



ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENTAL HANDBOOK

Handbook OCFO-05

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All Department of Education Employees

Approved by: ____/s/_____
Chris Marston
Acting Assistant Secretary for Management

Handbook for Travel Policy

Supersedes Handbook OCFO-05 "Handbook for Travel Policy" dated 05/25/2006.

For technical questions regarding this handbook, please contact Darlene Hughes via [e-mail](#) or on 202-401-2108.

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Chapter I – Introduction

The Handbook for Travel Policy (Handbook) was developed for use by the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Headquarters and Regional personnel who administer travel policy. This Handbook provides a comprehensive summary of ED's travel policies and is intended for use as a reference tool by Executive Officers, Principal Office Heads, and ED Travelers.

ED's travel policy is based on the following:

- General Services Administration's (GSA) Federal Travel Regulations (FTR);
- ED's Administrative Communication System (ACS) Directives and Handbooks;
- ED's Personnel Manual Instructions (PMI); and
- ED's Policy Memoranda issued by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO).

This Handbook was developed based on a review of ED's Policy Memoranda on travel, the FTR, and information gathered through interviews with ED representatives who develop and administer travel policy. In developing this Handbook, ED's documentation guidelines, as contained in [OM:1-101, The Administrative Communications System](#), have been reviewed and incorporated as applicable.

For questions relating to the information contained in this Handbook, contact the Director of the Functional Applications Group within the OCFO at 202-401-1867.

Use of this Handbook

The Handbook is organized into individual chapters. A detailed table of contents is provided to facilitate easy reference to topics that are of interest to the user. If the topic is not listed in the table of contents, the user should determine the main chapter heading or process to which the topic relates, and search through that chapter.

If users encounter acronyms or terms with which they are not familiar, they should refer to [Appendix A](#), which provides a definition of acronyms used and other common travel terms.

Any updates to this Handbook that users propose should be documented and forwarded to the Functional Applications Group through the use of the [Update Request Form contained in Chapter XIII](#).

The information contained in this Handbook has been updated to reflect new travel policies. For detailed information regarding system procedures, refer to the electronic travel system, [E2 End User Manual](#).

Information pertaining to, or guidance regarding Change of Official Duty Stations, can be obtained by contacting the OCFO Travel Team on (202) 401-1867. The chapter addressing official change of duty station has been removed from the Travel Policy Handbook.

Chapter II – Travel Authorizations (FTR §301-2)

A. General Requirements

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| Requirements for Travel Authorizations | Travel shall be authorized <i>only</i> when it is necessary to accomplish the purposes of ED’s mission in the <i>most effective and economical manner</i> . A Travel Authorization must be issued for all travel outside a 35-mile radius of the traveler’s official duty station. For information on travel within a 35-mile radius, see Chapter III, Making Travel Arrangements, Section C, Local Transportation . |
| Purpose of Travel Authorization | A Travel Authorization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorizes an employee to incur specific travel expenses; • Estimates expenses; • Obligates funds; and • Covers employee for liability purposes. |
| Authorization Approvals | An ED Approving Official (Reviewer, Approver or Certifier) ensures that the travel complies with ED policies and the FTR; that the travel is conducted effectively and economically; and that funds are available to support the authorization. |
| Per Diem versus Actual Expense | Per diem should generally be authorized for all travel beyond ED’s local travel radius. Actual lodging expense must be authorized in advance by the Director, Functional Applications Group (or his/her designee), who has been delegated the authority to perform this function, in those special circumstances when travel is to an unusually-expensive location and per diem is inadequate. See Chapter IV: Per Diem and Chapter V: Reimbursement for Actual Subsistence , of this Handbook, for additional information on per diem and actual subsistence. |
| Scheduling Travel | To the extent possible, employees and supervisors should plan and schedule travel during duty hours. |

**Overtime During
Travel Hours**

Overtime may be authorized for employees for hours in actual travel status outside of the employee's regular tour of duty hours when the travel:

- Involves performance of actual work while traveling;
- Is incident to travel that involves the performance of work while traveling; and
- Results from events that could not be scheduled or controlled administratively.

All overtime must be approved and authorized **in advance** through a memorandum, which must be approved by the individual traveler's budgeting and approving official(s). See [Personnel Manual Instruction \(PMI\) 550-3, Premium Pay](#), Attachment A, for more details.

**Compensatory Time
Off for Time in Travel
Status During Off-Duty
Hours**

Employees may receive compensatory time (comp time) off for travel for those hours spent in a travel status. Travel status includes only the time actually spent traveling between the official duty station and a temporary duty station, or between two temporary duty stations, and the usual waiting time that precedes or interrupts such travel. Additional guidance and examples are provided by the [Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, Compensatory Time Off for Travel](#) and in [PMI 550-4, Compensatory Time Off for Official Travel](#).

- This policy only applies to travel time that is not otherwise compensable as regular overtime/compensatory time.
- Compensatory time earned under these circumstances must be used within 26 pay periods.
- Employees leaving the agency's employment may not be paid for unused compensatory time.
- Bi-weekly and per annum pay caps do not apply as long as the travel time is not otherwise compensable as regular overtime/compensatory time.

Within 30 days upon his/her return from official travel, the employee must complete and submit Attachment A in [PMI 550-4, Compensatory Time Off for Official Travel](#), with a copy of the approved itinerary received for authorized travel to request compensatory time for travel. Supervisors will review and approve the employee's request so the timekeeper can enter the appropriate amount of compensatory time for travel into the automated payroll system. A copy of the approved compensatory ("time"?) and flex

sheet should be kept with the travel documentation in the event of a travel review/audit.

Employees who fail to submit their requests and appropriate supporting documentation for official travel within the required timeframe will not receive any credit for compensatory time for that travel.

Compensatory time for travel must be tracked and maintained separately from other types of compensatory time. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the compensatory time for travel is properly recorded before they certify the employee's electronic time card for release.

Combining Personal and Official Travel

When a traveler wishes to combine personal and official travel, the Approving Officer (Reviewer, Approver or Certifier) needs to review the situation against policy guidelines. The general rule is that a traveler on official business may take annual leave in conjunction with the official trip. In all such cases, the per diem that the traveler is entitled to should be reviewed to ensure that the traveler pays for expenses incurred on leave. Travelers are entitled to per diem only during the time that they are on official business travel. If a traveler chooses an indirect route or an interrupted route as a matter of personal preference, then the Approving Officer should verify that the per diem allowed to the traveler does not exceed the amount allowed for uninterrupted travel by a direct route. The traveler will only be issued a ticket for official Government travel and must exchange it for a personal ticket. When a ticket becomes a personal ticket, the traveler will be personally liable for the cost of the ticket and any changes or cancellations to the ticket. Per diem will begin at the start of official ED travel and will end when the personal travel begins.

B. Traveler's Responsibilities

An employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care and reasonableness in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. The traveler will limit expenses to those that are essential to the transaction of official business. Employees will be responsible for paying increased costs that result from personal preference. Employees must travel to their destination by the usually traveled route unless ED authorizes or approves a different route as officially necessary. In addition, ED has to find it in its best interest to authorize travel from a location other than the official duty station. Personal convenience is not a reason for ED to alter the travel.

C. Preparation of Travel Authorization

Each trip that an employee intends to take must have a travel authorization. A single travel authorization may contain multiple destinations as long as a single departure and return to the traveler's official duty station or authorized point occurs. Authorizations and payment of transportation expenses are limited to those expenses that result in the greatest advantage to the government (e.g. the costs that would be incurred for roundtrip travel between the official duty station and the TDY site). All travel authorizations must be created using ED's electronic travel system. Please refer to [E2 End User Manual](#), the electronic travel system end-user guide, for assistance. Note: ED has implemented an electronic travel system. Printed copies of completed travel authorizations are not an ED requirement. Employees may choose to print completed authorizations to carry with them for TDY assignments. Printed authorizations do not have to become part of the retained travel documentation.

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| Information Required | The following is required to prepare a Travel Authorization : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traveler's Name and ID Number;• Itinerary;• Purpose of Travel;• Estimated Costs;• Accounting Data;• Special Authorizations; and• Approval Stamp. |
| Assignment of Travel Authorization | The Travel Authorization Number is generated automatically in the electronic travel system. The first two positions of the travel authorization number designate the Principal Office organizational code and are followed by a sequential number (e.g., EL0000...). |
| Cost Estimation | Travelers must estimate total costs of the trip for obligation purposes. Estimated costs should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Per diem, reduced, conference or actual subsistence lodging rates;• Transportation costs through the use of a contracted common carrier; and• Other reimbursable costs (i.e. taxis, phone calls, etc.). |
| Accounting Classification Identification | The traveler or the traveler's Principal Office must assign the appropriate accounting data for obligating the funds. |
| Emergency Travel Procedures | There may be a need for emergency travel where authorizations have not been created and/or certified in the electronic travel system. Since the Travel Management Center (TMC) requires a travel authorization prior to the issuance of airline tickets, Executive Offices have established emergency travel procedures to manually create (verbal) authorizations for travelers who are unable |

to generate a system authorization in sufficient time prior to departure. Upon returning from the trip, the traveler will be required to complete the electronic authorization, referencing the emergency TA number in the Remarks Section. The electronic travel authorization must be completely routed (certified) prior to creating and processing a voucher. The traveler should contact the Principal Office's Executive Office for further details on this process.

Specific Authorization

When applicable, the following activities or expenditures must be specifically authorized in the Travel Authorization:

- Annual leave of 8 hours or more while in travel status;
- Auto rentals under GSA contract;
- Commercial car rentals;*
- Use of non-contract airline carrier;*
- Use of GSA auto;
- Travel by privately-owned vehicle (POV) in lieu of Common Carrier;*
- Foreign travel;*
- First class accommodations;*
- Use of taxis;
- Pre-employment interview travel;
- Laundry on trips of 4 consecutive nights of lodging or more;
- Actual subsistence;*
- Acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel expenses (In-kind travel);*
- Use of a foreign air carrier;
- Use of reduced fares for group or charter arrangements;
- Use of extra-fare train service;*
- Travel by ship;
- Use of a Government aircraft;
- Payment of a reduced per diem rate;
- Travel expenses related to emergency travel;
- Transportation expenses related to threatened law enforcement/investigative employees and members of their families; or
- Travel expenses related to attendance at a conference.

* Requires prior approval and justification.

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| Travel Authorization Approvals (Route Lists) | <p>All travel authorizations are approved through an electronic routing process in the electronic travel system. The process begins with the electronic routing of the document after the end-user/traveler or the traveler's group administrator has created it. After certification (or complete routing of the document), documents are chosen randomly to undergo a series of pre-audits prior to the datalinking process. ED travel auditors review those documents chosen through the random audit process for appropriateness and adherence to ED and Federal policies. If auditors identify issues/discrepancies, documents are electronically returned to the traveler for correction or justification. Any document returned to the traveler must begin the route process anew after the correction has been made.</p> <p>Based on the route model that has been assigned to the traveler, the document then proceeds to the next level of approval, which is usually the employee's supervisor. The final step in the routing process is the Certifying Official. Once the authorization is certified, it will pass through a nightly interface into the accounting system creating an obligation in the general ledger. In addition, once the travel authorization has been certified, this then triggers the TMC to issue common carrier e-tickets within the designated two business day timeframe.</p> |
| Delegation of Approving Authority | <p>Authority to approve the Travel Authorization may be re-delegated to the lowest level of management that has responsibility for both program accomplishment and obligation or commitment of funds.</p> |
| Travel Authorization Amendments | <p>Travel Authorizations should be amended when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dates of travel change (depart or return by two or more days);• The travel location changes;• Cost of trip is increased by 25% or more of the amount authorized; or• Mode of Transportation changes. |

Chapter III: Making Travel Arrangements (FTR §301-50)

A. Travel Management Centers

Definition

Travel Management Centers (TMC) are travel agencies with Federal contracts to provide travel services to all Government employees conducting official travel. **TMCs must be used to secure lodgings, rental cars, and purchase common carrier tickets for all official ED travel. A processing fee is charged for each ticketed transaction including cancellations that occur after a ticket has been issued. Travel reservations should be made via the TMC's on-line booking engine, unless unusual circumstances prevent the use of on-line booking.**

If a traveler does not meet one of the exceptions listed below, and books outside of the TMC, the traveler is responsible for any additional costs resulting from failure to use the TMC. Prior approval from the Executive Officer (EXO) must be received before securing common carrier reservations outside of the TMC.

Exceptions to using the TMC

- The primary reason travelers are required to use a TMC to book their lodging reservations is to ensure that the lodging property meets the Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act. All lodging properties participating in the [FedRooms Program](#) must meet the Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act. Therefore, a Federal traveler choosing to stay at one of these lodging properties may make the reservations directly with the [lodging property](#), instead of using the TMC.
- TMCs can only reserve rooms at lodging properties that are in their system. If a lodging property is not listed in the TMC's system, the traveler can make that lodging reservation outside of the TMC, as long as the lodging property is in compliance with the Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act.
- TMCs cannot book lodging reservations for employees who are attending conferences/training where rooms have been blocked off by a third party other than the TMC. In these cases, the traveler would need to book the reservation outside the TMC.
- In some cases, the TMC's on-line booking systems can only book car rental reservations at airport locations. If a traveler needs to make car rental reservations at other than an airport location, the traveler can either call the TMC to make the reservation or call the car rental company directly.

Services Provided

TMCs provide a wide range of travel services, including:

- Reservations and ticketing for travel via common carriers (air, rail, bus, steamship);
- Reservations for rental cars;
- Hotel/motel reservations and arrangements for conference facilities;
- Email notification of electronic common carrier tickets;
- Periodic management reports on travel activity;
- Point of contact for ED officials when problems arise; and
- Offers on Supersaver/Penalty fares.

Use of Other Travel Agencies

No other travel agency may be used to purchase travel services for official government travel. Using travel agents other than the established TMC for ED is a violation of the TMC's contract with the Federal Government and may subject the Government to a suit for damages for breach of contract. Use of other means may also result in a claim for reimbursement being denied. Only emergency situations allow for the purchase of tickets directly from a common carrier.

A traveler should immediately contact the TMC once he/she has notification of a trip cancellation. If reservations are cancelled before a ticket is issued there will be no fees charged. If reservations are cancelled after a ticket has been issued, the ticket issuing fee will be charged.

E-Ticket vs. Paper Ticket

ED encourages the use of E-tickets rather than paper tickets. Most airlines charge a processing fee for issuing paper tickets. This fee is only reimbursable if there is a justified reason for requesting a paper ticket.

B. Selecting a Mode of Transportation

Modes of Transportation

Travelers should use the most direct or usually traveled route. Additional transportation costs incurred by an employee who elects for personal reasons to travel by an indirect route are the employee's responsibility. (See [Chapter IV; Per Diem, Section D, Interruptions to Per Diem Entitlement](#), for additional information.)

ED travelers are required by law to use the most expeditious and cost-efficient means of transportation when on official travel. Usually, this will be a common carrier. Travelers must:

- (a) Limit authorization and payment of transportation expenses to those expenses that result in the greatest advantage to the Government; and
- (b) Ensure that travel is by the most expeditious means practicable.

Airlines are normally used for long distance travel since they usually result in the lowest overall cost. **(Please note: Travelers must use city-pair fares and government contract carriers to accomplish their mission unless prior approval and justification have been given for non-contract use.)**

When travelers have multiple (local) airport choices, travelers will need to request approval to fly from the higher cost airport if the total airfare cost differential exceeds \$250. This approval must be obtained in advance of the trip from the traveler's respective Principal Officer. If the cost is less than \$250, no Principal Officer approval is required.

In addition, travelers can fly direct non-stop contract carrier service in lieu of connecting contract carrier flights provided that the cost differential does not exceed \$250. Approval of requests exceeding the \$250 threshold must be obtained in advance of the trip from the traveler's respective Principal Officer. If the cost is less than \$250, no Principal Officer approval is required.

Other means of transportation, such as bus, train, or use of privately owned vehicles (POVs) and the payment of mileage, may be authorized if it is determined to be advantageous and economical to ED. When the use of a POV results in trip costs that are in excess of the common carrier cost for the same trip, reimbursement and compensatory time calculations are limited to the reconstructed common carrier cost of the trip.

Air Carriers (FTR §301-10)

Use of Government Contract Fares

The Federal Government maintains contracts with air common carriers to provide discounted fares between selected pairs of cities (**City-Pair Fares**) and when they are available, the [City-Pair Fares](#) must be used.

(General Rule) Failure to use available contract fares is a violation of Federal contracts and may leave the Government liable for damages for breach of contract.

Exceptions to the Rule

If a non-contract carrier is used on a city-pair route, one of the following travel conditions *must be certified* on the Travel Authorization and approved by the travel approving official:

- Airline seating capacity on any scheduled flight of the contract carrier is not available in sufficient time to accomplish the purpose of travel.
- The use of the contract carrier's flight would require additional overnight lodging.
- The scheduled flight of the contract carrier is not compatible with ED policies and practices regarding travel during scheduled work hours. (*Departure requires leaving before 6:30 a.m. or arriving after 6:30 p.m.*)
- Exigency or other requirements of the mission necessitate the use of another carrier or mode of transportation.
- On the basis of a comparison of total costs for each individual trip, the use of a "Y" (Coach) or "S" (discounted) class fare (not to be confused with "TDG" (regular base fare) or other promotional fares) is less than the contract fare at the time the reservation is made, considering such factors as actual transportation costs, penalties for not using a contract fare, subsistence, allowable overtime, or lost productive time.

If a contract fare is unavailable, travelers are expected to seek the most economical fares and should make reservations as far in advance as possible, inquiring if any discount fares are available.

Use of Non-Contract Fares

An analysis is required to determine if the use of non-contract fares is permissible on an intended trip. For example, if a contracted city-pair fare is available for the intended travel sectors, then that fare must be used. If a city-pair fare exists but is not available (or if a city-pair fare does not exist), then a non-contract fare may be used if the use of a non-contract fare is advantageous to ED and an exception condition stated in [Chapter II, Travel Authorizations](#), of this Handbook, is satisfied. Analysis may be required to determine if the use of a non-contract fare would provide cost savings to ED. The analysis may include estimating costs based on non-contract "Y" or "S" class fares for the trip and comparing it with the contract fare at the time of making the reservation. Other costs such as actual transportation costs, penalties, subsistence, allowable overtime, lost productive time, etc., resulting from the use of a non-contract carrier, should also be taken into consideration. The non-contract fare may be used if a city-pair fare is

unavailable **and** if the use of a non-contract fare is cost effective for ED. The use of non-contract fares must be specifically authorized and approved by the EXO before obtaining transportation tickets. Cost savings to ED result from overall annual contracts signed with common carriers and not through isolated trips using a non-contract fare that is cheaper than the contract fare.

Use of Special Fares

Non-contract carriers sometimes offer restricted or unrestricted coach fares to the general public, which are lower than the government contract fares. In such cases, the lower fare(s) may be used in accordance with procedures described below. They should not be used simply to avoid use of the contract carrier. However, when a non-contract carrier offers a commercial fare lower than its contract fare, the lower fare should be obtained provided the traveler can meet the requirements of the lower fare.

One or more of the following conditions, which must be certified on the travel authorization in advance of the trip, must apply if a carrier other than the contract carrier is used for travel within a contract route:

- Seating space or the scheduled flight is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of travel, or use of contract service would require the traveler to incur unnecessary overnight lodging costs that would increase the total cost of the trip; or
- The contract carrier's flight schedule is inconsistent with those who are required to travel during normal working hours; or
- A non-contract carrier offers a lower fare available to the general public, the use of which will result in a lower trip cost to the Government. This determination should be based on a cost comparison to include the combined cost of transportation, lodging, meals, and related expenses; or

Note: This exception DOES NOT APPLY if the contract carrier offers a Comparable fare and has seats available at that fare, or if the lower fare offered by a non-contract carrier is restricted to Government and military travelers on official business and may only be purchased with a CBA contractor issued charge card.

- Rail service is available and such service is cost effective and consistent with mission requirements.

Use of Super-Saver Fares

A super-saver fare is generally defined as a non-refundable, discounted, airline ticket that must be purchased within 24 hours of making the reservation and that requires a Saturday night stay at the destination. The special fare is usually offered only for a limited time.

Depending on the market served, a requirement may exist to purchase the ticket at least 14 days prior to departure.

The use of a super-saver fare requires that individual cost comparisons be computed between contract and non-contract carriers. When doing individual cost comparisons, we may assume that the cancellation penalty will not be invoked each time a super-saver fare is used, as the decision on how to compute penalty fees associated with the cancellation of non-contract carriers could be based on overall ED experience. In our judgment, we believe it is reasonable to assume that no more than one out of every two super-saver trips will be modified or canceled. Accordingly, extended trips using non-contract carriers may be approved if the penalty does not exceed 150 percent of the overall trip savings.

In order for a super-saver fare to be used, the following must hold true:

- the super-saver fare is the lower cost fare;
- the fare is available to the general public, and is not a “me too” fare; the “me too” fare is a companion type fare. For example: the airlines are offering a special promotion where one traveler purchases a ticket for a certain price and the second traveler purchases a ticket for a penny;
- use of the fare will lower the overall trip cost; and
- the penalty the non-contract carrier may impose will not exceed 150 percent of the expected savings.

Examples of when the use of a non-contract carrier may be approved and disapproved are listed below:

Example 1 (Standard Government Travel):

Official Travel: Using GSA designated Contract Carrier

Travel Dates: Wednesday, May 26 thru Friday, May 28

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Constructive Cost: | Contract carrier fare | \$750.00 |
| | Per Diem, 2 nights/3days | \$306.00 |
| | Subway, taxi fare (estimate) | <u>\$ 30.00</u> |
| TOTAL CONSTRUCTIVE COST | | \$1086.00 |

Example 2 (allowable):

Official Travel: Using a non-contract carrier, where the travel dates are extended to include a Saturday night stay at the temporary duty site and return on Sunday, May 30.

Travel Dates: Wednesday, May 26, thru Sunday, May 30

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Constructive Cost: | Non-contract air fare | \$306.00 |
| | Per diem, 4 nights/5 days | 650.00 |

Subway, taxi fare (estimate) \$ 30.00

TOTAL CONSTRUCTIVE COST \$986.00
 (Expected savings \$100.00)

(The penalty a non-contract carrier may impose is \$150.00)

The penalty a non-contract carrier may impose cannot exceed 150 percent of the expected savings. In this case the trip is allowable since the penalty is no more than 150 percent of the total trip savings (penalty imposed is \$150.00 divided by savings \$100.00 = 150%).

Example 3 (unallowable):

Using the same figures as Example 2, but establishing the penalty the non-contract carrier may impose at \$155.00, the trip is **not allowable** since the cancellation penalty exceeds the savings of \$100.00 by more than 150 percent (penalty imposed is \$155.00 divided by savings of \$100.00 = 155%).

It is very important that cancellation of super-saver fares be kept to a minimum if savings are to be realized. The EXO must approve requests of this nature and maintain records for review by OCFO. These records must show the cost comparison and reflect penalty fees incurred.

Because of various legal considerations, the traveler must initiate requests for extended stay to take advantage of super-saver fares. Under these circumstances, it is assumed that no overtime pay or other compensation will be paid to the employee, except for additional per diem when travel dates are extended to achieve overall trip savings.

**Premium Class
Travel (General
Rule)**

For official business travel, both domestic and international, you must use coach-class accommodations. Travelers are **NOT PERMITTED** to use premium class accommodations (first-class, business-class, or the equivalent) except as provided below. (FTR – §301-10.122; §301-10.123; §301-10.124.)

**Exceptions To
Rule**

- All premium (first and business) class travel must be approved by the Director, Financial Applications Group, or his/her designee in advance of travel. The following are definitions and justifications for Premium Class Travel.

You may request the use of **First-Class** airline accommodations only when ED specifically authorizes/approves your use of such accommodations, for the reasons given as follows:

- (a) No coach or business-class accommodations are reasonably available. “Reasonably available” means available on an airline that is scheduled to leave within 24 hours of your proposed departure time, or scheduled to arrive within 24 hours of your proposed arrival time.
- (b) When use of first-class is necessary to accommodate a disability or other special need. A disability must be substantiated in writing by a

competent medical authority. A special need must be substantiated in writing. If you are authorized to have an attendant (to accommodate your special needs) accompany you, you may be authorized for the attendant to use first-class accommodations if you require the attendant's services en route.

- (c) When exceptional security circumstances require first-class travel. Exceptional security circumstances include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Use of other than first-class accommodations would endanger your life or Government property;
 - (2) You are an agent on protective detail and you are accompanying an individual authorized to use first-class accommodations; or
 - (3) You are a courier or control officer accompanying controlled pouches or packages.
- (d) When required because of agency mission.*

*ED will not authorize premium class travel based on mission criteria alone. All requests must meet additional criteria for premium class travel.

Note: You may upgrade to first-class at your personal expense, including through redemption of frequent flyer benefits. This must be done outside of ED's Travel Management Center, directly with the specific airline. Any changes relating to upgrades must be done after the 'official' ticket has been issued through ED's Travel Management Center.

Business Class accommodations will only be approved for the following reasons:

- (a) Regularly scheduled flights between origin/destination points (including connecting points) provide only first-class and business-class accommodations and you certify such on your authorization; or
- (b) No space is available in coach-class accommodations in time to accomplish the mission, which is urgent and cannot be postponed; or
- (c) When use of business-class accommodations is necessary to accommodate your disability or other special need. Disability must be substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority. Special need must be substantiated in writing. If you are authorized to have an attendant (to accommodate your special needs) accompany you, you may be authorized for the attendant to use business-class accommodations if you require the attendant's services en route; or
- (d) Security purposes or exceptional circumstances with the use of business-class accommodations essential to the successful performance of the agency's mission; or
- (e) Coach-class accommodations on an authorized/approved foreign air carrier do not provide adequate sanitation or health standards; or

- (f) The use results in an overall cost savings to the Government by avoiding additional subsistence costs, overtime, or lost productive time while awaiting coach-class accommodations; or
- (g) Your transportation costs are paid in full through agency acceptance of payment from a non-federal source in accordance with the FTR; or
- (h) Where the origin and/or destination are Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS), and the scheduled flight time, including stopovers and change of planes, is in excess of 14 hours (in this instance you will not be eligible for a rest stop en route or a rest period upon arrival at your duty site); or
- (i) When required because of agency mission.*

*ED will not authorize premium class travel based on mission criteria alone. All requests must meet additional criteria for premium class travel.

Note: You may upgrade to business-class at your personal expense, including through redemption of frequent flyer benefits. This must be done outside of ED’s Travel Management Center, directly with the specific airline. Any changes relating to upgrades must be done after the ‘official’ ticket has been issued through ED’s Travel Management Center.

- Premium class travel will not be authorized for either temporary duty or permanent change of station (relocation) when the employee is not required to report to duty the following day. This is considered a rest stop. ED does not authorize rest stops in support of ED travel.
- ED will not authorize premium class travel based on mission criteria alone. All requests must meet additional criteria for premium class travel.

Blanket annual certifications for disabilities or special needs will not be allowed. Each trip must be approved on a case-by-case basis and have all required documentation provided.

**Frequent Flyer/
Bonus
Programs and
Other
Promotional
Materials**

Travelers are encouraged to enroll in frequent flyer traveler programs offered by various common carriers, hotel/motel chains and automobile rental companies.

The use of contract carriers has precedence and **must** be used when available. Employees may not choose a carrier just because he/she is a member of the carrier’s frequent flyer program.

Use of Benefits

The employee may retain benefits obtained through official travel (frequent flyer miles, bonus flights, reduced fare coupons, cash, gifts, credit toward future free or reduced costs of services or goods, etc.). The FTR allows travelers to retain and make personal use of promotional items earned while

on official Government travel if the promotional item is obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and at no additional cost to the Government. If the employee voluntarily gives up a seat on an airline, the employee may keep the compensation as long as it doesn't interfere with official duties, no additional expense to the Government is involved, and leave is taken when required.

A traveler who receives compensation from an airline for being denied a reserved seat must provide any payment received for liquidated damages to ED.

Note: Only the airlines themselves (NOT the TMC) can make reservations when frequent flyer miles are "cashed in."

**Travel
Gainsharing
Program**

If lodging expenses are below the maximum allowable lodging rate for the travel destination, the traveler is entitled to one-half the amount ED saves after a cumulative savings of \$400. If the traveler stays with a friend or relative and has no lodging expenses, he/she will receive one-half the lodging rate for that particular city after a cumulative savings of \$400. If the traveler is enrolled in a frequent flyer program and saves ED the cost of a common carrier ticket, he/she is entitled to one-half the savings from receiving the award after a cumulative savings of \$400. Employees must fill out the appropriate savings form (which can be obtained in Executive Offices) after returning from travel. Travelers must submit the savings form before the end of the fiscal year in which the trip(s) occurred; any forms received after the fiscal year will be denied. Further information and required forms for filing can be reviewed/downloaded on ConnectED, through the Travel Information link.

**Processing of
Unused Airline
Tickets**

All unused airline tickets should be returned by the traveler either prior to or at the time the Travel Voucher is submitted. For tickets purchased with the contractor issued travel charge card, the traveler is responsible for ensuring that the unused tickets are returned to the TMC and that a credit is issued to the contractor issued travel charge card for all unused tickets.

**Rental Cars
(FTR §301-
10.400)**

**Authorization
Requirements**

If travel requires the use of a rental car, the employee must prepare a justification of the cost effectiveness of a rental vehicle over other methods of transportation. This justification must demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the rental car use and must be entered in the 'Remarks' field of the travel authorization. The electronic approval of the Travel Certifying Official on the Travel Authorization is sufficient approval for the use of the rental vehicle. Some Principal Offices may request rental car justification in writing prior to creating the Travel Authorization.

The rental of cars and other vehicles is authorized when advantageous to the Government. *Personal convenience is not adequate justification for rental of a vehicle.*

**Contracted
Rental Agents
for Automobiles**

A list of rental car agents may be obtained through ED's TMC or by consulting [DOD's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command's website](#).

Always ask for the Government rate.

**Responsibilities
of Employees**

Employees, 18 years or older, who rent vehicles while on official travel, are responsible for:

- Providing proof of official travel;
- Using the vehicle for official purposes only;
- The safe operation of the vehicle;
- Possessing a valid driver's license;
- Making an effort to return the car to the rental agency with a full tank of gas or pre-purchasing gas from the automobile rental company; and
- Using least costly cars (upgrading of car requires prior approval if increase in cost is involved).

Employees using the vehicle for **personal travel** in conjunction with Official Travel should obtain a **second rental agreement** for such personal travel.

**Car Pick-up
and Return**

Under normal circumstances, employees should pick up the rental automobile on the first day of official travel and return it promptly when further use is no longer necessary. Some travel cases may warrant the rental automobile to be obtained on the last day of work or on a non-work day. Such cases should be discussed with a supervisor and travel approving official before obtaining the rental automobile.

**Government
Administration
Rate
Supplement
(GARS)**

GARS is an automatic fee that has been recently negotiated with the contracted rental car companies and the DOD that charges \$5 per day for a Government rated rental car. GARS will reimburse the rental car companies for those costs incurred which are peculiar to doing business with the Government, including the application of the agreement terms and conditions on a worldwide basis, the rental of vehicles to employees under age 25, acceptance of properly licensed fellow Government employees on official business as additional drivers, and a guarantee of the maximum rates for at least 60 days. GARS will be paid by all renters and shall be listed separately on the rental documents. This is a reimbursable expense.

Steps to Take in Case of Repairs or an Accident

1. In case of breakdown, the renter should immediately notify the car rental company and request a replacement vehicle (if necessary) and instructions for the disposition of the disabled vehicle.
2. In case of an accident, the renter should notify the car rental company, notify the police, and obtain a police report for the company. If a police report is not available, the renter will be required to provide the car rental company with all the exchanged information from all parties involved in the accident/incident.
3. The renter is required to promptly notify the location from which the car was rented and complete a company accident report (if applicable).
4. Additionally, the renter should keep a record of the location and representative who assisted the renter for follow-up purposes.

Damage Waiver and Insurance

Insurance is covered under the Government contract. Travelers are discouraged from buying additional insurance. Employees who buy additional insurance will **not** be reimbursed for this cost.

For a rental automobile used for official travel and covered by the Government contract rental agreement, ED only permits transporting Government employees and other individuals who conduct official business on behalf of ED. The standard insurance included in the Government rental agreement does not provide coverage for unauthorized passengers who could be injured as a result of an accident.

If a relative, dependent, or other unauthorized passenger accompanies an ED traveler on official duty, the automobile should be leased using a private rental agreement, and the traveler's reimbursement will be limited to the cost of a similar rental agreement to the Government.

The Government contract will cover the cost of damages due to an accident or burglary, including any deductible. However, if an employee was found to be driving recklessly, or in violation of traffic laws, the cost for damages may be the responsibility of the employee.

Any claims that arise as a result of personal property loss, injury or death attributable to the use of a rental car should be submitted with all supporting documentation (e.g., police reports, rental contract, etc.) to the Assistant General Counsel for Business and Administrative Law, Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, LBJ, Room 6C106, Washington DC 20202-2110.

There are times when a traveler gets a lower rate from a car rental company than what the TMC has quoted. However, the rates that are negotiated by the Government include Collision/Damage/Waiver (CDW) Insurance and several other benefits to the Federal traveler that he/she would not get on their own. Usually when a traveler gets a lower rate, the CDW insurance is not included because the traveler is covered by their own personal insurance. Consider what the Federal traveler receives under Insurance and

Damage Liability when booking car rental reservations through the TMC: protection against liability for personal injury; death; and property damage from the use of the vehicle; personal injury/wrongful death limits of \$100,000 for each person for each accident or event; \$300,000 for all persons in each such accident or event; and property damage limits of \$25,000 for each occurrence. In addition, the car rental company assumes the entire risk of loss of or damage to rental vehicle (including costs of towing, administrative costs, loss of use, and replacements) from any and every cause whatsoever, including, without limitation, casualty, collision, fire, malicious mischief, vandalism, tire damage, falling objects, overhead damage, glass breakage, strike, civil commotion, theft and mysterious disappearance, except where the loss or damage was caused by non adherence to rules set forth in the contract. Utilizing the Government contract eliminates these worries along with what happens in the event of an accident.

**Cost
Reimbursement**

If the leasing company does not pay for gasoline, expenses should be itemized on the Travel Voucher with attached receipts, when the expenses exceed \$75. **For all other applicable costs in the maintenance of the vehicle, travelers will be reimbursed as long as the expenses are itemized on the Travel Voucher.** *All claims for rental cars must be supported by receipts.*

**Government
Furnished
Vehicles (GFV)
(FTR §301-10)**

Definition

Government Furnished Vehicles are:

- Vehicles owned by GSA and leased by ED;
- Vehicles leased commercially through agreements with car-leasing agencies; or
- Commercially rented vehicles in ED's possession obtained through rental agreements.

Usage

GFVs are used for official travel purposes only, and may not be used for:

- Personal travel;
- Permanent Change of Duty Moves; or
- Transportation of "unofficial" persons.

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| Mileage Reimbursement Rate | The mileage rate for GFVs established by the GSA is calculated based on the current rate in the electronic travel system. |
| GFV Operators | <p>A GFV may be operated by an ED employee who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is authorized on a Travel Authorization to utilize a GFV;• Is 18 years of age or older; and• Possesses a valid driver's license from any State, DC, Puerto Rico, or U.S. Commonwealth. |
| Accidents and Insurance Claims | <p>If an ED employee is in an accident using a GFV, he/she:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shall not make admissions of guilt at the scene of an accident;• May be held responsible if a vehicle is damaged -<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Because of abuse, negligence, misuse; or○ While driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics;• Must immediately report the accident to his/her immediate supervisor, including any injuries that involve a workers compensation claim. If the employee is a bargaining unit employee, the supervisor should inform the employee of the right to Union representation;• Must complete and sign an accident report on an SF-91, Motor Vehicle Accident Report; and• Must have witnesses, if any, complete and sign a witness statement on an SF-94, Statement of Witness. <p><i>GSA-owned vehicles are self-insured by the U.S Government.</i></p> |
| Privately owned vehicles (POV) (FTR 301-10) | |
| Authorization Requirements | <p>POV transportation may be authorized when such travel is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deemed advantageous to the Government and based on constructive cost comparison of other travel modes.• A personal preference of the traveler, provided that expenses for mileage |

reimbursement, per diem, and other expenses are limited to the constructive cost of using a common contract carrier.

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| Excess Travel Time Incurred | When using a POV because of personal preference, travelers must charge annual leave for any travel time (<i>during work hours</i>) in excess of normal travel time via common carrier. Any necessary annual leave must be pre-approved . |
| Mileage Rates | Mileage rates for POV are updated electronically in the electronic travel system. |
| Mileage Rate Exceptions | Exceptions to the POV mileage rates for automobiles are also updated electronically in the electronic travel system. For example, the mileage rate of using a POV in lieu of an available GFV is lower than that of a POV where a GFV is not available for use. |
| Reimbursable Costs | A complete list of reimbursable costs is updated in the electronic travel system. |

C. Local Transportation **(FTR 301-70.102, 301-70.200)**

Definition Travel performed within a 35-mile radius of the employee's official duty station is considered local travel and does not require a Travel Authorization. Local travel **does not** allow for the payment of per diem.

Travel within the local radius should be performed using the most advantageous and economical means to ED.

Public Transportation Usage Subways or buses should be used as appropriate for local transportation (for exceptions, see "taxis"). If available through the employee's respective Principal Office, employees may use ED-owned subway fare cards for local travel on official Government business.

Public Transportation Bulk Purchases As a cost-effective measure, offices may purchase a supply of public transportation fare cards in varying amounts for use by their employees when traveling locally on government business.

Offices must institute appropriate internal controls over the fare card to ensure proper use and accounting.

Taxis
(FTR §301-10.420)

Authorization and Usage For Local Travel

Taxicabs may be used by ED employees when official business is performed. ED employees should attempt to secure airport limousine/shuttle service or public transportation whenever possible. The following is a list of examples where a taxi would be approved.

- If heavy or bulk materials are being carried by ED employees.
- If the ED employee is disabled.
- If the employee is dependent on public transportation for officially ordered work outside regular working hours, and the travel between the employee's office and home is during hours of infrequently scheduled public transportation or darkness.

Note: The scenarios above are being provided as a guide only and are not inclusive of all instances where a taxi will be approved.

Cost Reimbursement

Taxi reimbursement is based on normally established rates.

Tips are allowed at rates **up to fifteen (15) percent** of the base fare.

D. ED Sponsored Group and Conference Arrangements**Definition**

For the purpose of making travel and conference arrangements, a group is defined as **10 or more persons** traveling to a central location for a meeting, retreat, training activity, work activity, or any other gatherings that involves travel.

No-Cost Services

ED's TMC will make the following group conference arrangements **at no cost** to ED:

- Airline reservations and ticketing for all conference participants;
- Locating conference and lodging facilities that will meet the requirements of the group;
- Lodging/conference reservations for each member of the group; and
- Reservations for meeting/classroom space, breakout space, meals, audio/visual equipment, and group transportation from the lodging facility to the conference facility, if necessary.

Services for A Fee

ED's TMC will make the following group conference arrangements

at a cost (which must be determined in advance) to ED:

- On-site assistance at the conference facility;
- Pre-inspection of the conference facility; and
- Preparation of pamphlets or materials relating to the conference. (However, *Government Printing and Binding Regulations* must be followed and such materials should be procured through the Government Printing Office.) *Materials relating to the location of and about the conference facility will be provided free of charge.*

Use of Other Travel Sources

Travel or conference management services offered through the TMC at no cost must be used, and Principal Offices **may not** obtain these services through another source **unless**:

- The requesting office sends a cost comparison to the contracting officer demonstrating that using another source will be more cost effective;
- The requesting office sends a justification to the contracting officer showing that the TMC cannot provide services, or that the services cannot reasonably be segregated from other services not available through the TMC; or
- The services are available from an 8(a) firm (i.e., a business certified by the Small Business Administration (SBA) as being 51% minority owned or operated) at a reasonable price and the contracting officer awards the contract through the 8(a) program.

Travel Arrangement Procedures

To obtain airline tickets, hotel space, conference space, or other travel or conference management services through the TMC, the following procedures must be followed:

- **Select a coordinator** within the Principal Office to manage the conference planning and arrangements with the TMC. The coordinator should notify the TMC as soon as possible (preferably 75 days in advance of the date) with the number and names of the participants, the method of payment for air travel, the city and preferred location for the conference.
- **Do not** make arrangements directly with the conference and lodging facilities without the assistance of the TMC.
- **Do not** make air/land reservations without the assistance of the TMC.

- **Use of a contractor**, other than the TMC, requires a **written justification** and cost comparison. The justification should provide information on the use of a contractor for conference services, other than the TMC, that would be more advantageous to ED. Justification should be submitted to Director, Financial Management Policies and Administrative Programs Group, for approval.
- Groups with air-only arrangements, regardless of the size of the group, should be made through ED's designated TMC.
- Groups of 10 or more requiring air and land arrangements should be booked through the TMC, Group Department Office.
- ED policy on selection of conference sites requires **at least three sites** to be considered for the location of a conference. Offices must document the alternative sites considered and explain the rationale used in the selection of the conference site.
- Offices are required to maintain **records** on selection of conference sites and attendees. As required by OMB Bulletin No. 93-11, the records should be available for review. Each Principal Office is responsible for maintaining these records.

Payment Procedures

Payment procedures for groups and conferences are as follows:

- Advise the TMC of the **method of payment** for common carrier tickets (Government issued Charge Card or CBA). A Purchase Card or Purchase Order may not be used for payment of common carrier tickets.
- All payments made to the conference facility **must be made directly to the conference facility**, not through the TMC.
- If the conference facility requires a "**deposit**," this should be done using a purchase card or a purchase order issued directly to the facility. If a purchase order must be issued, note on the purchase order request that "ED's TMC has secured these arrangements." By making this notation this informs Contracts and Acquisitions Management (CAM) that competitive bidding is not necessary.

Chapter IV: Per Diem (FTR §301-11)

A. General Rules

Definition Per diem is a daily allowance for expenses incurred by an employee on temporary duty travel based on Government-wide rates established by GSA for specific geographical locations. These expenses consist of an average **daily lodging cost plus a fixed rate for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE)** subject to the maximum rates published by GSA.

Receipts are required for all lodging expenses and any miscellaneous expenses greater than \$75. If less than \$75, receipts for parking, local transportation, and personal phone calls do not need to be submitted; however, travelers are encouraged to provide receipts for all expenses related to a recently completed trip with the exception of meals.

Covered Expenses The per diem allowance covers all charges for the following types of expenses:

- **Lodging** (if lodging is obtained at less than the Government allowable rate, the employee may be eligible to receive a portion of the excess lodging funds under the Travel Gain Sharing Program. Contact your Executive Office for further details).

Note: Lodging taxes are not included as part of the per diem total. [Tax-exempt certificates](#) are available for most states.

- **Meals** and related tips and taxes (expenses specifically for alcoholic beverages, entertainment, and any expenses incurred for other persons are not allowed).
- **Incidental expenses** include fees and tips to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, airline attendants and parking attendants.

General Rules No expenses will be covered when incurred at the employee's official duty station or places of abode except certain expenses covered under an *approved Office of Personnel Management (OPM) training course*.

Any additional costs incurred for spouse or family while on temporary duty travel must be absorbed by the traveler. Payments made to friends or family for lodging while on temporary duty travel may not be claimed unless substantiated by the employee and approved by the supervisor as a reasonable expense.

- One Day Travel** For travel **less than 24 hours** that requires no lodging, $\frac{3}{4}$ **M&IE** may be received if the following is met:
- **Travel is outside of the 35-mile radius** of the employee's official duty station or place of daily commute; and
 - Travelers are away from their official duty station for **at least 12 hours**.

B. **Per Diem Computations**

Per Diem Rates The maximum per diem allowance for official travel **within CONUS** (the Continental United States) is published in Appendix A, Chapter 301, of the FTR. The amount shown in column "a" is the maximum that will be reimbursed for lodging expenses. The M&IE rate shown in column "b" is a fixed amount allowed for meals and incidental expenses covered by per diem.

Per diem rates for travel outside the continental United States, which includes Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Commonwealths of Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands (**OCONUS**) and within **CONUS** are available at [GSA's website](#).

The electronic travel system incorporates changes to the per diem and mileage tables. The current rates are always maintained in the travel system.

First and Last Days of Travel Employees on official travel are entitled to **receive $\frac{3}{4}$ day M&IE** on the **day of departure and day of return** from travel, **regardless of the actual arrival and departure times**. For the day travel ends, the M&IE received is determined according to the per diem rates for the city from which the traveler last lodged.

Lodging Allowance Computation The cost of lodging will be reimbursed up to the maximum amount designated for that geographic area per the FTR.

Travelers should find lodging at a hotel/motel that offers the Government rate and that is close to the location of the conference or meeting. (Note: **Receipts are required** for lodging expense reimbursement).

FedRooms This lodging program enables Government travelers to get maximum value for their money when on travel. The [FedRooms Program](#) includes the top 75 Federal travel destinations in the country and a list of hotels participating in this program. If an employee is traveling to one of the cities in the program, it is in his/her best interest to use one of the hotels on the list, because those particular hotels guarantee prices within per diem rates and last room availability. Some [FedRoom Properties](#) may also offer such amenities as free parking, airport shuttle, and complimentary breakfast. Hotels participating in the [FedRooms Program](#) must comply with the 1990 Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act and provide accommodations to the disabled.

In order to take advantage of this program, the traveler or the TMC must request the “FedRoom” rate when making reservations, and state that the ED traveler is employed by ED.

Split Per Diem and Actual Subsistence If a traveler will be going to two or more locations on one trip, part of the trip may be on per diem and part may be on actual subsistence. *For example, if traveling to a temporary duty location takes more than one day, ED may authorize actual subsistence and per diem if deemed to be administratively advantageous to ED and commensurate with the expenses expected to be incurred by the traveler.*

Multiple Per Diem Rates When an employee travels to more than one location in one day, the applicable per diem is determined by where the traveler is at midnight on the travel day (i.e. where the traveler sleeps that night). The authorized per diem rate for the place where the traveler is at midnight applies.

C. Adjustments to Maximum Per Diem Rates

Lodging Costs Not Incurred When lodging is furnished at no cost to the traveler, the maximum per diem rate is reduced to the M&IE rate.

M&IE Deductions for Meals Provided (FTR §301-11.18) GSA regulations require that the **M&IE rate be reduced** by the following amounts **if a meal is furnished without charge** to the traveler or is included in the registration fee. The M&IE breakdown is available on [GSA’s website](#).

| M&IE RATES | | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | \$39 | \$44 | \$49 | \$54 | \$59 | \$64 |
| Breakfast | \$ 7 | \$ 8 | \$ 9 | \$ 10 | \$ 11 | \$ 12 |
| Lunch | \$ 11 | \$ 12 | \$ 13 | \$ 15 | \$ 16 | \$ 18 |
| Dinner | \$ 18 | \$ 21 | \$ 24 | \$ 26 | \$ 29 | \$ 31 |

Note: The exception to this rule is if an airline or hotel/motel

provides a complimentary meal to the traveler, then the M&IE does not need to be reduced by that meal.

Meals and Lodging Provided

If all meals and lodging are furnished, the traveler receives a daily amount of \$ 3 for incidentals.

Note: The electronic travel system will calculate these adjustments automatically.

D. Interruptions to Per Diem Entitlement

Indirect Route

Travelers should use the most direct or usually traveled route. Additional transportation costs incurred by an employee who elects for personal reasons to travel by an indirect route are the employee's responsibility. There is no stipulation in the Federal Travel Regulations for travelers to depart or return to an alternate travel site. The FTR provides that employees depart and return only from their official duty station. However, ED has the discretion to allow indirect route travel. Each case will be determined individually and must be approved by the respective Principal Officer as beneficial to the government and not for the individual travelers' preference.

Interrupted Travel

If travel is interrupted due to a traveler's personal preference, convenience or through the taking of leave, the per diem allowed will not exceed the amount allowed on uninterrupted travel by a direct or usually traveled route.

Return to Official Duty Station for Non-workdays

Travelers may be required to return to official duty stations for non-workdays where significant cost savings will be achieved. When a traveler *voluntarily* returns to the official duty station for non-workdays, the maximum reimbursement for the round-trip transportation and travel expenses will be limited to the per diem allowance and travel expenses had the traveler remained at the temporary duty station.

Leave and Non-workdays

Leave of one-half or less of the daily working hours will be disregarded for per diem purposes. A traveler is not entitled to per diem when leave is greater than one-half of the prescribed daily working hours. Per diem also may **not** be paid for non-workdays when:

- the traveler is in leave status at the end of the work-day before the non-workday(s) and at the beginning of the workday following the non-workday(s); or
- the period of leave on either workday is more than one-half of the traveler's daily regularly scheduled working hours.

Travel Away from Duty Station

Travelers who perform temporary duty away from their official stations for 14 days or more may be authorized round-trip transportation expenses and per diem en route for periodic return travel to their official stations or home for non-workdays with a written justification in the comments field explaining the circumstances for the return.

Emergency Travel

When a traveler interrupts or discontinues a travel assignment because of an incapacitating illness or injury or personal emergency, transportation expenses and per diem may be allowed to the extent provided in FTR §301-70.505 and 301-70.501.

Chapter V: Reimbursement for Actual Subsistence**(FTR §301-11.300)****A. General Rules****Definition of Actual Expense**

Payment of authorized actual expenses incurred, up to the limit prescribed by ED, as appropriate. Entitlement to reimbursement is contingent upon entitlement to per diem, and is subject to the same definitions and rules governing per diem.

Authorization Requirements

Actual expense reimbursement is used only when special circumstances exist, i.e., when travel is to an unusually expensive location and per diem is inadequate. Use of Actual Subsistence **must be approved in advance** by the Director, Functional Applications Group (or his/her designee), regardless of the amount of increase over the per diem rate. The Director of Functional Applications Group reserves the right to disallow after the fact requests for actual subsistence reimbursements.

Reimbursements and after-the-fact requests for actual subsistence will only be allowed in emergency or unexpected travel situations.

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| Maximum Amounts Allowed | The maximum amount that an employee may be reimbursed under actual subsistence is limited to 300 percent (rounded to the next higher dollar) of the applicable maximum per diem rate. The electronic travel system automatically calculates the allowable amount. There is no authority to exceed this ceiling. |
| Reductions to M&IE | See Chapter IV, Per Diem, Section C, Adjustment to Maximum Per Diem Rates , of this Handbook, for details on the reductions to M&IE. |
| Receipt Requirements | Receipts are required for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All lodging, common carrier and rental car expenses; and• Any expense more than \$75. |

B. Conference Lodging Allowance

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|----------------------|---|
| Definition | The conference lodging allowance is a pre-determined maximum allowance of up to 25 percent greater than the applicable locality lodging portion of the per diem rate. Under this reimbursement method, employees will be reimbursed the actual amount incurred for lodging up to the conference lodging allowance provided they stay at pre-arranged conference lodgings. |
| Authorization | <p>The approval authority for the conference lodging allowance is the Government agency sponsoring the conference. This rate must be indicated on the Travel Authorization. Please refer to the end-user training manual for instructions on modifying lodging and M&IE expenses.</p> <p>The ED travel approving official can authorize the conference lodging allowance for an employee to attend a non-government sponsored conference.</p> <p><i>Note: The conference lodging allowance is not an actual subsistence reimbursement and does not require conditional routing and justification in the electronic travel system.</i></p> |

Chapter VI: Sources of Funds

(FTR §301-51)

A. Travel Charge Cards and Federal FTS Calling Cards

Federal FTS Calling Cards

Federal FTS calling cards are issued only if this service is necessary for an employee to effectively perform the duties within ED. Use of the Federal FTS calling card is authorized and encouraged while on official Government travel. Refer to this Handbook, [Chapter VII. A. Communications Services](#) and [Handbook OCIO-13, Handbook for Telecommunications Services](#) for additional information. Requests for calling cards can be obtained by your Principal Office's EXO.

Contractor Issued Travel Charge Card Program (Travel Charge Card)

A program established in which all ED travelers are eligible to apply for a contractor issued travel charge card to purchase transportation tickets, charge lodging expenses, rental cars and other miscellaneous ED authorized travel expenses.

Applications for a contractor issued travel charge card should be obtained from a Principal Office's EXO or Regional Component Head.

Participation in the contractor issued travel charge card program is required unless a traveler has one of the listed exemptions below. Employees who are determined to be ineligible for the card program due to misuse, delinquency or abuse, or have restrictions placed on their contractor issued travel charge card, will not receive an advance of funds for travel. These employees must travel on their own funds and will be reimbursed upon the submission of an approved Travel Voucher, with the exception of airline expenses. It is mandatory that common carrier tickets be purchased with a contractor issued travel charge card. In these cases, the Principal Office's centrally billed account (CBA) must be used. Lodgings may also be charged to the CBA; however, the payment of lodging expenses is up to the discretion of the Approving Official.

Exceptions

If an employee has been issued a Government Travel Charge Card, he/she must use the Government Travel Charge Card for official travel expenses with the exception of the following:

- Expenses incurred at a vendor that does not accept the government contractor issued travel charge card;
- Laundry/dry cleaning;
- Parking;
- Local Transportation;
- Taxis;
- Tips;
- Meals (when use of the card is impractical); and/or
- Phone calls.

The items listed above are exempt from the mandatory use of the travel charge card; however, these expenses can still be charged to the travel charge card if the vendor accepts that form of payment.

In addition to the exempt expenses, there are certain classes of employees who are exempt from using the travel charge card:

- New employees subject to immediate travel;
- An employee who has an application pending for the travel charge card;
- Individuals traveling on invitational travel;
- An employee who travels less than twice a year; or
- An employee whose contractor issued travel charge card was suspended/canceled due to personal abuse or non-payment.

Responsibilities

The Travel Charge Card is to be used only to charge expenses incurred in conjunction with official Government travel or to obtain authorized ATM (Automated Teller Machine) cash withdrawals incident to official travel. Official Government travel expenses include charges for air or rail fare, hotel or lodging costs, meals while on travel, car rental (excluding damages), and any incidental travel-related expenses such as taxis or faxing services. ED's OCFO does not consider conference registration fees a travel expense and suggests that conference registration fees be placed on the office's respective purchase card.

NO PERSONAL SPENDING IS PERMITTED with the card.

A cardholder may not intentionally misuse the travel charge card for personal items, even if he/she intends to pay for the personal purchases when the monthly billing statement is received. Such use of the Travel Charge Card is a violation of the agreement between the contractor, the Government, and the cardholder.

Travelers are **personally liable** for Travel Charge Card bills. Reimbursements received for allowable official travel expenses are to be used for outstanding Travel Charge Card bills.

Recourse for Non-compliance

Misuse of the Travel Charge Card **and/or failure to pay** one's charge card statement in a timely manner may result in suspension or cancellation of card privileges, and possible disciplinary action, as outlined in the guidelines in [OCFO:3-106, Travel Card Program](#).

Once an employee has his/her Travel Charge Card cancelled due to misuse or failure to pay, the contractor issued travel charge card will not be re-instated. Consequently, the traveler will not be entitled to receive cash advances. Common carrier expenses that require the use of a government issued travel Charge Card must be placed on the CBA.

In addition, travelers will be personally responsible for all other expenses associated with TDY and will be reimbursed upon the successful submission of a travel voucher. A traveler's personal credit card cannot be used for the purchase of Government airline tickets.

**Contractor Issued
Charge Card
Management
Procedures****Application for Cards**

Supervisors and EXOs must sign a traveler's application for a Travel Charge Card.

All applicants should go to the GSA web site and complete the training entitled, "GSA SmartPay Travel Card: [Charting the Course](#)". Select Travel Cardholder Training and then select 'VISIT THIS WEBSITE NOW'. Applicants must also review [OCFO: 3-106, Travel Card Program](#) and sign Appendix A (ITCC Acknowledgement Form) and the Fair Credit Release Form located at the end of the Directive.

Once the Travel Card Acknowledgement Form, Fair Credit Release Form, and the Training Certificate have been completed, return them to the Executive Office along with the Travel Charge Card application. Applications will not be processed without all four of these forms. Travelers should allow 7 to 10 business days to process their applications. If a rush is needed, please indicate this on the application form when submitting it.

Travel Card Reporting

The Agency Program Coordinator (APC), located in the OCFO, provides monthly Travel Card Transaction Activity and Delinquency Reports to EXOs. The APC should be contacted if additional account activity and balance information is needed.

**Employee Termination/Separation and Card Cancellation/
Closure of Account**

When an employee leaves ED, the appropriate EXO should send a notice via e-mail to the Agency Program Coordinator advising of the termination/separation.

The Functional Applications Group in the OCFO will notify the EXO or Regional Component Head when a card is canceled due to unpaid bills, problem charges, etc. The card should be collected and destroyed by the respective Principal Office.

Employee Transfer

If the employee is transferring to another Principal Office, the appropriate EXO should notify the APC of the change and the employee should indicate the office to which he/she is being reassigned.

B. ATM Program

Travel advances related to authorized official travel are obtained by using the Travel Charge Card to withdraw cash from Automated Teller Machines (ATM).

Responsibility Misuse of the ATM program may result in disciplinary action as described in [OCFO: 3-106, Travel Card Program](#); and deactivation of the PIN and the charge card account.

Usage If a traveler needs cash (in those places where the contractor issued charge card cannot be used), he/she can withdraw cash from ATMs with the card. Withdrawals are limited to \$550.00 a day or \$1,100.00 a week, but may not exceed **100%** of the traveler's M&IE and miscellaneous expenses for the trip.

Transaction fees and ATM access fees charged by financial institutions for authorized ATM transactions will be reimbursed when claimed as an expense on a Travel Voucher.

C. Centrally Billed Account (CBA)

Definition A CBA is a corporate account issued to Executive Offices and Regional Component Heads to be used for the procurement of all passenger transportation services by a common carrier or transportation services (rental car) or lodgings when an employee's Travel Charge Card cannot be used.

Usage A CBA must be used for official authorized passenger transportation by common carrier for those travelers who have not been issued an individual contractor issued Travel Charge Card or whose contractor issued travel charge card has been canceled. Use of the CBA for lodging expenses may be authorized at the discretion of each Principal Office.

D. Travel Advances

Eligibility Travelers with Travel Charge Cards should obtain travel advances via the ATM program. For those travelers who qualify under the authorized exceptions to the Travel Charge Card program or who are infrequent travelers, an advance may be obtained. Travelers whose Travel Charge Cards have been cancelled are **not eligible** for cash advances.

Situations for Issuing Advances

| Situation | If the traveler <u>has</u> a contractor issued travel charge card: | If the traveler <u>does not have</u> a contractor issued travel charge card due to allowable exceptions: |
|--|--|--|
| Local Travel | No advances are issued. | No advances are issued. |
| Non-Local Travel | Travelers should use the ATM program to obtain authorized advances of no more than 100% of the allowable M&IE portion of the per diem rate and other estimated miscellaneous expenses for the entire trip. | Both Headquarters and Regional travelers may obtain 100% of lodging and M&IE and other estimated miscellaneous expenses. |
| Travel to locations where the Government issued charge card is not accepted. | Travelers should use the ATM program to obtain authorized advances of no more than 100% of the allowable per diem (lodging and M&IE portion) rate plus 100% of the items listed on the TA that require cash to purchase. | Both Headquarters and Regional travelers may obtain 100% of lodging and M&IE and other estimated miscellaneous expenses. |

**Travel Advance
Procedures**

The following travel advance procedures must be followed in order to utilize ED funds effectively and to ensure correct reporting in the accounting system. For those travelers who qualify as authorized exceptions to the Travel Charge Card program or are infrequent travelers, an advance may be obtained.

Travel advances are issued through Functional Applications Group and paid through a Direct Invoice and deposited in the payroll direct deposit account of the traveler. Before a travel advance can be issued, Functional Applications Group must receive a signed copy of the travel authorization along with a memo from the EXO stating the reason for the advance, the amount of the advance applied for and the accounting string associated with the funding. Travel advances may not exceed the allowable lodging, M&IE and other estimated miscellaneous expenses. The request must be made no later than 3 working days prior to the commencement of the travel. At the time of the advance, the traveler must sign a travel advance repayment form that states that the advance will be repaid within 30 days from the travel return date.

Upon return from travel, the traveler must submit a travel voucher, just as if he/she had not received an advance. The traveler must then repay the advance by personal check, made payable to the U.S. Department of Education, accompanied by a copy of the travel advance repayment form, the ED Repayment Form and the travel authorization. Copies of the ED Repayment Form can be obtained by contacting the Functional Applications Group, Travel Office. The repayment should be sent to Functional Applications Group, Travel Office for processing. If the repayment is not made within 30 days, Functional Applications Group, Travel Office may initiate action to have the advance offset against the traveler's paycheck. Once the repayment is received, Functional Applications Group, Travel Office will close out the advance and forward the reimbursement along with a copy of the authorization to appropriate office within OCFO for processing.

E. Invitational Travel

Definition

ED invites other Federal or non-Federal individuals to attend a conference (meeting, retreat, training activity, seminar, etc.), to be panel participants, reviewers, guest speakers, or for an attendant to accompany a Federal or non-Federal individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits his/her major life activities.

In all instances when ED invites other Government or non-Federal employees, the invitees should be informed of and should follow ED's travel regulations and policies. This includes the mandatory use of the TMC for making travel arrangements on the behalf of the invitational traveler such as lodging and the common carrier reservations.

Travel Authorization Procedures

For all invitational travel, follow the standard ED travel procedures used for ED employees.

For invitational travel (described above), an ED employee must be assigned to the invitee as a sponsor in the electronic travel system. The invitee's profile must be entered directly into CPSS via a vendor payment enrollment form signed by the invitee and the information is collected into Oracle via a nightly interface. The travel system is updated with the invitee's information and the sponsor can then access the traveler's information to create an authorization on his/her behalf. Contact your Principal Office Administrator for detailed instructions on processing travel authorizations for Type 1 invitational travelers.

F. In-Kind Travel

In certain circumstances, ED may accept an unsolicited gift of travel for an employee to attend a meeting or similar function from a non-Federal source. Acceptance of such gifts is governed by the policy and procedures in [OCFO: 3-102, Acceptance of Payment for Official Travel from a Non-Federal Source \(In-Kind Travel\)](#).

All requests for approval of gifts of travel to be paid in whole, or in part, by an organization other than ED, should be sent to the Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary, via the Executive Secretariat (ES). If a non-Federal source is involved, ES must obtain clearance from the Office of General Counsel (OGC) for **ALL** payment-in-cash or in-kind travel. For information regarding documentation required, refer to the [OCFO: 3-102, Acceptance of Payment for Official Travel from a Non-Federal Source](#). *Travelers may not solicit travel expenses from any source.*

Travel Voucher Process If an ED office provides the invitation, the ED office processes the Travel Voucher on behalf of the invited party.

If an ED employee is invited by another Government agency, the employee's Travel Voucher is processed by the other Government agency.

If an ED employee is invited by a non-federal source, the preferred method for payment of the in-kind travel is for the sponsor to provide the lodging and transportation expenses up front. If the sponsor does not provide the expenses up front ED will process the employee's travel and the sponsor will reimburse ED. Sponsors may never reimburse the employee directly.

Chapter VII: Miscellaneous Expenses

A. Communication Services

(FTR §301-12)

Definition

Communication services are telephone, teletype, telegraph, cable, fax, internet hook-up at lodging establishments, and radio service used on "*official business.*"

Authorized Telephone Calls

Authorized telephone calls include:

- Calls to conduct official ED business (unlimited), to include phone, fax and internet connections. Travelers cannot claim any cell phone charges (for official business) that do not have an associated charge (i.e., usage of personal plan minutes), and receipts are required for official business calls;
- Emergency calls to notify family or doctor of an on-the-job injury (unlimited);
- Personal calls when a travel schedule change occurs (unlimited); or
- Personal calls (limited to \$7 per lodging night; see below for more information).

Authorized calls shall be made using:

- Government communications systems (e.g. Federal Telecommunications System (FTS) network equipment or government-provided cellular telephones) to the **maximum extent** possible;
- Commercial telephone systems, such as a hotel room phone or pay phone, when FTS is not available; or
- Federal FTS Calling Cards, to be used at the discretion of Principal Office Executive Officers.

Note: Air phones should not be used to conduct official business, except in the case of an emergency.

Personal Telephone Calls

Employees who are on Temporary Duty travel for one or more nights are entitled to a maximum of \$7.00 of personal phone calls per lodging night of travel.

Reimbursement Claims

Authorized calls (including up to \$7 per lodging night) shall be claimed as a reimbursement on a Travel Voucher, unless billed to a Federal FTS Calling Card or to a Government-provided cell phone calling plan.

- Telegraph and Teletype**
- Official telegrams sent to Government Offices having authorized charge accounts shall be endorsed by the sender as “*Official Business-Collect*,” unless otherwise directed by a designated authority.
 - When cash is paid for official messages, a report of the circumstances and a receipt copy of the message shall be sent to the EXO or Regional Component Head.
 - All messages shall be subject in all respects to the prevailing commercial count of chargeable words.
 - In addition, collect messages may include a surcharge.

- Cable and Radio**
- Official Cablegrams and Radiograms sent to Government offices having authorized charge accounts shall be endorsed by the sender as “*Official Business-Collect*,” unless otherwise directed by a designated authority.
 - All others shall be prepaid.
 - When “*collect*” service is refused, payment of the amount demanded shall be made by the traveler.
 - A report of the circumstances and a receipted copy of the message shall be sent to the EXO or Regional Component Head.

Priority of Official Messages

All Government communications by telephone, cable, or radio shall have priority over all other business except radio communications or signals that are given absolute priority under the *Communications Act of 1934*, as amended, and shall be subject to the prevailing classifications, practices, and regulations applicable to the corresponding commercial communications. Employees sending such telegrams shall endorse thereon the words “*Official Business*” and shall report to the Federal Communications Commission through their administrative offices any failure to transmit them in such priority and any charge made in excess of the rate prescribed.

B. Baggage

(FTR §301-12)

The term “baggage” means Government property and personal property of the traveler necessary for “*official travel*.”

**Unaccompanied
Baggage**

“Unaccompanied Baggage” means baggage that is not carried free by the transportation company due to excess:

- Weight;
- Size; or
- Number of pieces.

Authorization Requirements

Unaccompanied Baggage charges are reimbursable to travelers only if authorized by the employee’s supervisor and authorizing official. *(Example: carrying training materials to a meeting.)* If unaccompanied baggage services are specifically authorized, the Travel Authorization shall clearly state whether the charges are to be paid by the traveler or to be authorized on the CBA, if one is used.

All receipts for approved Unaccompanied Baggage charges should be attached to the Travel Voucher.

Unaccompanied Baggage costs for **personal items** are at the traveler’s expense.

Documentation Requirements

When the traveler pays for government related Unaccompanied Baggage, receipts are required to show:

- Weight of the baggage;
- Points between which it was shipped; or
- Extra cost.

**Other Reimbursable
Baggage Charges**

Other baggage charges that are reimbursable include:

- Transfer of baggage;
- Storage of baggage when it is shown that the storage was solely on account of “official business”;
- Charges or tips at transportation terminals shall be allowed for handling of Government property carried by the traveler. Tips for handling personal luggage are considered *incidental* and are reimbursed as part of M&IE; or
- In some cases, airlines are charging for a second checked bag. The fee associated is a reimbursable expense.

**Lost or Damaged
Baggage Claims**

When baggage is lost or damaged by the carrier during official Government travel, the traveler should file a claim according to this table:

| Step | Action |
|------|--|
| 1 | File a claim with the carrier. If the claim exceeds the amount paid by the carrier, go to step 2. |
| 2 | File a claim with the contractor issued travel charge card company if the contractor issued charge card was used. Contractor issued charge cards carry additional baggage insurance at no extra cost. If the claim exceeds the amount received in steps 1 and 2, go to step 3. |
| 3 | File a claim with the Government. Contact the EXO for proper forms. |

C. Other Travel Expenses

To the extent possible, requests for specific travel expenses should be requested on the Travel Authorization in advance of the trip.

Types of Other Expenses (FTR §301-12)**Examples of other expenses include:**

- If baggage services are specifically authorized, the Travel Authorization shall clearly state if the charges are to be paid by the traveler or be authorized on the CBA, if one is used.
- Stenographic or typing services; clerical assistance.
- Rental of typewriters and computers in connection with the preparation of reports or correspondence.
- Services of guides.
- Interpreters/Services of attendants for disabled travelers.
- Packers.
- Drivers of vehicles; gasoline for rental cars.
- Storage of property used on “*official business*”.
- Money order and certified check fees.
- ATM access fees and transaction fees (1.9% of total amount withdrawn). A receipt is not required if the fees are under \$75.
- Laundry expenses that may be separately authorized on the Travel Authorization for travel in excess of four days.

Authorization Requirements

Charges for other expenses shall be allowed provided they are authorized or approved by ED authorizing officials.

Receipt Requirements

Travelers are required to submit receipts for all expenses, equal to or greater than \$75. Employees are encouraged to submit receipts for all travel related expenses.

Note: Receipts for official business calls are mandatory.

Chapter VIII: Reimbursement of Travel Claims (FTR §301-52)

A. General Requirements

Receipt Requirements Receipts are required for the following:

- Lodging.
- Rental cars.
- Common carrier.
- Any expense over \$75.
- Any expense regardless of the amount, as advised by the traveler's supervisor in writing prior to departure.
- Official Business Calls.
- Approved Unaccompanied Baggage charges.

Fraudulent Claims Fraudulent claims will result in a forfeiture of the claim. Additionally, criminal penalties may be imposed for making a fraudulent claim (18 U.S.C. 287 and 1001).

B. Preparing Travel Claims (Except for Local Travel)

Travel Voucher Requirements Travel vouchers are documents created to request reimbursement of funds for travel taken for official government business. Vouchers are created within the electronic travel system from an existing authorization that was approved prior to travel. Vouchers cannot be created unless the corresponding authorization has a status of Open Voucher in the system. Whereas authorizations are estimates of expenses for travel, the voucher is an accurate account of what was spent.

Supporting Documentation The traveler must forward all required receipts to the Executive Office before the Travel Voucher reimbursement processing can occur.

Note: ED has implemented an electronic travel system. Printed copies of completed travel vouchers are not an ED requirement. Employees may choose to print completed vouchers; however, they do not have to become part of the retained travel documentation.

| | |
|--|---|
| Unused Travel Tickets | A statement must be entered in the comment field of the voucher, indicating that unused e-tickets have been properly accounted for. <i>All unused e-tickets purchased using a CBA must be sent to the TMC for processing. All unused e-tickets charged to the contractor issued charge card must be returned to the TMC to process a credit to the traveler's contractor issued charge card. For unused paper tickets, travelers must provide the TMC with the complete ticket so the ticket price can be credited to the contractor issued charge card. Costs of replacing lost and/or stolen tickets, regardless of how they were purchased, are the responsibility of the traveler and are non-reimbursable. It is the responsibility of the traveler to notify the TMC of cancelled/unused tickets.</i> |
| Supplemental (Amended)/Reclaim Vouchers | Expense items suspended from or omitted from previously certified vouchers might be allowable in an amended voucher. <i>Full itemization is required for all suspended items that are reclaimed and must be supported by the original documentation.</i> |
| Traveler's Certification | The traveler must electronically approve the Travel Voucher and route it to his or her designated reviewer before the voucher can be approved for payment by the certifier. |

C. Approval of Travel Claims

Approval of travel documents is accomplished through the route model process in the electronic travel system. There are typically three levels of approval for any particular travel document. The first level is the Reviewer, who is often a staff member in the Principal Office's Executive Office with knowledge of the FTR. The second level is the Approver, who is usually the traveler's supervisor, and the third and final level of approval is the Certifying Officer.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Certifying Officers | The traveler's Certifying Officer must certify that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only official travel expenses are being claimed for reimbursement;• The mode of transportation used and claimed is the most cost beneficial to ED; and• All travel expenses claimed are the most cost beneficial to ED. |
|----------------------------|--|

Review Items

The Reviewer, Approving Officer, and Certifying Officer should review the Travel Voucher for *authorized, reasonable expenses in compliance with ED policies and the FTR*. Some items to consider are:

- Does the Travel authorization match the travel expenses claimed on the voucher?
- Was annual leave or leave due to illness and injury taken while on travel? If so, have the necessary adjustments to per diem been made?
- Conference Attendance – Has the traveler deducted the appropriate meals as provided by the conference sponsor?

Expenses that have been determined to be unallowable on the travel voucher, based on the FTR and this Handbook, will be returned electronically by the Certifying Official to the traveler for adjustment.

Travel Voucher Audits

A random sampling of ED's Travel Vouchers are selected and receive a thorough examination to ensure that ED policy and Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) are being followed. In the event of a discrepancy, the traveler and the traveler's supervisor are notified so that corrective action can be implemented.

D. Submission of Travel Claims**Submission**

All Travel Vouchers should be electronically routed for approval to the Reviewer, Approving Officer and Certifying Officer. Supporting documents should be submitted to the appropriate official before any voucher is processed. All certified Travel Vouchers are electronically interfaced with Oracle Federal Financials for processing of payments. Reimbursements are directly deposited into the traveler's primary payroll bank account or to the contractor issued travel charge card, as designated on the Travel Voucher.

Travel Voucher Copies

The Certifying Officer's office should retain original receipts on file for 6 years and 3 months.

Timing Requirements

All vouchers should be submitted within 5 working days of returning from any authorized trip. Approving and Certifying Officials should review the voucher and approve or disapprove it in the system within 5 working days.

E. Local Travel Claims

Local Travel Definition Travel performed within a 35-mile radius of the employee's duty station is considered local travel. A Travel Authorization is not required to submit a local travel claim.

Note: ED has implemented an electronic travel system. Printed copies of completed local travel claims are not an ED requirement. Employees may choose to print completed local claims however; they do not have to become part of the retained travel documentation.

Claims for reimbursement of expenses for local travel are created as a local voucher in the electronic travel system.

Supporting Documentation Receipts for expenses must accompany the local travel claim before payment is issued.

Approval of Claims Local vouchers follow the same approval process as TDY vouchers.

Submission of Claims All Regional and Headquarters personnel must electronically route the local travel voucher to their Certifying Officer for processing. Once certified the traveler is reimbursed through an electronic funds transfer to the traveler's primary payroll bank account or to the contractor issued travel charge card, as designated on the travel voucher.

Chapter IX: International and Territorial Travel

ED will fund international and territorial travel when there is a clear and substantial benefit to the United States Government and to the Nation's education system. The Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary, must approve all international travel by ED staff (see [Delegation of Travel Authority, Certified 8/3/2005](#)).

Note: The States of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories and possessions of the United States, such as American Samoa and the Virgin Islands, are regarded as non-foreign travel areas (see [Delegation of Travel Authority, Certified 8/3/2005](#)), and official travel to these areas does not require advance approval of the Secretary, or his/her designee.

A. International Activities Plan

Each year by October 1, each Principal Office will submit an International Activities Plan for the upcoming fiscal year to the Secretary through the ES. This plan must state the purpose, approximate date and duration, destination, expected outcomes of each trip, the name of the traveler, and whether the trip is related to an ongoing international or territorial project, a new initiative, or a one-time event.

The ES will log in and forward the proposed travel plan to the OS/International Affairs staff (OS/IA) for comment and recommendation to the Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary. The Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary will then approve the plan or return it to the Principal Office for modification.

B. Approval for International Travel

All requests by ED employees and consultants for approval of international travel, including invitational travel, must be submitted to the Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary, through the [Executive Secretary \(ES\)](#). Travel that has been previously documented in the International Activities Plan will still require approval. In either case, the request should be received by the ES **at least three weeks before the departure date.**

Each such request must include the following documentation:

- One comprehensive Memorandum of Justification per trip, including the names and positions of the persons traveling and how this travel will benefit ED, the U.S. Government, and/or U.S. Education system.
- Travel authorization routed electronically through the Department's Travel System.
- Airline itinerary and detailed itinerary of official business, covering all days from departure to return, prepared by the traveler.
- Letter of invitation and/or material describing the meeting or activity, e.g., conference agenda.

E-Country Clearance Information

If appropriate, the request should include:

- The "Request for Approval to Accept Payment for Official Travel from a Non-Federal Source" form, if part or all of the travel is to be funded in cash or in-kind by an entity other than ED.
- International travel involving Federal employees at the Assistant Secretary level or higher requires approval from the National Security Advisor to the President. The traveler's Principal Office should provide a letter, which ES will send to the National Security Advisor to obtain the required clearance.

ES assumes the responsibility of sending copies of the request to the appropriate offices (OS/IA for recommendation to the Secretary, or his/her designee; OGC if the travel is payment-in-kind or in-cash).

Upon receiving approval or disapproval from the Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary, the ES shall notify the traveler and OS/IA.

Important note: The number of travelers to the same destination for the same purpose and the

number of official duty days should be the minimum needed to accomplish the official business required. The use of annual leave in conjunction with international and territorial travel must be evaluated critically. Each Principal Office is expected to exercise particular care in the scrutiny of such arrangements.

C. Travel Arrangements

Each traveler is responsible for making his or her own travel arrangements through ED's contracted Travel Management Center (TMC). Primary sources for information on passports, visas and immunizations are the appropriate foreign embassy/consulate and the State Department. OS/IA provides further links to those websites on its [website](#).

ED's travel system must be utilized when arranging foreign or territorial travel.

Note: For general information on specific countries, ED employees can access the [State Department's Country Background Notes](#).

Information on currency exchange rates can be found at [Oanda](#).

Passports

All persons traveling abroad on official U.S. Government business should use an official passport (rather than a tourist passport).

OS/IA will advise on what is needed to obtain an official passport. Usually, the traveler fills out a regular passport form and OS/IA supplies a cover letter of request. OS/IA will facilitate the passport application being delivered to the Special Issuance Agency (1111 19th Street, Suite 350, Washington, DC) and pick up the passport when ready.

Applications should be submitted to OS/IA *at least 30 days in advance*. However, in extenuating circumstances, OS/IA can expedite the passport process.

Official Passports are issued on a five year basis. All official passports remain the property of ED and must be returned to your Executive Office upon termination of employment. Official Passports can be kept for posterity by the terminating employee if the passport has been voided. Please contact OA/IA at (202) 401-0430 for help with this. Expenses related to obtaining a passport are reimbursed by selecting the "Passport Fee" expense category on the Travel Voucher.

Visas

A *visa*, required by some countries, grants permission for a foreign citizen to visit or do business within that country's borders. OS/IA will determine if a visa is required and, if it is, will contact the appropriate embassy or consulate to determine the steps involved in obtaining a visa. Often times countries require visas for official travel, even when they do not require them for tourist travel.

OS/IA will write a letter to the embassy or consulate stating that the travel is "official travel." In extenuating circumstances, OS/IA will expedite the process, but the outcome depends on the embassy involved.

Important note: expediting a visa can be a difficult process. It is imperative that the traveler applies for the visa well in advance of travel, *no less than two weeks* prior to departure, if at all possible.

Immunizations

It is the traveler's responsibility to call the [State Department](http://www.state.gov) (202-647-5225) to determine if immunizations are necessary or for related topics.

Immunizations are available through:

Department of State, Health Unit
Former USIA Headquarters
301 4th Street SW, Room M-18
Washington, DC 20024
Phone 202-203-7823

CLINIC HOURS LIMITED - Mon., Wed., Friday - 8:30 am – 12:00 pm.

Department of State, MED Exam Clinic

Office Location

SA-1, (Columbia Plaza) Second Floor
Room L201, 2401 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20241

Open from 8:00am - 4:30pm Monday through Friday.

Email: brownah@state.gov AND ealysm@state.gov

Phone 202-663-1779 --or-- 202-663-1782

Appointments should be made in advance by phone. Travelers are required to bring the travel authorization with the countries to be visited notated and their personal international certificate of vaccination (yellow card). First time travelers will be provided an international certificate of vaccination at the time of their first visit.

Choosing an Air Carrier

The Fly America Act requires Federal employees and their dependents, consultants, contractors, grantees and others performing United States Government financed foreign air travel to travel by **U.S. flag air carriers**, unless:

- Travel by foreign air carrier is a matter of necessity.
- The U.S. flag air carrier cannot provide the air transportation needed.
- Use of the U.S. flag carrier service will not accomplish the agency's mission.

The Director of the Functional Applications Group, must approve all requests for exception to travel by foreign air carrier prior to departure.

The traveler is responsible for obtaining this approval prior to submitting the request to the Secretary.

In determining the availability of U.S. flag air carrier service, the following guidelines should be followed:

- U.S. flag air carrier service available at point of origin should be used to the destination, or, in the absence of direct service, to the farthest interchange point on a usually traveled route.
- When an origin or interchange point is not served by a U.S. flag air carrier, foreign air carrier service should be used only to the nearest interchange point on a usually traveled route.
- When a U.S. flag air carrier involuntarily reroutes the traveler via a foreign carrier, the foreign air carrier may be used notwithstanding the availability of alternative U.S. flag air carrier service.

For travel between two points *outside* the United States, foreign air carrier service will generally be approved:

- If travel by foreign air carrier would eliminate two or more aircraft changes en route.
- If the use of U.S. flag air carrier would extend the time in travel status abroad by at least 6 hours more than travel by foreign carrier.

Expenditures for commercial foreign air transportation on foreign air carriers will be **DISALLOWED** unless there is a justification in

the comments field of the Travel Voucher adequately explaining why service by U.S. flag air carriers is not available, or why it was necessary to use a foreign air carrier.

Every effort should be made to utilize U.S. Government fares. Please refer to [Chapter III: Making Travel Arrangements](#), to determine rules on Government contract fares for common carriers.

Foreign and Territorial Per Diem Rates

The State Department updates per diem rates on its [website](#) monthly. The electronic travel system updates the system tables monthly as well.

Foreign and Territorial Travel Expenses

Reimbursement for the following expenses relating to travel outside the 48 CONUS may be authorized or approved:

| Expenses | Definition |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Conversion of Currency | Commissions for conversion of currency in foreign countries. |
| Check Cashing Costs | Charges covering exchange fees for cashing United States Government checks or drafts issued for the reimbursement of expenses incurred for travel in foreign countries. Exchange fees incurred in cashing checks issued for salary payments shall not be allowed in travel expense accounts. |
| Trip Insurance | Cost of trip insurance purchased by employees for use of a Government-furnished vehicle or POV during official business into a foreign country. This covers potential liability for property damage or personal injury or death to third parties. |
| Travel Document Costs | Fees and costs incurred in connection with the issuance of passports, visa fees, costs of photographs for passports and visas, certificates of birth, health and identity, affidavits and charges for inoculations that cannot be obtained through the Federal dispensary. |

Contractor Issued Charge Card

The traveler should use the contractor issued charge card during foreign and territorial travel whenever possible.

Chapter X: Change of Official Duty Station

(FTR §302) This chapter has been removed from the Handbook and will be issued as a separate handbook. Contact the OCFO for information and guidance regarding official change of duty station.

Chapter XI: Travel Responsibilities

A. Traveler's Responsibilities

The ED traveler's responsibilities are as outlined in the following table:

| Traveler's Responsibilities: |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize himself/herself with ED policies and the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) governing travel for all Federal Government employees; • Prepare and submit a travel itinerary and purpose of travel statement for use in preparing the Travel Authorization form; • Prepare the Travel Authorization form for compliance with the FTR and ED travel policies (the traveler is normally responsible for preparing his/her own Travel Authorization); • If eligible, obtain a contractor issued charge card for use in charging approved travel expenditures before departing on travel. If the ED traveler is a new employee to ED and does not have a contractor issued charge card, he/she can request through his/her EXO the authorization to use the Centrally Billed Account for securing reservations; • Arrange for transportation services through the agency-designated TMC. The traveler must also arrange for lodging and other travel-related items through the ED-designated TMC; • Ensure the lodging costs and transportation services are within the allowable Government per diem rates before departure. The traveler must submit a request for approval of lodging expenses that exceed established per diem rates and use of non-contract transportation services, if applicable, before departure on travel. Clear and concise justifications must appear on the travel authorization under the Remarks link; • Responsible for security of transportation tickets to prevent loss or theft; • Return the transportation tickets to the ED-designated TMC and cancel lodging accommodations as soon as possible, if trip is canceled; • Perform travel in accordance with ED policies and FTR relating to the least costly method of travel; • Obtain the required receipts during "official travel" for use in preparing the Travel Voucher; • Notify his/her supervisor of problems or emergencies that arise during "official travel" status; |

| Traveler's Responsibilities: |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input Travel Voucher in the electronic travel system and submit receipts and other pertinent documents to the appropriate official within five (5) working days of return from travel. For individuals on continuous travel, the voucher should be submitted within the first five (5) days of the month; • Prepare and submit a supplemental Travel Voucher with the required supporting documents to his/her supervisor upon receipt of a voucher difference statement; and • Promptly repay any outstanding travel expenses charged to the contractor issued travel charge card, and upon receipt of contractor issued travel charge card billing statement, timely remit balance in full. |

B. Approving and Authorizing Official's Responsibilities

An ED Travel-Approving Official's responsibilities are as outlined in the following table:

| Approving Official's Responsibilities: |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize oneself with the FTR and ED policies related to travel; • Provide guidance to the offices under his/her responsibility, to ensure compliance with the FTR and ED policies on travel; • Only approve travel that is essential to accomplish ED's mission; • Approve travel expenses that are necessary and in the best interest of the Government; • Approve the Travel Authorization in sufficient time for travelers to obtain their transportation tickets, lodging accommodations, and ATM advance of funds before departure on "official travel;" • Review the completed Travel Voucher for compliance with the FTR and ED policies; • Approve the Travel Voucher within the required time frame; • Ensure scheduled travel is performed during duty hours, to the extent possible; • Authorize, maintain and track overtime and compensatory time, if applicable; • Review and approves Employee's time and attendance record and ensure appropriate codes are used for overtime and compensatory time while in travel status; and • Ensure that funds are available to pay for the travel. |

Chapter XII: Policy Analysis and Applications

Travel Scenarios Requiring Analysis

A. Use of Non-Contract Fares

To determine if the use of non-contract fares is permissible on an intended trip, the fare needs to be analyzed. For example, if a contracted city-pair fare is available for the intended travel sectors, then that fare must be used. If a city-pair fare exists but is not available (or if a city-pair fare does not exist), then a non-contract fare may be used if the use of a non-contract fare is advantageous to ED and an exception condition stated in [Chapter II: Travel Authorizations](#), of this Handbook, is satisfied. Analysis may be required to determine if the use of a non-contract fare would provide cost savings to ED. The analysis may include estimating costs based on non-contract “Y” or “S” class fares for the trip and comparing it with the contract fare at the time of making the reservation. Other costs such as actual transportation costs, penalties, subsistence, allowable overtime, lost productive time, etc., resulting from the use of a non-contract carrier, should also be taken into consideration. The non-contract fare may be used if a city-pair fare is unavailable **and** if the use of a non-contract fare is cost effective for ED. The use of non-contract fares must be specifically authorized and approved before obtaining transportation tickets. Cost savings to ED result from overall annual contracts signed with common carriers and not through isolated trips using a non-contract fare that is cheaper than the contract fare. See [Chapter III, Making Travel Arrangements](#), of this Handbook, for ED’s policy details.

B. Combining Personal and Official Travel

When a traveler wishes to combine personal and official travel, the Approving Officer needs to review the situation against policy guidelines. The general rule is that a traveler on official business may take annual leave in conjunction with the official trip, provided that (1) the employee’s supervisor approves the leave in advance, consistent with the needs of the traveler’s office, and (2) the employee has not scheduled official travel as a means of underwriting the expenses of personal travel. In all such cases, the per diem to which the traveler is entitled should be reviewed to ensure that the traveler pays for expenses incurred on leave. Travelers are entitled to per diem only during the time that they are on official business travel. If a traveler chooses an indirect route or an interrupted route as a matter of personal preference, then the Approving Officer should verify that the per diem allowed to the traveler does not exceed the amount allowed for uninterrupted travel by a direct route. The traveler will only be issued a ticket for official Government travel and must exchange it for a personal ticket. When a ticket becomes a personal ticket, the traveler will be personally liable for the cost of the ticket and any changes or cancellations to the ticket. Per diem will begin at the start of official ED travel and will end when the personal travel begins.

C. Processing of Unused Airline Tickets

All unused airline tickets should be returned by the traveler either prior to or at the time the Travel Voucher is submitted. For tickets purchased through the use of the contractor issued charge card, the traveler is responsible for ensuring that the unused tickets are returned to the TMC and that a credit is issued to the contractor issued charge card for all unused tickets (See [Chapter VIII: Reimbursement of Travel Claims](#), of this Handbook, for ED’s policy details).

Chapter XIII: Handbook Maintenance

When ED's travel policies, forms, and procedures change, this Handbook should be modified to reflect the change(s). Either the Regional Offices or the Headquarters Offices can recommend these requests for corrections and changes; however, the OCFO shall initiate policy change directives.

A written [*Handbook for Travel Policy Update Request Form*](#), displayed on the following page, should be completed and forwarded to OCFO's Functional Applications Group Travel Office at ED Headquarters. The request should include the reason for the update request, a detailed description of the needed change(s), and the chapter(s), section(s) and page number(s) requiring the change(s).

The Update Request Forms received will be reviewed by the Functional Applications Group, Travel Office, to determine if an update to this Handbook is required. Functional Applications Group, Travel Office, then drafts the updates and issues the changes to all EXOs and Regional Component Heads. Each update should reflect the date of the update on the bottom left corner of the page to facilitate the tracking and maintenance of updates to this Handbook.

Update Request Form

Submitted by: _____

Office: _____ Date: _____

Office Request Reason(s):

_____ Information no longer applicable

_____ Additional information is needed

_____ Other (describe below)

Chapter(s), Section(s), Page Number(s) Requiring Change(s):

Description of Update Request:

Note: Use the back of the page if additional space is needed to describe the update requested. Submit the completed request to the Functional Applications Group, Travel Office, at ED Headquarters.

(For CM/TSG use only)

Date Received: _____ Reviewed by: _____

Update Completed by: _____

Date Replacement Page(s) Sent: _____

Appendix A - Definitions

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| Actual Subsistence | A method of reimbursing travelers for their actual costs of daily subsistence expenses. ED may authorize actual expenses when lodging expenses are unusually high due to special or unusual circumstances. |
| Agency | A military department, an office, agency, or other establishment in the executive branch; and the Government of the District of Columbia. |
| ACS | ED-wide Administrative Communication System used by ED to communicate ED policy and procedures. |
| Approving Official | Responsible ED official who is familiar with GSA and ED travel policies and guidelines and who is authorized to approve travel requests from ED employees. For the purposes of this Directive, an Approving Official can be defined as the official who performs one of the following roles – Reviewer, Approver, or Certifier in the Department’s Travel System. |
| ATM Program | Contractor issued Automated Teller Machine (ATM) services that allow cash withdrawals from participating ATMs to be charged to a contractor issued charge card. |
| Baggage | Government property and personal property of the traveler necessary for “official business.” |
| Functional Applications Group | Responsible office or entity within ED that distributes GSA regulations and develops ED travel policy regulations and guidelines; monitors various travel spending reports; acts as a liaison to TMC; and reviews and approves exceptions to the travel regulations. |
| Calendar Day | The 24-hour period from one midnight to the next midnight. The calendar day technically begins one second after midnight and ends at 12:00 midnight the following evening. |
| CBA | Centrally Billed Account. |
| City-Pair Fares | A contract maintained by the Federal Government to provide discounted fares between selected pairs of cities. |
| Common Carrier | Any firm furnishing commercial transportation as a public service under rates prescribed by lawful authority. This includes railroad, ship, bus, and airplane. |
| Communication Services | Telephone, teletype, telegraph, cable, fax, and radio necessary on “official business.” |
| Conference Attendance | Travel to attend a conference, convention, seminar, or symposium for |

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| | purposes of observation or education only, with no formal role in the proceedings. |
| CONUS | Acronym referring to the “Continental United States,” the 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia. |
| Contract Airlines | Those airline companies with which the Federal Government has signed an agreement to provide scheduled airline passenger transportation service between selected cities (city-pairs) at reduced costs. |
| Direct Payment | A payment of cash made by a non-Federal entity directly to an ED employee to cover the costs of travel. |
| ED | The U.S. Department of Education. |
| Emergency Travel | Travel to return an employee from a temporary assignment location at Government expense to his/her designated post of duty or home, or other alternate location, where he/she would normally be present to take care of the emergency situation if the Government had not assigned the employee to another location to perform official business. |
| En Route Travel | Travel from the official duty station to the new official duty station or temporary duty station. |
| ES | Executive Secretariat. |
| Ethics and Standards of Conduct | Rules and guidelines applicable to ED employees governing conduct. |
| Executive Office | Refers to a unit or function within ED Headquarters that provides administrative, budget, and financial services to a Principal Office and the staff of the Principal Office. |
| The Fly America Act | Refers to provisions enacted by section 5 of the International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act of 1974. |
| FTR | Federal Travel Regulations. |
| FTS2000 or VOIP | The government network of leased long distance circuits and switches through which you should make all official long distance calls. |
| Government | The Government of the United States. |
| Government-Contract Rental Auto | An automobile obtained for short-term use from a commercial firm under the provisions of an appropriate GSA Federal Supply Schedule contract. |
| Government-Furnished Vehicle (GFV) | An automobile that is (1) assigned or dispatched to an agency on a rental basis from a GSA Interagency Fleet Management Center, or (2) leased by the Government for a period of 30 days or longer from a commercial firm. |

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| GPO | Government Printing Office. |
| GSA | The General Services Administration. |
| Handbook | This Handbook for Travel Policy. |
| Incidental Expenses | Fees and tips to waiters and waitresses, porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, parking attendants and hotel maids. |
| Information Meeting | Travel to attend a meeting to discuss general ED operations, review status reports, or discuss topics of general interest. <i>If a site visit was conducted as part of the same trip, consider the entire trip to be for the purpose of the site visit.</i> |
| International Travel Expenses | Travel expenses relating to travel outside CONUS, such as conversion of currency, trip insurance, check cashing and travel document costs. See Chapter IX: Foreign Travel, Section D. International Travel Expenses . |
| Invitational Travel | ED invites other Federal or non-Federal employees to attend a conference or an ED employee has been invited by another Government or non-Federal source to attend a conference. |
| Local Transportation/Travel | Travel performed within a 35-mile radius of the employee's duty station. |
| Locality Rates | Maximum lodging and per diem rates prescribed for specific localities within CONUS. |
| Meals & Incidental Expenses Allowance (M&IE) | Fixed rate allowances for meals and incidental expenses used during temporary duty travel. |
| M&IE Deductions | Adjustments to M&IE allowances when meals are furnished without charge (e.g., conference including lunch). |
| Mileage Allowance | A rate per mile allowed instead of the actual expenses of operation for a privately owned conveyance. |
| Miscellaneous Expense Allowance | Authorized for various costs associated with normal travel and for discontinuing residence at one location and establishing residence at a new location. |
| Non-Federal Source | Any organization, association, corporation, individual, or any Governmental unit other than the Federal Government. |
| Official Duty Station | The location of record where the employee is assigned to work on a daily schedule. |

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| OGC | Office of the General Counsel. |
| OCO | Office of Communications and Outreach. |
| OMB | The Office of Management and Budget. |
| OCONUS | Outside CONUS. |
| Payment In-Kind | Refers to the provision, by the non-Federal source, of tickets for travel, lodging, meals, or other related items in lieu of direct payment or reimbursement for all or part of the costs of travel. |
| Per Diem Allowance | A daily payment instead of actual expenses for lodging, meals, and related incidental expenses. |
| PIN | Personal Identification Number, used in conjunction with the contractor issued charge card, to obtain cash advances via the ATM program. |
| PMI | Personnel Manual Instruction; a personnel directive from ED. |
| POV | Privately Owned Vehicle. |
| Recommending Official | The senior officer (Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary, or equivalent) who has line authority over the ED employee who seeks to have travel defrayed by non-Federal agencies. |
| Site Visit | Travel to a particular site in order to personally perform operational or managerial activities (e.g., to oversee program activities for internal control purposes, or management activities, grant operations, audits, inspections, repair activity, conduct negotiations, provide technical assistance or instructions). |
| Special Conveyance | A commercially rented transportation of any type (e.g., autos, planes, boats, etc.). It shall be used only when it is NOT advantageous to the Government to use a common carrier, Government-owned or Government-contract rental conveyance, or privately owned conveyance. Special conveyances MUST be specifically authorized. |
| Special Mission Travel | Travel to carry out a special agency mission, e.g., travel by Federal beneficiaries and other non-employees. |
| Speech or Presentation Travel | Travel to make a speech or a presentation, deliver a paper, or otherwise take part in a formal program other than a training course. |
| Temporary Duty (TDY) | Authorized temporary absence from an official station to which the traveler will return upon completing an assignment at another location. |
| Training Attendance | Travel to receive training. |

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| Travel Authorization | Provides an employee authorization to incur certain travel expenses, estimates expenses, and obligates funds. |
| Travel Authorization Number | A sequential number generated within the electronic travel system to identify and track each Travel Authorization. |
| Travel Management Center (TMC) | Travel agency that has negotiated a contract with GSA to provide travel assistance and ticketing services to ED employees. It is the policy of ED to use the services of the TMC to the greatest extent possible. |
| Travel Voucher | Documents used to claim reimbursement for costs incurred for and during travel. |
| Unaccompanied Baggage | Baggage that is not carried free by the transportation company due to excess weight, size, or number of pieces. |
| United States | The 50 States and the District of Columbia. |
| U.S. Flag Air Carrier | An air carrier holding a certificate under section 401 of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958. |