

# VRA Travel Award Rules & Guidelines

## Eligibility

- If you have never received a VRA Travel Award, you are eligible to apply for either a full award or a top-up (partial) award.
- If you have received a travel award from a local chapter during previous years, but not from the VRA Travel Awards program, you are eligible to apply for either a full award or a top-up award.
- If you received a full (\$600-\$1000) Travel Award during the past three years, you are ineligible to apply for a full award.
  - Example: If you were awarded a full award in 2013 (for the 2014 conference), you wouldn't be eligible to apply for a full award again until the 2016 application period (for the 2017 conference).
  - You can apply for a top-up award if you received a full award during the past three years.
- If you received a top-up (\$599 or less) award last year, you are not eligible to receive another top-up award this year.
  - Example: If you were awarded a top-up award during the 2014 application period, you wouldn't be eligible to apply for another top-up award until the 2016 application period (for the 2017 conference).
  - You *can* apply for a full award if you were awarded a top-up award last year.
- Travel awards are available to non-members (including international applicants) with the stipulation that if funded, awardees will become members of VRA. Here's a link to the VRA membership page: <http://www.vraweb.org/membership/>

See the list of past award winners if you are unsure of your eligibility:

<http://vraweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/VRATravelAwardsRecipients20151.pdf>

## Conditions Upon Receipt of a VRA Travel Award

- Award checks will be presented at a designated event during the conference; you must attend to receive the award. **You will not be able to use the amount for travel and other expenses in advance of the conference.**
- The full amount of the award must be used towards this year's conference. Award funds cannot be carried over to next year. Any funds not spent in the year given must be returned.
- After the conference each applicant must provide proof of all expenditures by submitting receipts to the VRA Treasurer electronically, by making a scan of receipts.
  - Please submit these receipts as one document if possible, i.e. PDF.
- Award recipients will be encouraged to give back to the VRA either during or after the conference by completing one of the following:

- Assist with registration at front desk during the conference
- Submit a blog report of a conference session, essay about your experience, or article for inclusion on the VRA website's blog or VRA Bulletin
- Facilitate a meeting or other conference gathering
- **Award monies may be used for:**
  - Conference registration (including workshop fees)
  - Transportation (includes airfare, ground transportation to and from the airport, car expenses, train travel, etc.)
  - Hotel accommodations (note that if you split a room, only 50% of accommodation costs may be covered by your travel award)
    - We **strongly** encourage you to stay at the conference hotel. Not only will this increase opportunities to meet with colleagues, but it will also help the VRA meet its hotel contract obligations.
  - Meals (starting from the time you leave for the conference until your return (includes snacks, coffee, etc.))
- **Unacceptable use of award money includes, but is not limited to:**
  - Visual Resources Association and regional Chapter membership fees
  - Transportation and registration fees for optional outings (e.g. tours)
  - Alcohol
  - Exceptionally expensive dining costs
  - Personal expenses charged to hotel room (i.e. dry cleaning, long-distance calls, wireless Internet fees)
  - Donations to VRA or any other affiliated organizations
  - Supplies needed for conference presentations or posters
  - Other optional expenses (souvenirs, books, entrance fees, unusually high transportation costs, etc.)
  - Any costs accrued on days before or after the conference

If you are unsure about the use of funds, please contact the Chairs of the Travel Awards Committee.

## Tips for Completing Your Application

We can't wait to read your application! We find that successful applications have a few specific qualities, and here are some of the most important things to keep in mind:

- Please be as precise as you can with your answers.
- **Think about your budget!** Provide a thorough breakdown of your proposed travel costs and explain the rationale (example: *“Round-trip flight from San Francisco to Atlanta - \$320 on United Airlines, as determined through an expedia.com search.”*)
  - When considering **transportation**, shop around! Check prices and availability on several popular travel sites to get the lowest fare (i.e., expedia.com, travelocity.com, orbitz.com, priceline.com, etc.)

- Another note on travel costs: if your institution requires you to use a specific airline, or has set a corporate airfare rate, please note this in the section for additional budget comments.
    - Note on travel within the conference city: a shuttle to/from the airport is typically a less expensive option than a taxi. A round-trip shuttle ticket may be less expensive than two one-way fares. Shared taxis might be an option. Public transportation, where available, is another way to save money!
  - To save on **lodging cost**, share a room! Lodging can be your biggest conference expenditure if you're not flexible about reducing the cost.
    - If you don't have a roommate in mind, put out a call on VRA-L once conference registration information is available to the membership. This is a great way to meet professional colleagues AND halve your accommodation cost.
    - If you're sharing a room, only include your portion of the cost in your budget and note that you'll be sharing.
  - When **budgeting for meals**, check the conference program first for hosted breakfasts or evening events. These usually have generous food offerings. Be realistic and thoughtful about what you'll really need to spend on meals, and check the per diem rate for the conference city at [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem).
- Be as specific and thorough as possible in your **Conference Goals Statement**.
  - Aim for about **500 words or less**.
  - Tell the Committee how certain workshops, sessions, and roundtables will directly benefit the work that you do in your collection.
  - **Avoid generalizations** such as "I will get to talk with colleagues about their digitization projects" or "I hope to learn about copyright law." We want to know why and how these opportunities will benefit you.
  - Be brave! **Participate** in the Conference as a presenter, moderator or volunteer. Connect with your VRA colleagues. Attend and participate in regional chapter meetings, or consider joining a committee and attend their meeting. And be sure to note your intended participation in your Conference Goals Statement.
  - Think about how you will **give back** to VRA in advance, and mention this in your Conference Goals Statement. Some ways to give back include:
    - Registration assistance at front desk during the conference
    - Submitting a blog report of a conference session, essay about your experience, or article for inclusion on the VRA website's blog (once the new website is up and running)
    - Facilitating a meeting or other conference gathering
- If you haven't already, **join the VRA listserv!** (<http://vraweb.org/membership/vra-l-guidelines/>)
  - Room shares, shuttle/cab shares, and other conference information is posted often to the listserv. Plus it's a great way to learn more about VRA, the annual conference, and your colleagues.

We look forward to hearing from you!

*Updated October 2015.*