

## **MRBP Policy:**

### **Financial Travel Assistance to Attend Panel Meetings or Events**

To enable/maximize Panel member participation, and for the Panel to be represented at many ANS related events that occur annually, the Panel has established the following guidelines for travel assistance related to Panel meetings and where Panel representation is needed.

#### **Eligibility for Travel Assistance**

The Panel will assist with travel for MRBP business when agency/organization restrictions, including insufficient travel budgets, would otherwise prevent travel.

Requests will be considered in the following prioritized order:

1. MRBP Executive Committee members
2. Invited speakers
3. MRBP voting members
4. MRBP non-voting members
5. Non-Panel members interested in Panel participation

#### **Level of Travel Assistance**

The Panel will provide travel assistance based on the above prioritized order and at the Executive Committee's discretion, until the Panel's budgeted amount per meeting or event is reached. To provide travel assistance to the largest number of Panel members as possible, requests for cost-share of travel expenses (e.g., travel expenses paid in part by the Panel member's sponsoring agency or organization) will be given priority over requests for the Panel to pay full travel expenses.

The Panel will provide only the necessary financial support to travel in an efficient way and at best available rates. Per Diem and mileage will not be reimbursed above GSA published rates for the current fiscal year (<http://www.gsa.gov>). Whenever possible, lodging reservations should be made as part of the established group block for the MRBP meeting or event. Alternative lodging should not exceed the rate offered as part of the established group block. MRBP travel assistance is limited to the individual attending the MRBP meeting or event; the Panel will not reimburse additional expenses associated with guest travel.

**How to Apply:**

Written requests for travel assistance should be submitted to the Panel Coordinator ([MRBP@fws.gov](mailto:MRBP@fws.gov)) no later than 30-days prior to the meeting or event for which assistance is requested, or by the specified deadline established for a specific event.

Requests should include:

- Panel members name and agency or organization
- Meeting or event for which travel assistance is requested
- Dates of travel
- Itemized estimate of all travel expenses
- Specific expenses the MRBP is requested to reimburse
- Total amount of funding requested from the MRBP
- Justification for travel assistance

**Approval of Travel Assistance**

The Panel Coordinator will rank requests received by the established deadline based on these guidelines and will provide recommendations to the Panel Co-Chairs for approval. Following approval by the Panel Co-Chairs, the Panel Coordinator will provide a response to each individual that requested travel assistance and confirm the level of travel assistance approved by the Panel Co-Chairs. Every effort will be made to provide responses within 1 week of the established deadline for submittal of written requests for travel assistance.

**Reimbursement of Travel Expenses**

Following the meeting or event for which MRBP travel assistance was approved, requests for reimbursement should be submitted to the Panel Coordinator. Requests should include a copy of the individual's agency or organization travel voucher itemizing claimed expenses and providing the total reimbursement request. Signed copies of receipts should be provided for all claimed expenses other than meals.

Requests for reimbursement will be sent to the Panel Co-Chairs for approval, and then submitted to the MICRA Chairperson for authorization of payment by MICRA. The Panel Coordinator should be contacted if payment has not been received within 3 weeks of submittal of request and required documentation.