

GAINSHARING TRAVEL SAVINGS PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE

This Directive transmits the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration's (GIPSA) decision to begin a program which rewards employees who save GIPSA money while on official travel. This Directive expires 18 months from the date of issue.

2. BACKGROUND

The Government Employees Incentive Awards Act, 5 U. S. C., Paragraph 4501- 4507, authorizes an agency to pay a cash award for "efficiency" or "economy." GIPSA will begin a program which rewards employees who save GIPSA money while on official travel. These savings will come from use of less expensive lodging and/or from use of frequent flyer benefits to purchase airline tickets for official travel. Employee participation in this program is optional. This program is a product of the National Partnership Council.

3. POLICY

Kinds of Travel Covered

All official domestic travel with air, meals, and incidental expenses, and/or lodging expenses, paid from GIPSA trust or appropriated funds occurring within 18 months of the employee's submission.

Lodging Savings

Employees who participate in the program can receive cash awards for incurring lodging expenses at a daily rate which is less than the maximum lodging rate for the locality under the lodging plus method. All employees are encouraged to obtain and use the tax exemption certificates for hotel taxes where appropriate. This will increase the savings to GIPSA. Appropriate tax exemption certificates may be obtained through the Federal Travel Directory located through the Internet at **www.policyworks.gov**.

- a. Lodging savings will not be credited when lodging was prepaid or prearranged to receive lower rates or obtained as a result of contractual arrangements with the hotel. However, any savings resulting from shared accommodations under such an arrangement do qualify for the travel savings award.

- b. Under the "Best Available Lodging Value Program," the General Services Administration (GSA) is pursuing reduced hotel rates through agreements with hotels in major cities. Lodging savings at hotels in the program cannot be counted as savings for the travel savings award program. Lodging savings under "preferred property" agreements are also not eligible.
- c. The amount of lodging savings must be reduced by the amount of additional transportation costs incurred to obtain the less expensive lodging.
- d. All GIPSA employees who travel more than twice a year are required to apply for a government-issued credit card. The card should be used for payment of all lodging costs unless the card is not accepted by the hotel. This will allow GIPSA to maximize the amount of the sponsor refund from the credit card company. Accommodations with friends or relatives are excluded from the charge card requirement.
- e. When a room is shared while on official travel there will be a lodging savings. The employees should arrange to be billed separately. If this is not possible, a daily rate must be determined for each employee. Divide the total lodging costs by the number of employees and the number of nights to arrive at a daily rate for each employee.
- f. All employees are encouraged to stay at a hotel which meets the requirements of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990. Hotels in compliance can be found on the Internet at www.usfa.fema.gov/hotel/index.htm.
- g. Lodging costs incurred on personal time such as annual leave during official travel or any other type of personal preference travel used in connection with official travel will not be counted as lodging savings under this program.
- h. Employees who stay with someone while on official travel and avoid lodging expenses will receive credit for one-half of the lodging rate for the locality toward the travel savings cash award.

Miscellaneous and Incidental Expenses (M&IE)

Employees returning to their residence early to save lodging expenses and M&IE may also include these savings, provided the employee is not in travel status on the day travel would have occurred.

Redemption of Frequent Flyer Benefits

Employees who obtain a free coach class ticket with frequent flyer benefits earned on official government travel or personal travel are eligible for the travel savings award. Savings will be measured against the contract rate in effect at the time of the flight. If there is no contract rate, then the lowest available non-restricted coach fare will be used as the basis for measurement of the savings.

Amount of Award

The amount of the award for each employee will be 50 percent of the savings on M&IE, lodging, and the contract carrier airfare occurring within 18 months of the employee's submission. The minimum cumulative award that can be received is \$100.00. No one award may exceed \$500.00. Note: Taxes will be withheld (federal, state, local, FICA).

Criteria for Award

The cumulative savings to GIPSA must be at least \$200 before the employee is eligible to receive an award. Awards may not be made more frequently than once every six months unless the cumulative savings exceed \$1,000.

Processing and Responsibilities

The Travel Savings Form (Attachment 1) will be completed and submitted by the employee for all official travel which shows savings in M&IE, lodging, or the redemption of frequent flyer benefits occurring during the previous 18 months prior to its submission.

- a. The employee should record each trip containing covered savings on a Travel Savings Form supported by the approved travel voucher.
- b. When the cumulative savings to GIPSA reaches at least \$200, the employee may submit it to his respective supervisor for review and/or approval.

Availability and Completion of Forms

Instructions for completion of the Travel Savings Form (Attachment 1) begin on the next page. The Travel Savings Form may be reproduced locally. A copy of a completed form AD-287-2, Recommendation and Approval of Awards (Attachment 2) can be found at the end of this document.

Distribution of Forms

The approved Travel Savings Form will be sent to the Servicing Personnel Office. Supporting documents will be maintained in the originating office for audit purposes. The travel savings data on the form will be used to generate a nationwide report on the Gainsharing Travel Savings Program.

/s/

James R. Baker
Administrator

Attachments