Rice University continues to monitor the evolving outbreak of the 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19) and will provide guidance on restricted travel as necessary. If you have any questions, please contact Gina Diaz at extension 6715 or regina.r.diaz@rice.edu.

For those travelling on University business, the Rice Travel Policy allows for reimbursement of cancellation or change fees with a valid business reason. The current Coronavirus outbreak meets this requirement. The policy also allows the purchase of refundable tickets where there is a high likelihood that the itinerary may change. For travel that has yet to be booked, it is recommended that travelers purchase refundable tickets instead of trip cancellation insurance since trip cancellation insurance does not provide coverage in all situations. Travelers should also use preferred vendors where possible, because these relationships can provide additional support and flexibility. See Rice’s list of preferred vendors.

We encourage travelers to discuss upcoming travel plans with their department chair or supervisor to determine whether travel is necessary and whether there are alternative methods to participate in existing obligations (Zoom, Skype, etc.).

In all cases, travelers must contact the travel agency or vendors (hotel, airline, etc.) as soon as they know they will not be traveling in order to reduce cancellation penalties.

**Can I be reimbursed for my trip if I cancel due to concerns about the Coronavirus?**

**Non-Sponsored Funds**

For international university-sponsored travel, Rice will reimburse from departmental funds any cancellation, change fees, room charges, conference registration or similar fees that are not refunded or covered by a penalty waiver from the airlines or hotel.

If a traveler elects to cancel a domestic trip due to individual safety and health concerns, and not as a result of the conference being cancelled, Rice will reimburse from departmental funds any cancellation, change fees, room charges, conference registration or similar fees that are not refunded or covered by a penalty waiver from the airlines or hotel.

**Sponsored Funds**

Cancellation fees on grant-related activities can be charged to sponsored funds if the travel was cancelled as a result of Coronavirus related cancellations or CDC travel restrictions (see CDC Level 3 Countries). Authorized approvers must ensure any change or cancellation fees charged to sponsored funds are reasonable and allowable. Otherwise expenses should be charged to non-sponsored funds. Travelers should retain documentation of their cancellation request with the vendors.

If a traveler has booked domestic travel but the traveler elects to cancel their trip due to individual safety concerns, **these charges cannot be charged to sponsored funds**. However, Rice will reimburse from departmental funds any cancellation, change fees or similar charges with the approval of the department or organization as an appropriate business expense to Rice.

All reimbursements or pcard charges for these types of fees (sponsored or non-sponsored) must be identified with the COV-19 activity code. This is accomplished by filling in “COV-19” in the business purpose of the transaction in Concur. NOTE: this must be at the transaction level and not simply at the report level.