

Out-of-City Travel Guidelines and Procedures for DSS-HRA-DHS Employees

TO: All Staff

FROM: Vincent Pullo
Agency Chief Contracting Officer (ACCO)

I. PURPOSE

This procedure summarizes the guidelines governing expenditures for out-of-city employee travel, lodging, meals and other miscellaneous expenses as found in the Office of the Comptroller's Directive 6, which was revised and re-issued on December 30, 2016. It is strongly recommended that each DSS-HRA-DHS employee who engages in business-related travel obtain a copy of Directive 6 which can be found on the intranet under the Office of Contracts Standard Operating Procedures. The Directive will provide comprehensive guidelines and more fully explain what is required to ensure compliance.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Office of Contracts has administrative responsibility for agency-wide contracting activities. The Office of Contracts is also responsible for processing requests for *DSS-HRA-DHS* employees seeking to travel for business related purposes. **Mayoral employees that are not on the agency's payroll (i.e. CEO, HHS-Connect, MOCDV), however they're reimbursed through funds monitored by the agency should follow the travel procedures as set forth by the Mayor's Office. Upon the return from agency related business, Mayoral staff should follow *Section H. "Reimbursement"* as listed in this procedure.**

III. TRAVEL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

A. Overview of Travel Policy

To effectively carry out the travel process, all travel requests must be submitted to the Office of Contracts **at least 30 days prior to departure with proper pre-approvals.** Timing of the request should ensure approval well in advance of this deadline. Staff members planning an out-of-city trip must be aware of the lead-time required for approval prior to the trip. The Commissioner's Designee must authorize all requests for out-of-city trip approvals. The current designee is the Chief Operating Officer.

Employees who travel on behalf of the City of New York may be paid for their travel costs. The costs eligible for payment vary according to the classification of travel undertaken.

Directive 6 describes "Overnight Travel" as any travel that includes an overnight stay and meets one or both of the following:

1. The distance the employee travels is more than 75 miles from Columbus Circle and more than 75 miles from the employee's home, and/or
2. The travel results in, or would result in, a work day of more than 12 hours measured as departure from home to return home.

B. Meals

Meals are paid only in overnight travel situations when not provided as part of the activity for which travel is taking place. Employees traveling for less than a full day when leaving or arriving home or the primary work station are entitled to only part of the per diem reimbursement rate depending on the time of day travel begins and ends.

Payment for breakfast, lunch and/or dinner will be allowed when overnight travel requires **leaving** home or the primary work station before the following hours:

Breakfast	7:00 am
Lunch	11:00 am
Dinner	6:30 pm

Payment for breakfast, lunch and/or dinner will be allowed when the overnight travel requires **arrival** at home or the primary work station after the following hours:

Breakfast	7:30 am
Lunch	2:00 pm
Dinner	7:00 pm

C. Lodging

Employees lodging at domestic or foreign destinations will be reimbursed at the rates established by the U.S. Government. The federal per diem schedules indicate the maximum lodging rates that will be paid. Employees who spend less will be reimbursed only for actual lodging expenditures.

Employees lodging within New York State are exempt from hotel occupancy taxes. To qualify for the exemption, employees must present the lodging establishment with either an Exemption Certificate for Tax on Occupancy of Hotel Rooms or a statement on agency letterhead indicating

that the named employee is conducting official business and is exempt from this tax. Employees may request forms from their travel liaison, agency travel coordinator or the Finance Office.

Please refer to the U. S. General Services Administration (GSA) website at <http://www.gsa.gov>, to find meal and lodging per diem rates.

D. Transportation

With regard to transportation, employees must make every effort to use the most efficient and economical means. Please note that transportation should not be purchased until the travel requests have been approved by all appropriate parties. If a ticket is purchased prior to receiving official approval, the traveler is responsible for all cost associated if the trip has been disapproved. Additionally, business class is prohibited unless deemed appropriate per Directive 6.

E. Submitting Requests for Travel

1. All travel requests must be approved by the employee's supervisor and the Responsibility Area/Responsibility Center (RA/RC) head, who will subsequently submit the request to the Office of the Chief Operating Officer for approval. The travel request should be accompanied by a cover memorandum requesting approval, summarize the contents of the supporting documentation and state the benefit to the City of New York. Thereafter, the package will be forwarded to the Office of Contracts for processing.
2. When submitting a request for travel, you must include the following:
 - A. The Approval Request for Official Out-of-City Trip (OTT) form must be completed including the name(s) of traveler(s), purpose and justification, travel and hotel expense including meals, miscellaneous fees which may include conference fees, luggage cost (one bag without overweight charge if flying), costs for ground transportation (i.e. cab fare, mass transit fare); and funding information. **Per the Mayor's Office of Citywide Services, all expenses, regardless of the entity funding the travel must be listed on the OTT form. The total cost of the request refers to the total amount of the travel, not just that which is the responsibility of the agency.** The OTT form must be initialed by the employee's supervisor and RA/RC head.
 - B. All requests must be accompanied by supporting documents including description of the session/conference, full itinerary, hotel confirmation, transportation reservation, funding information and conference fees confirmation, if applicable. If funding is from a non-government entity, requests must be accompanied by an opinion from the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) specifically indicating if vendor conducts business with the City, are lobbyist or if the travel is a conflict of interest.
 - C. All justification memoranda for travel must provide an explanation of how attendance at the event will benefit the agency and the reason why the traveler is the most suitable person to represent the Agency. If more than one traveler is attending, the justification

must include the need for each attendee. All justification memoranda must be initialed by the employee's supervisor and RA/RC head.

- D. If the travel is for training, the request must be submitted for recommendation to the Office of Policy Procedures and Training (OPPT) to the attention of:

Office of Workforce Development/Educational Programs Director
150 Greenwich Street, 35th Floor, New York, NY 10007
(929) 221-5661

Recommended requests will be forwarded for approval and signature to the Office of Staff Resources (OSR). The approved form must accompany the travel request. Keep in mind that more lead time will be necessary for training requests in order to first obtain OSR approval.

- E. Once initial approval is received by the Chief Operating Officer, travel requests to Albany, NY and Washington, D.C. must be reviewed and approved by the Deputy Mayor for Legislative Affairs prior to departure. In addition, travel requests that include six or more travelers for the same conference/training or any portion sponsored by a non-government entity must be approved by the Mayor's Office of Citywide Services.
3. Once travel has been approved by all parties, a control number will be issued for the traveler's records. The traveler will receive a memorandum of approval with a control number and instructions for reimbursement. Travelers are reminded that it is the individual's responsibility to confirm approval prior to travel. **Failure to do so will result in unauthorized travel leading to no reimbursement, loss of personal time and possible other consequences.**
4. As mentioned above, the agency will pay the check-in luggage fee for one bag within the minimum weight class. We are not responsible for any additional luggage fees. The fee must be included in the "Miscellaneous Expense" section of the OTT form.

Always refer to Directive 6 and GSA per diem before submitting any request for travel. In order to quickly process your travel request, please include your contact name and number.

F. Extending Business Travel with Personal Travel

Pursuant to Directive 6, employees should be discouraged from extending business travel and combining it with personal travel and agencies may prohibit it. Among other reasons, the practice might encourage, or appear to encourage, business trips that are not essential, or to encourage business trips when alternatives to travel exist (e.g. meetings via conference call).

In instances where an employee seeks to take leave time in conjunction with business travel, the Chief Operating Officer must provide approval for each instance.

If approved, any additional costs caused by a personal extension must be borne by the employee (e.g., when a personal return flight on a Sunday is more expensive than the original business

return flight at the conclusion of the business purpose of the trip, the differential in cost must be borne by the employee).

G. Employee Post Attendance Reporting

Pursuant to Directive 6, a brief synopsis of the relevant subject matter covered at the training, educational or professional conference must be submitted to the Office of the Chief Operating Officer within 14 business days of the employee's return and be available for Comptroller's audit. The synopsis should include, but not be limited to, a description of the benefits that will accrue to the agency because of attendance, the functional areas of the agency impacted, and any action taken or to be taken as a result of attendance. Additionally, the employee must ensure that relevant materials and/or a summary briefing of the information gained at the meeting are shared with appropriate members of the agency's staff. If the travel was by a member of a public board or commission, a verbal presentation of the trip's benefits must be made at the next public meeting, or otherwise be reported in accordance with rules the board adopts. This synopsis should be included in the package containing the request for reimbursement for a particular trip.

H. Reimbursement

Within 14 days of return from an out-of-city trip, the traveler is to complete the applicable forms (Out of City Travel Expense (HRA/Comp-1), provide a copy of their official travel approval memorandum with control number and OTT, synopsis of the trip, obtain supervisory approval of the travel expense form, through the Electronic E-SIF/NON-SIF system in order to receive reimbursement. If you have any questions or need access to the system please forward them to the attention of:

Finance Office/SIF Unit
150 Greenwich Street, 33rd Floor New York, NY 10007
Telephone: (929) 221-5986 Email: sifunit@hra.nyc.gov

A copy of all forms and receipts should be sent to:

Office of Contracts/Agency Travel Coordinator
150 Greenwich Street, 37th floor New York, NY 10007
(929)-221-6359

I. Exclusion from Sales Taxes

The City of New York is exempt from paying New York State Sales Tax. Agencies and employees should not pay sales tax on any item or service purchased in the State of New York on behalf of the City for official business purposes. Employees must obtain and present a Sales Tax Exemption Certificate or exemption request on agency letterhead at the time of purchase. Employees may obtain forms from your unit travel coordinators or the Finance Office. Any payment of sales tax on official travel within New York State cannot be reimbursed.

J. Cash Advance

If necessary, a request for a cash advance must be submitted directly to the Office of Contracts, at least **72 hours prior** to the date of travel.

K. Cancelled Travel

It is the responsibility of the traveler to notify your unit's travel coordinator, the Office of Contracts and Finance Office immediately of any changes to, or cancellations of, travel to reconcile any expenses incurred.

L. Retreats

All out of town retreats must be recommended by OPPT and approved by OSR. Once approved by OSR, OPPT will submit the request to the Office of the Chief Operating Officer within 45 days prior to departure. Be sure to include all pertinent documentation in the package including:

- Full justification for the retreat including an explanation of the venue chosen, reason for the overnight stay (if applicable), method of transportation to the chosen venue, meals, agenda of activities and the benefit of the retreat to the agency.
- Venue contract