

SUBJECT: PAYMENT OF EXPENSES BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, REGIONAL OR NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

SUMMARY:

State employees who perform special services for the federal government, regional and national organizations may have travel expenses paid by such organizations, provided such travel is in accordance with state travel policies and procedures.

QUESTION:

The Employee Relations Director for the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education inquires whether individual college (State) employees who perform special services for out of state regional or national organizations (including the federal government) may receive direct reimbursement from these out of state organizations for actual expenses incurred. State technical college faculty and administrators are frequently asked to serve on site visitation and audit teams which review other colleges, professional organizations such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and such special programs as accreditation reviews. No state funds are involved in the performance of these special services.

DISCUSSION:

This opinion is rendered in response to a letter dated August 20, 1992 requesting an opinion from the State Ethics Commission. The Commission's jurisdiction is limited to the applicability of the Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act of 1991 (Act No. 248 of 1991; Section 8-13-100 et. seq., as amended, 1976 Code of Laws). This opinion does not supersede any other statutory or regulatory restrictions or procedures which may apply to this situation.

In Advisory Opinion SEC AO92-037, the State Ethics Commission advised that costs associated with attendance at committee meetings handled by a Federal agency could be provided since there is no financial benefit being provided to the employee if in accordance with state travel reimbursement policies and procedures.

In Advisory Opinion SEC AO92-058, the State Ethics Commission advised that Forestry Commission employees could attend meetings sponsored by the Federal government, sister states, or a national association with travel, lodging and meals arranged by or reimbursed by the sponsor without violating the Ethics Reform Act, provided such travel is in accordance with state travel policies and procedures. Similarly, in Advisory Opinion SEC AO92-061, the Commission advised that State employees who serve as officers on

national professional organizations may receive payment of expenses from such organizations. Based on the facts submitted and prior advisory opinions, State employees who perform special

services for the federal government or regional and national organizations may have travel expenses paid by these organizations, provided such travel is in accordance with state travel policies and procedures.