

Travel Policy & Procedures

Purpose

This document ensures that employee travel is consistent with the business objectives of the Agency. It also ensures fair and equitable treatment of employees by defining procedures for authorized business travel and guidelines for expense reimbursement. The policy applies to all Agency travel, exceeding 100 miles from traveler's program office, including travel funded under federal and non-federal grants and contracts.

General

Employee travel should be via the lowest cost alternative, consistent with good business practices. All official agency travel must be properly authorized, reported, and reimbursed; under no circumstances shall expenses for personal travel be charged to, or be temporarily funded by the Agency. The traveler is responsible for reporting travel expenses, in accordance with the regulations set forth in the Policy. The Program Director is responsible for ensuring that all employee travel complies with the Policy. Any expense submitted which does not comply with the guidelines of this procedure will not be reimbursed, unless accompanied by a valid exception approved by the Executive Director or designee.

All employees traveling on Agency business will be required to complete the Travel Form which includes obtaining an approval signature from the Executive Director or Assistant Executive Director in advance of the travel. If an advance is requested, the approved Travel Advance Request Form is to be submitted to Accounts Payable. Subsequently, the Travel Form will be completed with the actual travel information and reconciliation of expenses with advances, signed by the Assistant Executive Director, and submitted to the Finance Office as the expense report. If no advance is required, the traveler may retain the approved Travel Form until the conclusion of the travel when this form will be reconciled, approved, and submitted for payment. The Travel Form, Travel Advance Form, Affidavit for Lost Receipt Form and instructions for requesting advances are available on the Intranet.

A. Travel Authorization

The traveler and/or Program Director are responsible for making all travel arrangements including determining the most cost effective travel options and completing all sections as indicated on the Travel Form.

1) Documentation:

A document must be attached to the Travel Form stating the purpose, date, time, and location of the trip. Such documentation could include seminar, conference or meeting brochures or a memo/letter.

2) Date and Time:

To determine proper per diem allowance, Departure/Return Dates and Times must be stated on the Travel Form.

3) Per Diem:

The allowance for meals, including gratuities and incidentals shall be limited to actual cost or the maximum daily rates allowed by IRS. The daily rate for most cities in Continental United States is provided on the Intranet and can be accessed from http://www.gsa.gov/HP_01Trvl_perdiem . The federal per Diem amount is a daily rate and does not require submission of receipts. An employee may spend the allowance in any combination for meals, so long as the daily allowance is not exceeded. In the event that a sponsor of a seminar, conference, etc provides a meal, the daily allowance would be reduced by the following amounts:

- a) Breakfast - 20%
- b) Lunch - 30%
- c) Dinner - 50%

For example, if travel to a city where the daily rate is \$59 and lunch is provided, \$17.70 would be deducted from the allowance leaving \$41.30 to be used for the remaining meals etc.

4) Reimbursable Hours:

Per Diem is calculated and paid to employees for time during travel exceeding 100 miles from traveler’s program office to a destination on authorized Agency business. For travel lasting 24 hours or more, employees may claim meals (as noted above) based on the following timeframes:

First day of Travel	
Trip begins at or before 7 am	Breakfast may be claimed
Trip begins at or before 11 am	Lunch may be claimed
Trip begins at or before 5 pm	Dinner may be claimed
Continuing after 24 hours	
Trip ends at or after 8 am	Breakfast may be claimed
Trip ends at or after 2 pm	Lunch may be claimed
Trip ends at or after 7 pm	Dinner may be claimed

5) Actual Cost Option:

With appropriate approval by the Executive Director or designee, actual meal receipts may be submitted for reimbursement in lieu of using per diem rates. Individual reimbursement under the actual cost option may exceed the amounts indicated above, if so approved.

6) Restrictions:

No allowances, under either option shall be made for in-flight meals, meals included within registration fees paid by the Agency or meals

otherwise provided by someone else. No advances for meals will be allowed for travel lasting one day (24 hours) or less.

7) Transportation:

- a) Commercial Airlines – Coach Class or other discounted class shall be used for all travel regardless of purpose or funding source.
 - i) Use of business or first-class or other higher-cost services may be authorized by the Assistant Executive Director under the following circumstances:
 - Business or first-class is the only service offered between two points;
 - The use of coach class would be more expensive or time consuming, e.g., when, because of scheduling difficulties, traveling by coach would require an unnecessary hotel expense, circuitous routing, or an unduly long layover when making connections;
 - The use of business or first-class travel is necessary to reasonably accommodate a disability or medical need of a traveler.

Documentation of such circumstances should be attached to the Travel Form.

- b) Tickets for transportation on a commercial carrier may be purchased from a travel agency, direct from carrier, or an online travel service and billed directly to the Agency after receiving the proper approval. The invoice from the vendor must be sent directly to Accounts Payable Office.
- c) Any corresponding personal travel taken in conjunction with an authorized trip is the responsibility of the traveler.
- d) If the employee is to travel by private vehicle, the employee shall be reimbursed mileage at the established rate set by the Internal Revenue Service. Mileage reimbursement will also be made for all documented business travel incurred at the destination. Employees must document miles traveled on the Travel Form.
 - i) Mileage should be computed between the traveler's office and the destination.
 - ii) Accounts Payable Office may compare miles traveled to a Standard Mileage Chart.

8) Registration:

If registration is to be paid by Accounts Payable Office, attach the original registration form to a copy of the Travel Form. Accounts Payable will mail the original registration form with the registration check. If the check and registration form need to be carried by the employee to the conference, the request to have the check released to the employee must be noted.

9) Hotel:

Hotel expenses are paid at no more than single occupancy rate unless otherwise authorized. Please allow for taxes and other associated costs when computing hotel rates for advance purposes.

10) Lodging Allowance:

When an employee is able to obtain lodging at no-cost to the Agency (for example, with a friend or relative) while attending a conference or other out-of-town function, the employee may be reimbursed a flat rate of \$50 per night.

11) Vehicle Rental/Taxi:

Expenses such as taxi, shuttle service, bus, and commercial transportation companies will be reimbursed when travel is directly related to Agency business. The Agency will pay employee's taxi fare, car rental, or appropriate mileage reimbursement to and from the airport, hotel, conference, or other business destination as approved by the Assistant Executive Director. All transportation expenses must be documented by receipts.

12) Phone Calls:

Telephone, internet and FAX charges properly supported with receipts will be reimbursed only for official calls and communications.

B. Issuance of Travel Advances

- 1) Travel advances may be requested electronically or via hardcopy by a traveler. A Travel Advance Form should be completed by the traveler indicating the items for which an advance is requested. The Travel Advance Form is to be sent to the traveler's Supervisor and Assistant Executive Director for approval. The approved Travel Advance Form should then be sent to Accounts Payable. Instructions for completion of the Travel Advance Form are available on Intranet. All Travel Advance Forms received by the Accounts Payable Office by the weekly cutoff date (noon Friday), will have checks mailed to the employee's home address by the following Friday.
- 2) A traveler can have only one outstanding travel advance at a time. Each advance should be accounted for before another advance is granted.

C. Expense Report Reconciliation

Within 10 days of return or upon cancellation of a trip, the employee must complete and submit to Accounts Payable Office the Travel Form, duly

reconciled and signed by the traveler, supervisor, and Assistant Executive Director. If an advance was requested, the amounts received as advance should be updated with the actual amounts incurred for reconciliation.

- 1) Following original receipts validating travel are required:
 - a) Airline Receipt / Invoice.
 - b) Registration receipt.
 - c) Lodging Invoice / Documentation.
 - d) Taxi/bus/commercial carrier receipts, car rental agreements, parking receipts.
 - e) Other receipts as necessary to document other costs. If other costs are included on your hotel bill, designate which ones are Agency business expenses and initial as such.
 - f) Actual receipts submitted in lieu of per diem, if approved.
 - g) Reimbursement of travel expenses for which the original receipts have been lost or are not available must be approved by the Program Director and a Missing Receipt Affidavit must be submitted.
- 2) Documentation should also include a travel report, agenda, or brochures to document attendance of the event.
- 3) The reconciled and approved Travel Form must be submitted even if employee is not owed any additional reimbursement so that the travel advance may be cleared and the travel expenses charged.
- 4) Employees receiving an advance in excess of the actual cost are responsible for repayment of any excess amount. A check made payable to FCEOC should be submitted to the Finance Office, in accordance with the Cash Receipts policy, along with a copy of the approved and reconciled Travel Form.

D. Unrecovered Advances

- 1) Thirty days after a trip is completed, the Finance Office shall initiate proceedings for the recovery of any outstanding travel advances.
- 2) If an employee fails to substantiate expenses and return any unused cash advance amounts within 60 days of the end of a trip, the Agency, under IRS regulations, will report the travel advance amount through the payroll system as additional wages to the employee.
- 3) Payments, such as registration fees, airline tickets, etc., made directly to a vendor on behalf of an employee will not be included in the travel advance amount being reported as additional wages in the event the advance is not cleared within 60 days.

E. Reimbursement from Outside Source

If any reimbursement for an employee's travel is expected from an outside source, it is the traveler's responsibility to ensure that all required documentation is submitted to the outside source and that the reimbursement is received by the Agency.

F. Payment of Expenses on Behalf of Others

Agency travelers will not be compensated for expenses paid by them on behalf of his/her spouse, family member, or friends.