

Representative Travel Guidelines

These are the guidelines for representative travel money disbursement, which are intended for use by the YM Representatives to organizations and by the YM Assistant Clerk.

Summary of Guidelines for Representatives

- The assistant clerk oversees the disbursement of travel funds.
- Any official representative may request travel money from SEYM. However, not all travel can be fully covered by the Yearly Meeting. When more travel money is requested than is available, the assistant clerk will prioritize and pro-rate the disbursements, considering guidelines set by the Yearly Meeting.
- The responsibilities of the representatives with respect to obtaining travel money are:
 - Make requests for travel money to the assistant clerk
 - Submit receipts to the YM secretary
 - Report to the Yearly Meeting

Complete Guidelines for Assistant Clerk and Representatives

Minute 07EC01: The EC approves the draft of the Representative Travel Guidelines prepared by the ad hoc Representative Travel Committee and distributed to EC members. The proposed revised guidelines will be brought for approval to the Yearly Business Meeting sessions, Fourth Month 2007, after being published in the DIA (available from the seym.org website).

Guidelines for Representative Travel

The Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (SEYM) holds that it is in the best interest of the Yearly Meeting (YM) to insure that all who are led and appointed to serve as official representatives to affiliated organizations should be able to do so. Names of potential representatives are brought forward by the Nominating Committee for approval in Yearly Business Meeting (YBM) or Interim Business Meeting (IBM) plenary sessions.

In addition, if the YBM or IBM approves sending someone to a one-time gathering for which there is no standing representation or prior approval, such as a youth conference or special consultation, then that person is considered an official representative for that occasion and may request travel money. If a situation arises where approval is time sensitive and action is required before the next YBM or IBM, it should be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee, with a recommendation from the Assistant Clerk.

Sources of Support for Representatives

Yearly Meeting Support:

Information:

It is advisable for Friends considering a representative assignment to discuss the assignment with other Friends, particularly, but not exclusively, those who have previously served the organization of interest. The Nominating Committee and the *SEYM Operational Handbook, Procedures & Job Descriptions* are excellent resources for details about the degree of commitment required by each organization. The handbook can be obtained from the SEYM secretary or downloaded from the SEYM website, www.seym.org. A potential candidate needs to be clear on what is expected of her/him from the outset.

Financial Assistance:

The YM budget includes financial assistance for official representative travel. The Assistant YM Clerk is the contact person for assistance with the travel. No one who is led to be a representative to an organization should be deterred from doing so for financial reasons. However, though the YM plans to increase its funds over time, it is, unfortunately, not now possible to fully cover all representative travel. When travel money requests exceed the limit of our representative travel budget or other sources of YM funding in a given year, the Assistant YM Clerk may need to prioritize and pro-rate the disbursements according to guidelines approved by the YM. Such decisions are made by the Assistant YM Clerk in consultation with the Finance Committee in order to assure that all possible resources have been considered.

Some representatives may wish to pay their own travel expenses. All such gifts benefit YM and are greatly appreciated. It is recommended that receipts for such funding be sent to the YM secretary in order that the costs of representative travel can be documented for more accurate budget preparation. If requested, the secretary will provide a receipt for the travel expenses as a donation to the YM.

Worship and Ministry:

The primary source of nurture and guidance for representatives within the YM is the YM Assistant Clerk. However, should issues arise that are also appropriate for Worship and Ministry, the YM clerks, or others in the YM, those avenues are readily available, as well.

Reporting to the YM:

Each official representative of SEYM (whether or not he/she requests travel money) and anyone else who receives travel assistance from the Yearly Meeting should report to the YM regarding his or her trips or other forms of representation. There are several ways of reporting. The following are preferred, because they reach the most people:

- an article in the SEYM newsletter
- a special interest session at the YBM Gathering
- a written report in the IBM- or YBM-DIA
- a (succinct) verbal report in a YBM plenary session

Monthly Meeting or Worship Group Support:

It is recommended that a prospective representative go through a clearness process within his/her monthly meeting before he/she approaches Nominating Committee for consideration. In some cases, Nominating Committee approaches a Friend to ask her/him to serve as a representative. In this situation, too, a clearness committee meeting is appropriate prior to acceptance of the recommendation. The amount of time and energy needed to do the job varies a great deal, depending on the organization. In some cases of significant and active involvement, it may be advisable for the monthly meeting clearness committee to recommend that an on-going care committee be provided for the representative.

Having a representative to a Friends organization within a monthly meeting can enrich the life of the monthly meeting. It is recommended that the monthly meeting provide opportunities for the representative to bring information, ideas and concerns from the organization before the monthly meeting as well as the YM. Monthly meetings may also choose to provide some of the financial support for their member Representatives.

Procedure for Travel Money Requests and Disbursement:

A representative who wants to request travel funding should contact the YM Assistant Clerk with the approximate cost before the trip. He/she should contact the Assistant Clerk with the final amount after the trip. The Assistant Clerk approves disbursement by notifying the representative and the YM secretary. The representative sends the receipts for expenses to the YM secretary. The secretary sends the representative a check and notifies the Assistant Clerk that the representative has been paid.

The representative may also request some or all of the travel money disbursement before the trip is made, if needed. All travel money disbursement requests need to be made during the fiscal year in which the trip was made. (The SEYM fiscal year runs from June 1 through May 31.)

Assistant Clerk Procedures:

The Assistant Clerk approves travel money for any official representative, within the constraints of the available travel money. If more requests are received than available money in the budget, the Assistant Clerk contacts the Finance Committee Clerk to see if other monies can be tapped for representative travel.

The Assistant Clerk contacts all official representatives at the beginning of each fiscal year to determine the following:

1. Does the representative have any concerns about the organization he/she is representative to or about his/her ability to represent the YM?
2. Does the representative have other needs and does he/she have the spiritual support he/she feels is needed?
3. Which representatives expect to travel in this coming year?
4. Which representatives expect to request travel money?
5. Do all representatives have a clear understanding of the travel money disbursement procedures and policies?

Given this information, the Assistant Clerk can estimate whether representative travel will be within budget, or whether additional funds need to be explored. If it is determined that even with additional funds, insufficient monies will be available, the Clerk uses the following guidelines, along with his/her best judgment of individual circumstances, to prioritize and/or pro-rate disbursement:

1. Travel to meetings of organization governing boards on which the representatives sit have the highest priority.
2. Travel by each representative to one official meeting per year of an organization is prioritized above additional trips by any representative in the same fiscal year.
3. Travel to regular business meetings of the organizations has priority over travel to other meetings, such as consultations, symposiums, etc.
4. If one trip combines both a representative meeting and personal enrichment or leisure, then the expenses should be pro-rated accordingly, with the YM contributing for the business portion of the trip.