

## Welcome to USDA!

**Objective:** Official travel on behalf of USDA must be accomplished in a manner that meets the Department's mission to perform the business of Government and minimizes the costs of travel.

As a new employee, there are few things you need to know before you travel.

*Travel expenditures in the Federal Government must be authorized in advance.*

Official travel includes but is not limited to:

- Transportation
- Meals & Lodging (a.k.a. per diem)
- Baggage expenses
- Official telephone calls
- Laundry

Miscellaneous Expenses



**“After my first week, I need to travel. What should I do?”**

**Step 1** Determine travel purpose or objective.

- Site Visit
- Information meeting
- Training or Conference Attendance
- Relocation

**Step 2** Obtain supervisory approval to plan your trip. To participate in the USDA travel card program, you will need to travel 2 or more times per year.

**Step 3** Sign-up for the agency Travel Card Program within 14 days prior to travel commencement. You can obtain a travel card application from your Agency Travel Coordinator (ATC).

*You must use the Government travel card only for official travel expenses related to transportation, lodging, and other authorized travel costs. The travel card should not be used at any time for personal purchases.*

Refer to “USDA’s Travel Card Do’s & Don’ts” brochure for more information.

**Step 4** Plan itineraries and transportation modes. You will need to identify travel duration, estimate lodging, transportation, and subsistence costs. Use the current per diem rates found at: [www.policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mt/perdiem/travel.shtml](http://www.policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mt/perdiem/travel.shtml)

*USDA policy prohibits general purchases of First Class Travel accommodations.*

**Step 5** Obtain Form AD-202, Travel Authorization from your administrative staff. Complete the form and obtain approval as required by your agency. The approved authorization form is required for obligation of appropriated funds.

**Step 6** Establish travel reservations through your agency Travel Management Center (TMC). Contact your administrative staff or ATC to determine which TMC to use. For the headquarters’ TMC, contact Carlson Wagonlit Travel at 877-787-6019 or website at: [www.cwgovernment.com/usda/index.htm](http://www.cwgovernment.com/usda/index.htm)

*Electronic tickets are required for travel within the United States.*

**“How do I file a travel claim within USDA?”**

**Step 7** Gather airline, lodging, car rental, and miscellaneous travel receipts. Miscellaneous expenses that are ordinary and necessary to accomplish the *official business purpose* of the trip are reimbursable. Vouchers must include an explanation of why an expense was incurred. A receipt must support any miscellaneous expense of \$75.00 or more.

**Step 8** Complete and submit Form AD-616, Travel Voucher to your supervisor for approval within 5 days of return. If you are on continuous travel, you must submit a travel voucher every 30 days. *If you receive a travel advance, you must indicate on the voucher the reimbursement amount to be applied first to the outstanding travel advance.* Put this amount on Line 40 of the AD-616. The balance of the reimbursement will be remitted to you.

**Step 9** Pay travel card bill upon receipt and retain travel records & receipts for audit purposes.

*National Finance Center (NFC) usually will provide an electronic funds transfer in three days upon receipt of the approved travel voucher.*

**Congratulations!**  
Your travel at  
USDA is now complete.

**Now you are ready to  
travel!**

## USDA REMINDERS

- Employees should become familiar with the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), USDA, and agency specific guidelines. The FTR is located at:  
[www.policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/FTR/fitrhpfore.html#BMtablecont](http://www.policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/FTR/fitrhpfore.html#BMtablecont)
- Government travelers must exercise the same care in incurring expenses as a prudent person would if traveling on personal business and using personal funds.
- Secure reservations as early as practical. Where appropriate, charge airline tickets to travel card within two days of actual travel.
- If you use the government travel card for any other purpose than authorized in conjunction with official travel, you will be subject to any penalties the Department or your agency may impose for the misuse of travel card privileges.
- Travel card bills must be paid within **30** days, regardless of USDA reimbursement. **The traveler is personally responsible for the timely payment of all travel card charges.**

***During National and Local emergencies, employees who are on official travel should follow their agency guidelines to obtain arrangements to get home or to other safe locations.***

**REVIEW YOUR AGENCY SPECIFIC EMERGENCY TRAVEL PROCEDURES AND PRECAUTIONS PRIOR TO TRAVEL DEPARTURE.**

## USDA CONTACTS

***Know your Agency Travel Coordinator!***

***Still have questions?***

*Contact your Agency Travel Coordinator (ATC). The ATC knows your agency specific travel policies and procedures. For a list of ATCs, please see:*  
[www.usda.gov/ocfo/travel/index.htm](http://www.usda.gov/ocfo/travel/index.htm)

**ATC(s):**

**Email:**

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### HEADQUARTER CONTACTS

***Office of the Chief Financial Officer  
Credit, Travel, & Accounting Policy Division (CTAPD)***

***Only ATC's are authorized to contact CTAPD for questions regarding USDA travel policy and travel card program.***

### NATIONAL FINANCE CENTER CONTACTS

***Customer Support & Analysis Section (CSAS)***  
504-426-5471

Any questions regarding accessing the Travel System  
(e.g., input, transmissions, implementations, etc.)

***Travel Inquiry Section***  
504-255-4878

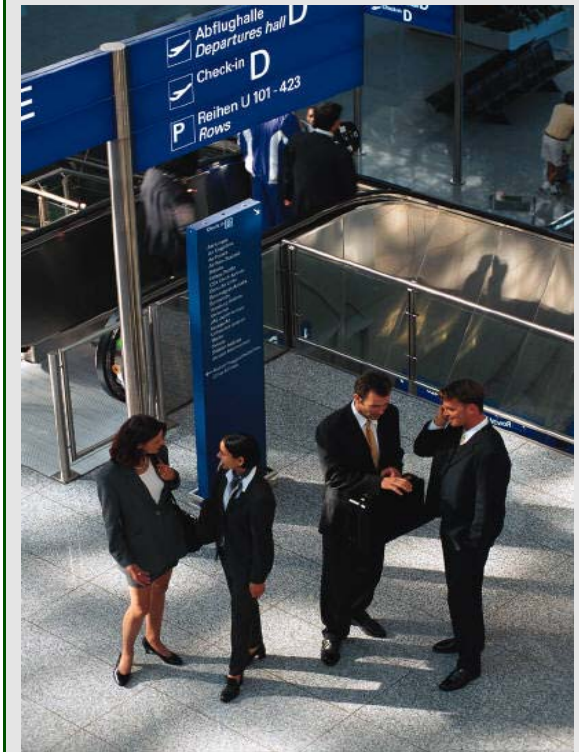
General payment, processing, reports, or suspense inquiries.

***Publishing & Visual Communication Team***  
504-426-1218

Requests for external procedure manuals, bulletins, etc.



## TRAVEL STEPS FOR NEW EMPLOYEES



United States  
Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D. C. 20250

**EST. 5/03 CTAPD**

