Arranging Travel For Invitational Travelers

This job aid provides employees with information about arranging Temporary Duty travel and transportation for Invitational Travelers..

Keep in mind that only those travel and transportation expenses that are authorized on the Temporary Duty authorization and allowable may be reimbursed. If an Invitational Traveler procures lodging or a rental car --even when the procurement is arranged by the Travel Management Center-- and it is not authorized, then the expense is not reimbursable.

TOOLS for SUCCESS:

- E-government Travel System User Profile
- Travel Management Center telephone number
- E-government Travel System “AutoTANUM”
- Centrally billed account
- Personal credit card

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Invitational Travelers are "employees" as defined by the Federal Travel Regulation. *See Federal Travel Regulation PART 300-3—GLOSSARY OF TERMS, "Invitational travel" and §301-1.2, "What is an “employee” for purposes of TDY allowances."*

Because "Invitational Travelers" are not directly employed by the Government, they cannot be issued the Government contractor-issued Individually Billed Account travel charge card. Therefore, they are presumed by the FTR to be exempt from mandatory use of the IBA travel charge card, which is why the FTR specifies that personal credit cards and advance payment may be allowed.

Also, when an Invitational Traveler profile is setup in the ETS, the unique employee ID for Invitational Travelers always starts with the letter ‘I.’ This enables a TMC travel agent to recognize that the employee is an Invitational Traveler.

PAYING FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES:

Federal Travel Regulation §301-51.6 specifies how travel and transportation expenses for Invitational Travelers are paid and establishes the order of precedence for the form of payment.

"(a) Personal funds, including cash or personal charge card;
"(b) Travel advances; or
"(c) Government Transportation Request (GTR)."

Employees who travel at the invitation of the Department may have their expenses paid as follows:

- A centrally billed account shall be used to procure the common carrier transportation, and
- A personal credit card shall be used for lodging and rental car reservations.

PREPARING TO ENABLE INVITATIONAL TRAVEL

All Temporary Duty travel must be authorized and paid through the E-government Travel System, so an ETS User Profile must first be established for the employee. Contact the local travel system administrator or Lead Federal Agency Travel Administrator for assistance (procedures and roles vary slightly by Operating Division). Once the ETS User Profile is established, then travel may be arranged.

ARRANGING TRAVEL FOR INVITATIONAL TRAVELERS

Step 1: Inform the employee of:
- The Operating Division/organization they will travel for;
- Which of the three travel services they may arrange: common carrier transportation, lodging, and/or rental car.
- The servicing Travel Management Center telephone number.
- The unique employee ID that starts with 'I.'

Step 2: When the employee calls the TMC, the TMC agent will clarify information and:
- Reserve the common carrier transportation to a centrally billed account;
- Reserve FedRooms lodging and/or an Economy class rental car to the employee's personal credit card; and
- Tell the employee, "If you are not authorized to incur lodging or rental car expenses, then you will not be reimbursed those expenses."

When the reservations are made, an "AutoTANUM" will be generated –an automated TDY travel authorization request– that will have the reservations listed on it and the costs.

Step 3: Review the TDY travel authorization in the ETS, add or remove expenses as needed, and stamp the authorization as appropriate so that it may route as usual. If a rental car or lodging is not authorized, then it should be removed from the authorization