



National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

BIOENERGY, CLIMATE, AND ENVIRONMENT
FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUSTAINABILITY
YOUTH, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY
FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

NIFA

Panel Manager
Training Documents

Financial Arrangements for Travel

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Travel

Knowledge and Understanding of Federal Travel Regulations for Federal Travelers





Approval

What is needed to travel officially as a Panel Manager

- National Program Leader (NPL) must give advanced approval in writing
- NPL will then guide through the approval process from NIFA administration
- Must have an approved Travel Authorization (TA)



Federal Travel Regulations Requirements

Official travel may not be arranged:

- Directly with an airline or with a personal, unauthorized travel agent
- **NIFA cannot reimburse travelers for airline/train tickets purchased from any sources other than the NIFA authorized vendor by NIFA Travel Staff**
- Traveler is responsible for any added travel costs that result from use of an unauthorized travel service (e.g., Travelocity, Orbitz, Priceline, etc.)



Exceptions to Provisional Travel Requirements

- Reasonable accommodation may be granted to travelers who have a disability
- In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a traveler with a special need will be treated the same as a traveler with a disability



General Rules for Official Travel

- The government (government meaning the federal approving official), not the traveler, determines mode of transportation
- If a Panel Manager is traveling on NIFA official business, they are expected to exercise the same care as if they were traveling on personal business
- Excessive cost, indirect routes, luxury accommodations, or services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not reimbursable under Federal Travel Regulations



General Rules for Official Travel (continued)

- Panel Manager is responsible for all excess costs and additional expenditures incurred that relate to personal preference or convenience
- Panel Manager must use the mode that results in the cost providing the greatest advantage to the government
- Common carrier (air, train, rental car, shuttle or bus) deemed most efficient by Federal Travel Regulations is to be used



Travel Procedures

After the NPL introduces the Panel Manager to the Program team, the following will take place:

- Panel Manager's "Personally Identifiable Information" (PII) will be used to create their profile to authorize official travel
- NIFA staff will send a travel logistics letter via email to the Panel Manager along with an "Invitational Travel Reservation Form". This form must be returned to the NIFA staff within **three business days**



Travel Procedures (continued)

- Invitational Travel Form must be used to obtain the departing date, time and airport code for all travel
- NIFA cannot guarantee that your requested departure time will be granted
- NIFA may use a 2-hour window before or after the departure time requested
- Once a reservation is made, the NIFA staff will send you a copy of the itinerary for your review
- No later than three days prior to your departure date, you will receive a copy of your travel receipt and travel authorization



Transportation Reimbursements

What will be the reimbursement if the Panel Manager is authorized to use common carrier transportation and they use a personally owned vehicle (POV) instead?

- The reimbursement will be on a mileage basis plus per diem. Reimbursement **cannot exceed** the total cost of the authorized method of common carrier transportation plus per diem
- POV mileage rate is \$0.655 (rate may change, see www.gsa.gov/mileage for the current rate)
- Parking and Tolls
- Local Transportation – Bus, train, shuttle, Uber, Lyft, or taxi



Accommodations, Meals and Incidentals Reimbursements

- Hotel per diem is determined from the area's GSA locality rate for the month of the travel.
- The reimbursement may not exceed the locality rate.
- Meals and Incidentals (M&IE) will include two amounts:
 - One amount used for the first and last day of travel
 - One amount used for every full day in travel status
- Current per diem rates for hotel and meals & incidentals can be found on the GSA website at www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates



Travel Reimbursement (continued)

- It is required that a traveler read and sign the Travel Expense Data Sheet and electronic travel voucher
- These forms certify that all travel expenses were incurred on behalf of NIFA
- All supporting documents must be submitted on the last day of panel or the first business day after the end of the panel
- Travel vouchers must be completed and submitted for payment **within five business days**



Sample Travel Expense Data Sheet and Electronic Voucher

| TRAVEL EXPENSE DATA SHEET | | | | | | |
|---|---|------|------|------|------|----------------------|
| Program Code: program code | Panel Member Name: «First Name» «Last Name» | | | | | |
| Reimbursement: The preferred method of reimbursement is by electronic transfer using the banking information you have provided. | | | | | | |
| NOTE: Please verify your mailing address: «street address» «city», «state» «zip» | | | | | | |
| BUSINESS PHONE: «Work Phone» | | | | | | |
| Travel Dates | Date | Date | Date | Date | Date | Date |
| Departing City & State «city», «state» | | | | | | |
| Arriving City & State WASHINGTON DC | | | | | | |
| Per Diem (No. of Days) | | | | | | |
| Lodging (receipt required) | | | | | | |
| Meals & Incidentals (M&IE) | | | | | | |
| Total Per Diem Amount | | | | | | |
| P.O.V Mileage (daily total miles) | | | | | | |
| Parking, tolls | | | | | | |
| Local Transportation: <i>Metro</i> | | | | | | |
| Local Transportation: <i>Airport Taxi</i> | | | | | | |
| Local Transportation: <i>Taxi for panel</i> | | | | | | |
| Local Transportation: <i>Shuttle</i> | | | | | | |
| Misc. (Hotel Tax) (Telephone) | | | | | | |
| Baggage Fee | | | | | | |
| Car Rental (Paid by Traveler) Receipt Required | | | | | | |
| <p>NOTE: A receipt is required for lodging, airline tickets and other expenses for \$35.00 and over. You will receive \$69.00 per day for Meals and Incidentals (M&IE) but this amount is prorated to \$51.75 for the first and last day of travel. You are also eligible for limited reimbursement of documented personal telephone calls up to \$5.00 per lodging night. Local panelists whose official duty station or residence falls within a 35-mile radius of Washington, D.C., will not receive per diem (lodging and M&IE), but will be reimbursed for daily transportation, over and above normal commuting expenses, and miscellaneous costs. Please be advised, any local panelists that incurs hotel expenses in error, will not be reimbursed for such costs. Any panelists who is unclear about what expenses will be reimbursed, should contact the program support supervisor for clarification.</p> <p>Your signature on this form certifies that you have incurred the expenses claimed.</p> | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | Traveler's Signature |

Traveler Justification: CBA Authorized

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| STATUS | DATE | TIME | SIGNATURE NAME | REASON |
|---------|------------|------------|--------------------|--------|
| CREATED | 03/23/2017 | 8:36AM EST | LUGO, OMAR ALFREDO | |

I certify that the electronic signatures listed above are valid and on file

Omar Alfredo Lugo 2/24/2017

SIGNED DATE

Document Signatures

Traveler/Preparer Name: _____

Traveler/Preparer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Approver Name: _____

Approver Signature: _____

Date: _____



Tips for Successful Travel Management

- A Panel Manager should direct all panelists' travel-related questions to Program Staff associated with your program.
- They can provide guidance about allowable reimbursable expenses that may include:
 - Additional travel days beyond panel start or end dates
 - Alternative accommodations
 - Supervisors (Division Directors) can also be consulted



Federal Travel Regulations



Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)

[Federal Travel Regulation | GSA](#)

Agriculture Travel Regulations (ATR)

<https://www.usda.gov/directives/dr-2300-005>

Travel Policy

<https://www.usda.gov/ocfo/travel-express/travel-policy>



Questions?

Contact Program Assistant associated with your NIFA program