

A. INTRODUCTION

This position is located in the Budget and Fiscal Office of the Deputy Area Director, Agricultural Research Service (ARS). The incumbent provides expert advice and support to Area personnel and senior management on matters relating to local, domestic, and foreign travel and relocation programs. Other responsibilities include administering and maintaining travel management software, monitoring system problems, and seeking corrective action for identified problems.

B. MAJOR DUTIES

1. Serves as the Area Federal Agency Travel Administrator (FATA) and resource manager for the e-Travel system. Responsible for loading, up-dating, and maintaining system tables to include personnel tables, organizational tables, group tables, permission tables, and routing tables, and lines of accounting, budgets, and reports. Identifies and recommends system solutions, i.e., analyzes unfavorable outcomes, and based on the information gathered, recommends a course of action. Serves as the Help Desk Administrator for Area Users and Authorizing Officials; provides clarifying instructions to users when periodic vendor changes are made to the system which can occur without corresponding updates; monitors system usage; and enters new system users.
2. Analyzes and interprets Federal, Departmental, and Agency policies and procedures related to travel, relocation, and travel systems affecting the fiscal management of Area activities. Analyzes effect on current processes and modifies or develops procedures for situations involving foreign travel, emergency travel for natural disasters or program emergencies, and recurring travel for scientific research, etc. Researches problems and issues effecting programs. Initiates and drafts advisory correspondence to Area locations, including implementation guidance for new policies, directives, and procedures for release by senior management.
3. Develops training aids and conducts training classes for Area employees that are tailored to individual or group needs. Includes Area policies, procedures, and utilizes web based training, video conferencing, and other methods for presentations. Assists Financial Management Division-Travel and Relocation Services Branch in developing Agency-wide training classes and participates in the delivery.
4. Serves as the key contact for the Area and provides technical advice and guidance on travel, e.g., domestic and foreign travel, attendance at domestic and international meetings, to employees, program staff, and management officials.
5. Advises Area and location management officials on authorization of relocation benefits for transferees and new hires. When costly items such as real estate expenses are authorized, performs cost analysis by calculating relocation entitlements under various scenarios (i.e., using third party Relocation Services and developing options for new hires). Advises management of the most cost-effective means in which to proceed with a relocation

allowance in terms of budget impact. Monitors relocation obligations in TRVL in order to assess their effect on Area accounting reports.

6. Counsels employees and family members on all aspects of relocation, providing advice and guidance on inquiries related to residence titles or entitlement to immediate family allowances under extenuating circumstances, e.g., separate travel and temporary quarters.

7. Responds to Agency inquiries concerning the use of travel funds for conferences, travel advances, and justifications for use of premium class travel, etc.

8. Researches precedent cases in the General Services Administration (GSA) Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA) and Government Accountability Office (GAO) Comptroller General Decisions for applicability to resolution of unique or unusual problems in the travel and transportation area.

9. For official travel outside the U.S., coordinates the procurement of documents such as official passports and assists employees in applying for visas. Contacts the foreign embassy for additional information, and provides information to Headquarters to obtain country clearances. In cases of longer stays in foreign countries, provides advice on submission of periodic travel vouchers for reimbursement of funds and sets a subsistence rate in keeping with actual expenses, etc. Advises traveler on any medical requirements related to the travel.

10. Maintains the official Area records and directives for foreign travel and attendance at international meetings. Prepares periodic or on-demand reports on foreign travel.

11. Serves as the Area expert for the Foreign Travel Information System (FTIS). Manages the Passport Tracking System. Monitors official passport expiration dates, processes documents to renew or obtain new passports. Tracks passports and updates FTIS with their physical location. Ensures the traveler possesses a current official passport for the duration of trip. Instructs personnel on the use of FTIS for the approval process of all foreign travel and trip reports.

12. Serves as the Area administrator for the travel card program. As such, approves and processes requests for new travel credit cards, monitors adherence to travel card policy and procedures, provides advice and guidance on travel card use, trains Area personnel, monitors reports for indication of misuse of the travel card, ensures accounts are closed in a timely manner, and serves as liaison with travel card vendor for resolution of issues and problems relating to travel card use.

13. Examines, evaluates, and recommends alternative means of meeting travel requirements for unusual situations, i.e., interrupted travel due to illness or family emergencies, unplanned foreign travel with short time frames, and rerouting travelers due to program or emergency needs.

14. Determines if travel funds contributed by outside sources are allowable, and prepares responses for the authorizing official's signature.

15. Reviews for compliance and recommends action on proposed travel authorizations requiring approval of the Area Director, or higher authority. Coordinates and/or initiates special travel authorizations for all non-routine travel, e.g., attendance at international meetings, transfer of official station, use of premium class travel, foreign travel, and travel of non-government employees.

16. May serve on Agency study teams related to travel, relocation and travel card use, and policy in order to gather information on system use, flow of documents, and approval processes.

C. EVALUATION FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position

Level 1-6, 950 pts

Knowledge of and ability to research, and analyze the Federal Travel and Relocation regulations issued by GSA; Department of State Standardized Regulations; REE travel, relocation and travel card policy and procedures; GSA Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA); and GAO Comptroller General Decisions to advise and assist employees in planning travel and transportation and resolving problems.

Knowledge of passport requirements, entry (visa) requirements, and other processes to request country clearances from American embassies and foreign consulates.

Skill in analyzing problems and recommending solutions to travel and relocation issues, i.e., reimbursements, automated travel systems, relocation cost analyses, etc.

Skill in applying analytical and evaluative techniques to the identification, consideration, and resolution of complex travel and transportation problems; ability to discern overlapping issues and conflicting guidance to interpret and prepare guidance for management's approval.

Knowledge of the National Finance Center's Unified Travel Systems to enter relocation allowances and issue travel orders; skill in monitoring obligations in TRVL and assessing their effect on Area accounting reports.

Ability to understand electronic systems logic and skill to conduct initial system troubleshooting of problems, e.g., ability to determine when the systems are shut down, computers are not hooked up properly, and passwords are incorrect. Ability to identify system problems that require the attention of an Information Technology Specialist.

2. Supervisory Controls

Level 2-3, 275 pts

The supervisor makes assignments by defining objectives, priorities, and deadlines and assists the employee with unusual situations that do not have clear precedents.

The employee carries out assignments independently, consulting with the supervisor on potentially controversial matters such as new policies, major system issues, internal control weaknesses, or misuse of the travel card program that may require an official investigation.

Completed work is reviewed for timeliness, compliance with Agency, Department and Federal policies, cost effectiveness, and overall effectiveness in meeting the needs of Area's travel program. Methods used are not usually reviewed in detail.

3. Guidelines

Level 3-3, 275 pts

A variety of references, guidelines, policies, and procedures are available such as GSA policies, Comptroller General Decisions, General Accounting Office (GAO) guidelines, Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) guidelines, and Department of State regulations, procedures and decisions. Guidance is also available from the Agency, Department, and other federal agencies.

These guidelines are not always applicable due to their general nature. They are generally broad, voluminous, and sometimes conflicting. In many instances they do not cover situations which arise. The employee uses initiative and exercises judgment in the interpretation and adaptation to resolve unusual situations, and deviates from traditional methods to modify or develop new procedures for situations which need quick resolution. These situations include, but are not limited to, delivering foreign travel documents to en-route travelers, assisting travelers with illnesses or family emergencies, assisting travelers involved in accidents, and ensuring the safety and well-being of Area employees while on travel.

4. Complexity

Level 4-3, 150 pts

The work includes a variety of duties requiring many different and unrelated processes and methods that are applied to a broad range of travel and transportation activities.

The employee responds to inquiries related to changes or deviations in domestic and foreign travel. For example, an emergency situation interrupts the travel of federal, non-federal employees, or family members. Each case is treated individually because of the differing circumstances. The references describe in general terms what needs to be done but research of other regulations and case law is required to find the best resolution for both the traveler and the unit. When requested by the agency, the employee conducts financial analyses of the use of travel funds for conferences, amounts and purpose of travel advances, amounts and justifications for use of

premium class travel, and relocation, etc., to identify how funds are used and suggest alternative, less expensive methods to accomplish the mission.

The work involves identifying the conditions under which travel is performed and conducting research and analysis to defend and support the recommended course of action.

5. Scope and Effect Level 5-3, 150 pts

The purpose of the work is to manage the Area travel and transportation program for federal employees and their families. The employee develops plans, evaluates, and advises on government travel policies and programs.

Work products and decisions affect the operation of the travel and relocation program and the people who use the system. They also contribute to the cost effectiveness of Federal funds and proper reimbursement to personnel.

6. Personal Contacts Level 6-2

Contacts are made with Area employees and family members, management and program personnel, Office of the Area Director, Agency senior management and policy offices, nongovernment persons under special agreements with the Agency, travel and relocation vendors, and other non-Federal entities that support or provide travel and relocation services to the Federal sector.

7. Purpose of Contacts Level 7-b, 75 pts

The purpose of contacts is to provide travel advice and guidance, to obtain travel services of behalf of employees and their families, resolve travel and relocation problems, assist with erroneous charges on travel cards, and assist with travel systems access.

8. Physical Demands Level 8-1, 5 pts

Work is primarily sedentary. Occasional travel is required to coordinate travel policy and review automated systems. No special physical demands are required.

9. Work Environment Level 9-1, 5 pts

Work is performed in an office setting with adequate heat, ventilation, and lighting.

D. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS (**Check if applicable**)

- Supervisory Responsibilities (EEO Statement)
- Training Activities - Career Intern, Student Career Experience Program
- Motor Vehicle or Commercial Driver's License Required
- Pesticide Applicators License Required
- Safety Officer Collateral Duties
- Radiological Protection Officer Collateral Duties
- Environmental Management Officer and Member Collateral Duties
- EEO Collateral Duties
- Drug Test Required
- Vaccine(s) Required
- Financial Disclosure Required
- Special Physical Requirements/Demands
- Special Agency Check (SAC) and limited background investigation required for Research Leader positions
- SAC and full background investigation required for positions working with BSL-3 (or higher) agents, or in BSL-3/BSL-4 facilities.

Total points = 1,885

Grade Conversion = GS-09 (1,855 – 2,100 points)