Faculty Dependent Care Travel Fund

Cornell’s Faculty Dependent Care Travel Fund program offers eligible faculty reimbursement up to $1,500 per fiscal year (July 1st – June 30th) for qualified, short-term, dependent-care expenses due to eligible professional travel. The travel fund includes an additional $500 for expenses related to the care of a child with special needs.

Additionally, the program has been temporarily modified to also support faculty who incur backup dependent care expenses as a result of care disruption due to COVID-19 up to $2,000.

Care needs must be incurred while:

- teaching (virtually or in-person) when usual dependent care arrangements are temporarily not available
- writing a grant proposal or meeting an external publication deadline that is due within 6 months from the date of the fund application.

The purpose of the Faculty Dependent Care Travel Fund is to help alleviate the financial burden of a breakdown in dependent care incurred by single caregivers or individuals in a domestic partnership/marriage whose spouse/partner is not available for backup care due to work obligations or other extenuating circumstances.

The maximum combined (travel and backup care) reimbursement amount is $2,000. Funding for this program is limited and may reach the maximum budget prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Qualifications and Eligible Expenses

Who qualifies as an applicant?

Individuals with the following university titles qualify for this program:

- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Full Professor
- Clinical Professor (assistant, associate, and professor)
- Research Professor (assistant, associate, and professor)
- Professor of Practice (assistant, associate, and professor)
Who qualifies as a dependent?

For travel care needs, a dependent is defined as:

- a minor who resides with the applicant and for whom the applicant provides primary support (up to age 18) or
- a disabled adult who lives local to, or with, the applicant and receives at least half of their basic care needs from the applicant.

For backup care needs, a dependent is defined as:

- a minor who resides with the applicant and for whom the applicant provides primary support (up to age 13) or
- a disabled teen or adult who lives local to, or with, the applicant and receives at least half of their basic care needs from the applicant.

Which activities will be eligible?

Recipients must certify that funds requested for travel or backup dependent care costs were incurred between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, and were due to:

- travel to conferences or to research-related activities,
- teaching (specify course number and times),
- an upcoming grant deadline (specify the agency and due date of the grant), or;
- a pending publisher deadline (letter noting the deadline).

In dual caregiver situations, an attestation of the spouse’s/partner’s unavailability must be provided as well.

Note related to airfare costs: The fund reimburses for the cost of economy airline travel only. If an applicant chooses to purchase a ticket that is more expensive, they must provide documentation of the price difference (collected the same day as the reservation was made for the same flight) from an online reservation system. The applicant would then be responsible for the difference after reimbursement of the economy ticket price.

Documentation

For the travel fund, faculty must submit information about the professional activities associated with the travel. Examples: conference program with presentation date. See note above related to airfare cost reimbursement.

For the backup care fund, faculty must submit information about the existing dependent care breakdown. Examples: notice of child care/school classroom closure, notice of unavailability of home health aid due to Covid, and a link to funding agency deadline. Back-up care expenses must be above and beyond typical care expenses incurred and caused by a COVID-19-related care interruption. Regular school district breaks are not covered.

Payment

Payment will be made after travel and/or care is arranged, provided, and paid for, and concluded. The Application Form and all receipts/documentation must be submitted by July 15, 2023, to be eligible for funds from the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Failure to submit by the July 15, 2023 deadline will result in expenses being applied to the 2023-2024 fiscal year and will count towards the recipient’s cap.

Is this considered taxable income?

These funds are considered taxable income. If approved, Cornell will add an additional 25% of the final expenses when the payment is issued to help defray the tax burden.

Application Process

Faculty can apply online by completing the application. The application is confidential and will be reviewed by the Faculty Dependent Travel and Back Up Care Fund Application Committee.

The Application form, the Travel Verification form, and all receipts/ documentation should be submitted within two weeks after dependent care has been provided. Applicants will be informed of the funding decision within two weeks of their submission.
Applications are reviewed weekly, and payments will be included in the next paycheck following an application’s approval. Decisions regarding any award are final. Program provisions are subject to change from time to time, and the existence of the program is no guarantee of the availability of funds or the award of grants.

Eligible faculty can submit more than one request (and receive more than one grant) within a given fiscal year, up to the annual maximum ($1,500 for travel, $2,000 for backup care, or a combination not to exceed $2,000).

For questions, please contact Work/Life in Human Resources at worklife@cornell.edu.