion from the Commission. For details, please consult the Commission.

Certain internet advertisements may not require a disclaimer when there is a limitation on space or content consistent with the small items exemption applied by the FEC (e.g., search word ads, “like” ads on Facebook, promoted Tweets, etc.).

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to electronic communications are reimbursable. All official electronic communication content, which is sent out as an unsolicited mass communication, must comply with the Communications Standards Manual.

All official electronic communications must comply with House information technology and security policies as approved by CHA.

All official electronic communications sent to an email list of 100 or more individuals must include a usable opt-out in the body of the email that enables an individual to opt-out from the Member’s email list. Opt-out requests must be honored. These mailings must comply with House IT Policy 007.0 – Bulk Email List Management as approved by the Committee.

## **FRANKED MAIL**

### **Use of the Frank**

1. Pursuant to 39 U.S.C. § 3210, committees are entitled to the privilege of sending mail as Franked mail in order to assist and expedite the conduct of official Committee business. The content of Committee mail must relate to the normal business of the Committee. For information regarding the use of the Frank, refer to the Commission Manual.
2. At the request of the Committee Chair, a separate mail accounting system can be provided to the minority of the Committee.
3. Mail to be delivered outside the United States, its’ territories and possessions (other than mail matter bearing an APO or FPO address for delivery through the United States military mail system) is not eligible for distribution under the Frank and may be sent with stamps. In applicable circumstances, the Committee may also use the following:
  - a. For official mail to U.S. Embassies and missions abroad, the Department of State provides diplomatic pouch service. For information regarding this service, contact House Postal Operations at x63764.
  - b. Committee hearings, reports, and prints which are not available for purchase from the Government Publishing Office, and which are to be sent to foreign countries, may be sent to the Library of Congress for forwarding through the Exchange and Gifts Division. For further information regarding this program, contact the Library of Congress, Exchange and Gifts Division at x75243.

### ***Franked Mail Monthly Statement***

Each month the United States Postal Service (USPS) will prepare an USPS Franked Mail Monthly Statement listing the postage expenses of all Franked mail incurred in that month. The USPS will

forward this statement directly to Postal Operations for payment from the Committee's franked mail allocation and will provide an informational copy to Committees.

## **POSTAGE EXPENSES**

Ordinary and necessary expenses incurred only when the Frank is insufficient, such as certified, registered, insured, express, foreign mail, and stamped, self-addressed envelopes related to the recovery of official items, are reimbursable. Postage may not be used in lieu of the Frank. Such mailings must be in compliance with the Communications Standards Manual.

## **STATIONERY**

Pursuant to 44 U.S.C. § 734, ordinary and necessary expenses associated with the printing and production of official stationery are reimbursable. Official stationery (franked envelopes and official letterhead) may be procured from the Government Publishing Office through the Legislative Resource Center (x65200).

Official stationery must contain the name of the Committee, Committee Chair, Ranking Member and Congress of the United States, House of Representatives, or comparable language.

Official stationery may contain the names of other Committee Members and committee staff.

Official stationery may not contain the following information:

- a. Seals other than the Great Seal, Congressional Seal, or State Seal.
- b. political party identification.
- c. Slogans.
- d. Private entity information or endorsement.
- e. Campaign contact information (e.g. address, phone number, e-mail address).
- f. Greetings.
- g. Picture or likeness of any Member.
- h. Family Crest.

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the purchase of stationery (writing paper, press or news release letterhead, etc.) are reimbursable. Committees may purchase the stationery from OPS or an outside vendor.

Official stationery may be used only for a letter or other document when the content is official in nature and the content must comply with Communications Standards Manual.

## **WEBSITES**

### **General**

Ordinary and necessary expenses associated with the creation and continued operation of websites, in support of official Committee business, are reimbursable.

1. The content of an official Committee website and official Committee social media must comply with the rules established by the Commission and set forth in the Communications Standards Manual.

2. Committee websites may be maintained by the House, committee staff or a private vendor authorized to provide Web services to the House in compliance with the regulations issued by CHA.
3. The minority and Subcommittees shall be entitled to a separate page that is linked to and accessible from the Committee's primary (house.gov) web page. For any web pages created under this policy, the Chair (Committee or Subcommittee) or Ranking Minority Member (Committee or Subcommittee) responsible for its content must be identified on the introductory page.
4. Committee and Member websites may link to each other, but Member websites may not be located on websites paid for by Committee funds.
5. In addition to the official Committee website, the Chair may establish profiles, pages, channels or any similar presence on third-party sites that allow individuals or organizations to offer information about themselves to the public (social media accounts). Committee-controlled content on social media accounts is subject to the same requirements as content on Member websites.
6. All social media accounts and websites of the majority and minority are controlled by the Chair and Ranking Member respectively.

Regulations governing the use of URLs and information security are located in the User's Guide.

## **GENERAL OFFICE EXPENSES**

### **APPLIANCES**

Small appliances (microwaves, coffee makers, toaster ovens, air purifiers, etc.) under \$500 in value for use in Committee offices are reimbursable. Committee funds may not be used to pay for items that are readily supplied to offices by the CAO or AOC (e.g., mini-fridges, full-size refrigerators).

### **ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS**

Ordinary and necessary expenses incurred to attend an event in support of official committee business are reimbursable, including but not limited to informational programs such as conferences, seminars, forums and symposiums.

Members and staff are often invited to attend events because of their official position but that does not necessarily mean that the event itself is official in nature. To qualify for reimbursement from committee funds, the event must be primarily official in nature and the primary benefit of the Member's or staff's attendance must be to the committee and not the organization facilitating the event.

Committee funds cannot be used for any expenses related to:

1. an event that is primary social in nature (such as award ceremonies, galas, banquets, receptions, graduations, etc.);
2. a campaign or political event;
3. a sporting or entertainment event;

4. a fundraiser or charity that solicits or collects donations of goods, services or funds; or
5. a visit to a monument or museum.

## **BOOTHS**

Ordinary and necessary expenses associated with renting or outfitting a booth to provide public information directly related to official Committee business are reimbursable.

## **BOTTLED WATER**

Committee funds may be used to purchase bottled water, water coolers and water filtration systems for use in Committee offices.

## **BUSINESS CARDS**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for business cards for Committee Members and Committee employees are reimbursable. Business cards must contain the name of the employing authority and accurately describe the position to which the employee has been appointed.

Committee funds may not be used to purchase business cards for individuals who are not employed by the House.

## **DEPOSITS**

Security and other deposits are not reimbursable and must be paid with personal funds by a Committee Member. Vendors should be notified that any return of deposits should be made to the Committee Member who paid the deposit.

## **DUES**

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 5946, membership fees and dues in a society or association or expenses of attendance at meetings or conventions of members of a society or association are not reimbursable.

## **EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for Members or employees of the Committee to take professional training and development courses related to official Committee business are reimbursable.

Committee Funds may be used for Members and staff to take training or development courses that impart knowledge, tools and skills to improve their ability to conduct Committee business.

Expenses to obtain a primary, secondary, graduate, postgraduate, professional degree or acquiring or maintaining a professional certification or license are not reimbursable with the exception for basic first-aid, CPR or notary certifications. Expenses related to professional training or development that relates to a Member's or employee's committee business duties are reimbursable even if such a program provides a certification upon completion. Expenses related to professional training or development that relates to a Committee Member or employee's official duties are reimbursable, even if such a program provides a certification upon completion.

The Retention through Educational Advancement Program (REAP), which replaced the Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP), allows a Member and an eligible employee to enter into a written service agreement under which payments are made by the House to repay a student loan repayment, educational assistance, and professional development program. Additional information on REAP can be located [here](#) on [Housenet](#).

The CAO offers a wide range of training courses and professional development programs through the CAO Coaches Program and Staff Academy at no cost to offices. More information about the training opportunities available through the Congressional Staff Academy is available on HouseNet. The Congressional Research Service has issued multiple reports on House Rules, procedure, major policy issues, and can provide tailored confidential memoranda, briefings, and consultations upon request in addition to seminars and workshops.

### **Specialized Training**

In addition to educational expenses, each Committee is authorized, with the approval of the CHA, to provide assistance to employees of the Committee in obtaining specialized training, whenever that Committee determines that such training will aid the Committee in the discharge of its responsibilities.

1. Such assistance may be in the form of continuance of pay during the periods of training, or grants of funds to pay tuition or other expenses of training, or both.
2. Committees must obtain reasonable assurance from the employee of his or her intent to return to work so that the employee may convey the benefits of such training upon the Committee.

The Committee Chair must submit a letter to the CHA, prior to any expenses being incurred, explaining the need for the specialized training, the cost, the duration, and any other pertinent information.

### **EMPLOYMENT-RELATED EXPENSES**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to filling employment vacancies are reimbursable.

The following expenses are not reimbursable:

1. Transportation to and from employment interviews.
2. Relocation expenses upon acceptance or termination of employment.

### **EQUIPMENT**

All official work of the House of Representatives must be performed and maintained on House equipment, except for in certain circumstances handheld devices. Committee Members may use campaign funds to pay for handheld devices (phones and tablets only) and/or use their personal handheld devices for official use.

Ordinary and necessary expenses for equipment (including cost of installation, maintenance, warranties and repairs) for use in committee offices are reimbursable subject to CHA regulations.

Equipment used for telework purposes should only be issued to paid employees or vendors who require remote access to the House network to perform their services.

Any equipment with a purchase price of \$1,000 or more and any high-risk equipment (e.g., equipment that presents a cybersecurity risk because it contains official data and/or provides access to the House network) regardless of original cost will be added to the committee's office inventory.

Committee Chairs are personally liable for all equipment on the committee's inventory. If an item is missing or damaged, the Committee Chair is automatically assigned liability. Committee Chairs may request a waiver from liability.

See the User's Guide for additional information on equipment.

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGE EXPENSES**

Members and employees may be reimbursed for food and beverage expenses incidental to in-person attendance at an official proceeding of the Committee (e.g. hearing, markup, etc.) provided the expenses are ordinary and necessary and otherwise comport with existing House rules and regulations, including those in the Handbook.

Members and employees of a Committee may be reimbursed for food and beverage expenses incidental to an official meeting hosted by the Committee that includes person(s) who are not Members or employees of the House.

Members and employees may not be reimbursed for food and beverage expenses related to social activities or social events (e.g. receptions, entertainment, holiday or personal celebrations, and swearing-in or inauguration day celebrations, etc.).

The cost of alcoholic beverages is not reimbursable under any circumstances.

## **FRAMING**

Framing services for items to be displayed in the Committee offices are reimbursable. When Committees use the in-House framing service provided by the CAO, charges will be automatically debited from Committee funds.

## **FURNITURE AND DECORATIONS**

Decorations (e.g., frames, bookends, flags, seals, rugs, etc.) under \$1,000 in value for display in congressional offices are reimbursable.

The AOC provides a palette of standard colors and provides labor and materials to paint offices. Committee funds may not be used to purchase paint. If an office wants a non-standard color, a Committee Member may use personal funds to purchase the paint and provide to the AOC for application.

Committee funds cannot be used to purchase furniture or other items that are readily supplied to offices by the CAO and AOC. Carpet and draperies are provided by the CAO at no cost to offices

every seven years. If an office wants to replace the carpet and draperies earlier, then Committee funds will be charged.

Committee funds may be used to pay for items such as desks (standing and traditional), office chairs, and desk lamps necessary for telework, subject to any applicable telework requirements. Offices are required to maintain an inventory of such items. The purchase of any single item exceeding \$250.00 is subject to preapproval by the CHA.

## **LATE FEES**

Ordinary and necessary fees related to late payments incurred beyond the control of a Member or employees of the Committee are reimbursable.

## **OFFICIAL PRESENTATION OF ITEMS TO FOREIGN DIGNITARIES**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the purchase of items of nominal value for official presentation, by a Member or employee of the Committee at the direction of the Chairman, when on official travel for the House, paid for with appropriated funds, outside the United States, its territories and possessions; or in connection with visits to the United States by foreign heads of State and other foreign officials are reimbursable. Committee funds cannot be used to purchase items for foreign travel paid for by a foreign government or privately sponsored travel.

To purchase items from the House Gift Shop, select the item(s) and notify the sales clerk that it is for official Committee business. Receipts for such items should be vouchered and must be supported by a listing of the name, title or position, and country represented of all individuals attending the event and/or to whom an official presentation is made.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY EXPENSES**

Ordinary and necessary photography expenses related to a Committee's official business, including but not limited to, official photographs, and photograph presentation folders and frames of nominal value, are reimbursable.

Official photographs must comply with applicable rules and regulations for official use and may not be used for personal or campaign purposes.

In Washington, D.C., contact House Creative Services at x52700 for services, charges, and availability.

## **PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Committee funds may be used to reimburse up to one-half of the cost of the annual premium to maintain a professional liability insurance policy for certain qualified employees pursuant to 5 U.S.C § 5941, which defines "qualified employees" as a supervisor who has been delegated the authority to make employment decision and/or a manager who is authorized to formulate or influence policy.

To obtain reimbursement, a receipt or invoice of the premium along with a copy of the insurance policy must be submitted to the Office of Financial Counseling. Financial Counseling will send the policy to the Office of Administrative Counsel for review prior to processing for reimbursement.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to purchasing or subscribing to print, broadcast, and electronic publications, including but not limited to research materials, reference books, informational brochures, periodicals, and clipping/media monitoring services of such publications for official Committee business use are reimbursable.

Subscriptions to publications (including clipping and media monitoring) are eligible for advance payment and may extend beyond the term of the Congress. Subscriptions that extend beyond a Member's term in office will be assigned to the Member's successor.

All invoices for these subscriptions received by the Office of Finance through the close of business January 2 will be debited from the current MRA year. Subscriptions beginning on January 1 or 2 may be debited from either allowance year, as directed by the Member.

## **STAFF RETREATS AND LEGISLATIVE PLANNING SESSIONS**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to staff retreats or legislative planning sessions located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area (within 90 miles of the U.S. Capitol) are reimbursable.

Expenses that are reimbursable include, but are not limited to, food and beverage, rental of space, and hiring a contractor to facilitate the retreat consistent with Handbook regulations. Committee Members and staff may be reimbursed for expenses related to attendance at such meetings no more than two times per year (two times each for both the Majority and the Minority).

Committee funds may not be used for social events or activities (including but not limited to: boating, skiing, sporting events, theme parks, etc).

The Office of Employee Assistance offers customized in-person and virtual retreats for congressional offices at no cost. These retreats can help Committee offices improve communication, enhance work processes, develop long-term strategic plans and more. Offices can also pay a private vendor to facilitate staff retreats.

## **SUPPLIES**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for office supplies in support of the conduct of official Committee business are reimbursable.

Committee funds may be used to procure or reimburse the cost of certain personal protective equipment such as facemasks, face shields, protective gloves, protective eyewear, and certain personal use thermometers as authorized by the Committee upon the recommendation of the Office of the Attending Physician.

## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to official use, including periodic or flat service fees, for internet connection in the residence of Members and employees of the Committee are reimbursable. The primary purpose of the internet connection must be for official business with de minimis personal

use and no political/campaign-related purpose. The cost of installation of such lines is not reimbursable.

## **TELEWORKING**

Ordinary and necessary expenses incurred in compliance with the CHA teleworking policy are reimbursable.

## **VENDORS**

Committees may contract with firms or individuals for general, non-legislative and non-financial office services (e.g., equipment maintenance, systems integration, web services, data entry, staff training).

Committees may not contract with an individual or firm substantially owned or controlled by an individual who works for the House, in a paid or unpaid capacity, for the acquisition of goods or services.

Vendors may not perform regular core functions of employees or provide consulting services (including, but not limited to: legal fees, speech writers, personal financial advisors, communications advisors, political party or campaign advisors).

Vendor contracts must be for a specified time period not to exceed a Congress. Vendors are not employees of the House and do not count against a committee's staff ceiling and are ineligible for benefits.

Committees are advised to consult CHA before entering into such contracts.

## **HEARINGS AND MEETINGS**

Committees must adhere to House Rules with respect to preparing for and holding hearings, mark-ups and meetings.

Notices of Committee hearings and meetings should include a contact person to arrange accommodation for persons with disabilities. For suggested language and assistance in meeting accommodation, contact the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services at x44048.

## **AUDIO AND VIDEO EXPENSES**

Ordinary and necessary expenses including but not limited to the following, are reimbursable:

- a. Audio and video of meetings and hearings.
- b. Audio and video dissemination of Committee meetings and hearings.
- c. Video teleconferencing for official Committee business.

Except for notices of official Committee events, the costs related to purchasing television broadcast time are not reimbursable.

Note: In Washington, the House Recording Studio, an in-House source for audio and video services, is available. Contact the House Recording Studio at x53941 for information on services, charges and availability.

There are certain election-related restrictions on mass communications. Audio and video content must relate to official and representational duties and must comply with the Communications Standards Manual if sent out as an unsolicited mass communication.

## **CHARTS / PRESENTATION MATERIALS**

Ordinary and necessary expenses for the production of charts or other materials for official Committee business are reimbursable. Committees may use the in-House service or an outside vendor for the production of charts. Contact House Creative Services at x52700 for services and charges.

## **FIELD HEARINGS**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the conduct of field hearings, including but not limited to the procurement of public/government or commercial space, security, and related operational expenses are reimbursable.

## **INSURANCE FOR RENTAL SPACE**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the purchase of liability insurance for securing space in which to conduct an official committee meeting are reimbursable if the provisions of the Federal Tort Claims Act are not adequate. When a compensable event occurs, the deductible portion of a policy may be paid from Committee funds.

Security and other deposits are not reimbursable and must be paid from a Committee Member's personal funds. Vendors should be notified that any return of deposits should be made to the Member.

Expenses for the purchase of fire and theft insurance are not reimbursable. See the User's Guide for additional information on Insurance.

Committees are encouraged to consult with the Office of the General Counsel at x59700 prior to purchasing insurance.

## **INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING SERVICES**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to interpreting and translating services, including accommodations are reimbursable. For events held in House Office Buildings, contact the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services at x44048.

## **OFFICIAL REPORTERS**

All transcription services must be arranged through the Office of Official Reporters. These services include:

- Official hearings, mark-ups or other bipartisan meetings of Members of the Committee called by the Chair of a Committee or Subcommittee.

- Classified Member briefings called by the Chair.
- Depositions and/or interviews that are part of a Committee investigation.
- House/Senate joint committee meetings or conference meetings held on the House side of the Capitol or in the House office buildings.

These transcription services are provided at no cost to Committees. When in-house reporters are not available, the Office of Official Reporters will arrange for an outside contracted vendor.

For field hearings, the Office of Official Reporters will either send an Official Reporter or arrange for a reporter from a commercial firm with availability at the location of the field hearing. There is no cost to Committees. If an Official Reporter is assigned to cover a field hearing, travel expenses of the Official Reporter will be paid for by the Office of the Clerk.

The Committee Chair may authorize the use of an outside reporter, at direct cost to the Committee, for meetings other than those that the Official Reporters are required to cover. These include open Committee briefings, town hall meetings, and unofficial hearings not called by the Chair. All expenses related to these services must be paid from Committee funds.

Contact the Office of Official Reporters at x52627 for information on how to request a reporter.

## **PRINTING AND PRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS**

The Office of Congressional Publishing Services, Government Publishing Office (GPO), offers Committees a wide array of support for preparation of their official publications and other documents for GPO printing. Among the types of support available, a Chair may formally request the Public Printer to detail a GPO professional to the Committee on a short or long-term basis.

Committee staff with questions or needing assistance with preparation should contact Congressional Publishing Services at 202-512-0224.

By direction of the Joint Committee on Printing, House Committees may generally receive up to 100 copies of hearings and 100 copies of Committee prints, with up to four sets bound copies for official use (including archival purposes).

## **WITNESSES**

The reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by a witness is an extraordinary measure and is authorized at the discretion of the Committee Chair.

Reimbursement will be made only to an individual called to appear as a witness before a duly constituted meeting or hearing under House Rules, a duly constituted staff deposition or a transcribed interview that is a part of a committee investigation.

Witnesses may travel at the government rate when the Committee is reimbursing for travel expenses.

If a witness is a minor or requires medical assistance, reimbursement may be made to the parent or guardian of the minor or nurse or aide accompanying the witness.

If a witness resides outside the United States, its territories and possessions, reimbursement may be made to the witness for travel expenses to and from the United States.

# TRAVEL

Travel in support of official Committee business, is official travel. Official travel includes local travel and being away from home overnight when returning to the primary duty station is unduly burdensome or impractical.

Ordinary and necessary expenses associated with official travel, including transportation, lodging, meals (excluding alcohol), and incidentals (e.g., parking, ticket change fees, etc.) are reimbursable.

The Committee Chair must approve all official travel and may establish internal Committee procedures for authorization of travel.

The primary duty station for Committee staff is Washington, D.C.

Please see the Telework Policy for additional information regarding alternate work sites. Official travel may not exceed 60 consecutive days.

## GENERAL

1. Official travel must originate and terminate in Washington, D.C. or another location of official business except where otherwise stipulated in the Handbook.
2. Only Members and employees of the Committee, consultants, vendors and witnesses may be reimbursed from Committee funds for travel expenses (unless otherwise authorized, in writing, by the Speaker).
3. Any travel by detailees will be undertaken pursuant to the authority of the detailing department or agency. Reimbursement of travel to the department or agency will be from Committee funds and subject to the detailing agreement.
4. Official travel may not be for personal, campaign-related political party, campaign or Member personal office purposes.
5. Travel to or from a destination for the purposes of connecting to or from another official or officially-connected trip is also considered official travel. Any connecting/linking travel must occur within the US to be reimbursed with official funds, and the primary purpose of the secondary trip must be official.
6. Expenses incurred during travel or while outside of the United States, its' territories or possessions are not reimbursable.
7. Living expenses (meals, housing, and other personal expenses) incurred at the Member's or employee's residence or duty station are not reimbursable, except in extraordinary circumstances when authorized by CHA.
8. Commuting expenses (local transportation between a Member's or employee's primary residence and their primary duty station) are not reimbursable, except in extraordinary circumstances (e.g., extreme weather conditions, staff working beyond availability of mass transit, etc.) when authorized by the Committee Chair.
9. Only ordinary and necessary charges associated with failure to cancel reservations incurred beyond the control of the Members and employees of the Committee are reimbursable.

10. Official travel expenses may be shared by more than one Committee office or with a Member office. The division of costs must accurately reflect the expenses incurred by each office.
11. The CHA encourages Committees to establish a limit on reimbursement of travel related expenses and suggests the use of the locality based per diem rates as a guideline. The locality based per diem rates are located on the General Services Administration Web page at <http://www.gsa.gov/search.html>.
12. Pursuant to House Rule XXIV, clause 10, no Member of the Committee may be reimbursed for transportation or travel-related expenses after the date of the general election in which the Member has not been elected to the succeeding Congress, or in the case of a Member who is not a candidate in such general election, the earlier of the date of such general election or after the adjournment sine die of the last regular session of the Congress.

## **COMBINED TRAVEL**

Combined travel is travel when a Member or employee of the Committee for official reasons either travels to an intervening destination or spends additional time at the location of official business. The primary purpose of the travel must be official, and any expenses incurred (e.g., lodging, meals, rental car, etc.) on the days of personal travel must be paid for with personal funds.

If traveling to an intervening destination either to or from a location of official business for personal reasons, the traveler must purchase the “personal” segment (official to personal) with personal funds at the commercial rate. The “official” segment (personal to official) must be purchased with personal funds at either the commercial or government rate and the official travel card may not be used. The traveler may then seek reimbursement for the government rate of the direct route (official to official) or the actual traveled fare (official to personal to official), whichever is less.

A Combined Travel Form must be included when submitting for combined travel reimbursement, stating that the official travel and personal travel was combined for personal convenience.

## **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

The Department of Defense will support approved travel of Members and employees of the Congress upon request of the Congress, pursuant to law or where necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Department of Defense.

The Department of Defense Directive number 4515.12 prescribes the policy of the Department of Defense with respect to support for travel of Members and employees of Congress. For additional information, contact the Congressional Liaison Office of any branch of the Armed Services.

## **FOREIGN TRAVEL**

Committee funds cannot be used for travel outside of the United States, its territories, or possessions.

The authority to incur expenses for foreign travel is contained in House Rule X, clause 8, 22 U.S.C. § 1754, and in other provisions of law and is coordinated through the State Department Travel Office. For further information contact the Office of Interparliamentary Affairs at x61766.

See the Foreign Travel section of the User's Guide for important information on who can authorize foreign travel and reporting requirements for individuals and committee chairs.

## **GOVERNMENT RATE ELIGIBILITY**

The government rate is available to Members and employees of the Committee to support the conduct of official travel. The government rate is not available for privately-sponsored officially connected travel.

To be eligible for the government rate when scheduling official travel, Members and employees of the Committee may present:

- Government Travel Card or Committee Cardless Account.
- Official Travel Authorization Coupon.

Contact the Finance Office at x57474 for account information and forms.

## **MIXED PURPOSE TRAVEL**

Mixed purpose trips typically involve travel that includes official, campaign and/or privately-sponsored activities. Often this travel is funded by a mix of official, campaign and/or private funds. If the primary purpose is for a non-official event/purpose, the office cannot schedule official activities around the non-official event/purpose to make the travel eligible for Congressional offices to be reimbursed. Mixed-purpose trips may need to be approved by the Committee on Ethics.

Because mixed travel is so nuanced and specific, please contact CHA with any questions prior to making any travel arrangements.

## **MODES OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Aircraft**

Members may not use personal, official or campaign funds for a flight on an aircraft unless specifically authorized in House Rule XXIII, clause 15(b):

1. Aircraft operated by an air carrier or (commercial operator certificated by the Federal Aviation Administration;
2. Aircraft owned or leased by a Member or a family member of a Member;
3. Flight of personal use by a Member supplied by an individual on the basis of personal friendship or another Member;
4. Aircraft operated by a government entity (Federal or State); or
5. Owner or operator of the aircraft is paid a pro rata share of the fair market value of the normal and usual charter fare by dividing costs by Members or employees of Congress on the flight.

For any questions related to the use of personal or campaign funds for a flight on an aircraft please reach out to the Committee on Ethics x57103 and the Federal Election Commission's Office of Congressional, Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs.

### ***Chartered Aircraft***

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to chartering an aircraft are reimbursable when passengers are restricted to Members, their immediate family (spouse, child, parent) and employees of the committee, the names of whom must be stated on the voucher.

If an immediate family member is a passenger, the Committee may seek reimbursement for the full cost of the chartered aircraft and the family member must submit a check to the Finance Office payable to the US Treasury equivalent to the cost of a comparable commercial first-class fare with an explanatory letter. A letter explaining the reason for its submission must accompany the check.

Other non-Congressional individuals may travel on the Committee chartered aircraft when the chartered aircraft vendor has the ability to charge based on individual seating in the same manner as a commercial aircraft vendor; and other passengers are federal, state, and local officials, and are joining the Members and staff of the Committee in support of official committee business.

Prior written approval must be obtained from the Committee for a charter aircraft originating from or terminating at the D.C. metropolitan area and/or when the anticipated cost for the total itinerary exceeds \$7,500.

The Committee recommends that charter aircraft be used sparingly, and only if/when the Member determines there is no suitable commercial flight available. Please contact the Committee for more information.

### ***Private or Corporate Aircraft***

Committee Members may use their own privately owned aircraft for official business and may be reimbursed on a per mile basis, and not for fuel purchased or any other expense. The rate per mile is set annually by the [General Services Administration](#)

Committee Members may accept at no cost travel on private aircraft owned by another Member, U.S. Senator, or a family member. For questions related to accepting flights on private aircraft owned by any other individual, please contact the Committee on Ethics at x57103.

Use of corporate aircraft by Members and employees of the committee in support of the conduct of official Committee business may occur **ONLY IF** the corporation is reimbursed for the fair market value of the flight.

To determine the fair market value of such a flight, apply the following:

- a. When the travel is via a previously or regularly scheduled flight by the corporation reimbursement is based on the cost of a commercial first-class flight to the nearest location served by a commercial passenger airline. If only standard (coach) rates are available at the nearest location, the committee must reimburse the entity for the standard (coach) rate.
- b. When the flight is scheduled specifically for Committee use, payment will be made based on the cost of an equivalent commercial chartered flight to that location.

Prior to scheduling travel via corporate aircraft, offices should contact the Committee on Ethics, at x57103 for guidance.

## **Officially Leased Vehicles**

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to the rental of a vehicle in support of the conduct of official business are reimbursable.

1. Non-governmental use of a vehicle may be made only when such use is:
  - a. During the course of and generally along the route of the day's official itinerary.
  - b. Incidental to the day's official Committee business.
  - c. De minimis in nature, frequency, and time consumed.
  - d. Does not otherwise constitute a significant activity or event.
  - e. Not for any campaign/campaign-related political party purpose.
2. The Committee recommends that cars be rented at the government rate with unlimited mileage and full and comprehensive collision damage waiver (CDW) coverage. Not all rental car franchises include CDW coverage with the government rate. To ensure CDW coverage, offices should make their rental car reservations through the Combined Airline Ticket Office (CATO).
3. If the government rate is unavailable or the government rate does not include CDW coverage, the cost for CDW coverage is reimbursable.
4. Personal accident insurance, personal effects coverage, and equivalent insurance policies are not reimbursable.
5. Security deposits, advance payments, termination fees, traffic violations, etc., are not reimbursable.
6. In the event of an accident with a rental vehicle, Members or employees may contact the Office of General Counsel at x59700 for guidance related to the Federal Tort Claims Act.

## **Privately-Owned / Privately-Leased Vehicles**

A Member or employee of the committee who uses his or her privately owned or privately leased vehicle while on official committee business may be reimbursed on a per mile basis and not for fuel purchased or any other expense. The rate per mile is set annually by the [General Services Administration](#).

Mileage reimbursement may not be made for a vehicle that is owned or leased by the principal campaign of a Member, a political- action committee, a political party or anyone other than a Member or employee.

## **TRAVEL PROMOTIONAL AWARDS**

Free travel, mileage, discounts, upgrades, coupons, etc. accrued by Members or employees as a result of official travel awarded at the sole discretion of the company as a promotional award, may be used at the discretion of the Members and employees of the Committee. The CHA encourages the official use of these travel awards whenever practicable.

## **UNEXPECTED OFFICIAL TRAVEL**

If a Committee Member or employee is unexpectedly required, beyond their control, to travel for official business (e.g., previously unscheduled House vote or committee meeting or hearing, natural disaster, or civil disorder, etc.), then travel from and back to the personal destination is considered official travel and is eligible for the government rate.

Travel to and from campaign or other political activity is not reimbursable.

## **DISBURSEMENTS**

Disbursements from Committee funds are made on a reimbursement or direct payment basis that require supporting documentation and Committee Chair certification as to accuracy and compliance with applicable federal laws, House Rules and CHA regulations. The Voucher Documentation Standards, available on HouseNet, specify what documentation is required for each type of expense.

Reimbursement and payments from Committee funds may be made only to Members, employees of the Committee, consultants, detailing Government agencies, witnesses or vendors providing services to support the operation of the Committee.

The CAO prepares for each office a monthly financial statement showing the year-to-date expenditures and obligated amounts. The quarterly expenditures reflected in these statements are compiled and published online as the quarterly Statement of Disbursements.

## **ADVANCE PAYMENTS**

There are instances in which advance payments may be paid from Committee funds. All advance payments must meet the following criteria:

1. Vendor provides these billing options to other customers (documentation required).
2. Amount to be paid must be fixed at the time of purchase (i.e., variable cost contracts or services are ineligible).
3. All transactions for advance payments for the next legislative year must be submitted for payment before the beginning of that legislative year.
4. Vendor may not bundle items that are eligible for advance payment with items that are not eligible.

Unless specifically authorized by the Committee, only the following advance payments are reimbursable.

***Between first and second session of a Congress ONLY (may not exceed a Congress):***

1. Public information booth rental, facility rentals, and related costs, excluding deposits.
2. Educational expenses.

3. Telecommunication devices and services.
4. Original Equipment Manufacturers' warranties (*when purchased with equipment even if warranty exceeds a Congress*).
5. Web and information technology services (including software license and maintenance fees). Advance payments are not allowable for custom services to be performed such as but not limited to designing or building websites.
6. Correspondence Record Management systems.
7. Water / coffee services.

***Between Sessions and Congresses (but may not exceed beyond the next Congress):***

Subscriptions for print and electronic publications (including clipping and media monitoring services of such publications).

## **GOVERNMENT PURCHASE CARD**

The Government Purchase Card is available for Member and employee use for the purchase of goods and services obtained in support of official business (e.g., office supplies, subscriptions, training, etc.). Expenses incurred on this card are directly reimbursable to Citibank with an accompanying voucher, and applicable receipts.

Members and employees are reminded that the Government Purchase Card is for official non- travel related expenses only. Use of this card for any personal or non-official purchases is prohibited.

## **GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARD**

The Government Travel Card is available for Member and employee use for official travel and travel-related expenses. Travel expenses incurred on this card are directly reimbursable to Citibank with an accompanying voucher, and applicable receipts.

Members and employees are reminded that the Government Travel Card is for official travel purposes only and may be used by the cardholder only. Use of this card for any personal or non-official purchases is prohibited. The cardholder may use the card to purchase travel-related services (e.g., airline tickets, hotel expenses, etc.) for other authorized travelers.

The Office of Finance will monitor the monthly delinquency report received from Citibank and alert offices of delinquencies. The Office of Finance will not intervene in the event of a delinquency; the cardholder will be responsible for the delinquent amount.

## **GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARDLESS ACCOUNTS**

1. The Government Travel Cardless Account is available for Committees to use to purchase airline tickets through CATO as well as any other travel related reservations that do not require the traveler to present a card such as AMTRAK, car rental, or hotel reservations.
2. The Committee Chair must appoint an employee of the Committee to act as manager of the account and specify which employees are authorized to use the account.

3. Reimbursement for expenses incurred with the cardless account is made directly to Citibank with an accompanying voucher and applicable receipts.

## **INTENT TO OBLIGATE FUNDS**

At times, offices are unable to procure necessary items they intend to purchase prior to the end of the legislative year due to circumstances beyond their control. Requests to obligate prior year funds after January 2 of the succeeding year to purchase equipment will be considered when a Committee Chair provides documentation demonstrating a bona fide intent to obligate.

Office supplies, printing, and software and decorations cannot be included in a letter of intent.

To obligate funds, Committee Chairs must submit a “Letter of Intent” signed by the Chair to [CAOLetterofIntent@mail.house.gov](mailto:CAOLetterofIntent@mail.house.gov) by 5:00PM EST on January 2 (*or the Friday before when January 2 falls on a weekend*) including the following information:

- Description of the item(s) to be purchased, including quantity, make, model, cost per item, name of vendor, and vendor’s contact information, if that information is available (Offices may not block off a general amount).
- Circumstances preventing the completion of the purchase prior to the close of the legislative year.

The total amount of the items listed on the letter of intent may not exceed 10% of the committee’s current year authorization or the amount remaining for that session, whichever is less.

If the “Letter of Intent” is in compliance with the applicable regulations and procedures, prior year funds will be available through March 31 of the following year (*or the Friday before when March 31 falls on a weekend*). If the items are not purchased by the deadline, the Chair forfeits the opportunity to use prior year funds for the purchase.

## **TAX EXEMPT LETTERS**

To avoid paying unnecessary taxes, please contact the Office of the General Counsel at x59700 for tax exempt letters applicable to each state.

## **MODIFICATIONS**

### **ADDITIONAL CHANGES**

The Chairman of the CHA is authorized to make technical and conforming modifications to the Committee Handbook, and to make other modifications with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee and notification to all Members of the Committee. In the event changes are made pursuant to this clause, the Chairman shall notify all Congressional offices by suitable means.