

PART 1: TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS

1 Getting Started

A. Things to Consider Before Authorizing Travel

Travel shall be authorized only when it is necessary to accomplish Agency operations effectively and economically. Approving officials are required to have a good working knowledge of travel policies and regulations and must consider:

- alternatives to travel; such as mail, fax, or teleconferencing
- the most economical means of travel considering transportation costs, per diem expenses, and salary expenses
- management of allocated travel funds

Note: The purely personal convenience or preference of the traveler is not a determining factor in authorizing travel or travel allowances.

B. Forms Required

All official temporary duty travel should be authorized on a travel authorization **in advance** of travel expenses being incurred. No other documents are sufficient to authorize travel expenses to be incurred, and authorizations are required for travel expenses to be reimbursed. The following forms are used to authorize official travel:

- AD-202 Travel Authorization/Advance for all GS employees
- AD-202 Travel Authorization/Advance for all CO employees and County Office Committee (COC) members as of October 1, 2003

Note: Verbal authorization does not constitute legal authority to travel. Employees traveling without the required AD-202 may not be reimbursed for expenses incurred during unauthorized travel (See Paragraph J, When to Prepare Travel Authorizations, and Paragraph K, Post Approval of Travel Authorizations). Travelers should carry a copy of the travel authorization while on official travel to ensure that they receive government rates for common carrier travel, rental cars, and hotel/motel accommodations. Refer to Paragraph 2, AD-202 Preparation, for information on preparing the AD-202.

C. Authorizing Actual Subsistence vs. Per Diem

Generally, per diem should be authorized for all non-local travel, in accordance with Part 3 of this Manual. Actual subsistence may be authorized at the time of travel if the per diem rate is inadequate. For additional information, guidance, and limits regarding the authorization of actual subsistence expenses, refer to Part 4, Reimbursement of Actual Subsistence Expenses. Employees attending conferences should refer to Part 9, Conferences and Meetings, for information regarding per diem for attendance at conferences.

D. Travel During Non-Duty Hours

As far in advance as possible, official travel should be planned and scheduled to prevent employees from having to travel during non-duty hours.

Both GS and CO employees should refer to Handbook 32-PM for Agency policy regarding overtime administration.

E. Traveler's Responsibilities -- *Prudent Person Rule*

Travelers are expected to exercise the same care in incurring government travel expenses as a prudent person would exercise when traveling on personal business. These types of excess costs are not authorized:

- indirect travel routes or enroute delays
- luxury accommodations
- unnecessary services

Employees are responsible for paying for the personal portion of indirect travel routes and enroute delays as well as excess costs resulting from luxury accommodations and unnecessary services.

F. Travel Which Combines Official and Personal Travel, Including Deviations from Authorized Method or Itinerary

The travel authorization should show only the official travel. Personal deviations from the official itinerary should **not** be shown on the authorization since it may cause personal travel to be mistakenly considered as part of the official travel.

Stops enroute to, from, or between points of official business for personal preference, regardless of whether leave is involved or not, should be justified. Traveler must receive advanced approval for these travel situations from their immediate supervisors and/or travel approving officials regardless of the type of travel authorization issued for the official trip.

It is recommended that the traveler identify these situations in the "remarks" section of the authorization or attach a memorandum to the authorization for approval by the approving official.

The travel voucher must show the actual travel performed including portions of personal travel and deviations. A comparative cost statement should be included as part of the voucher showing the cost of the actual travel as compared to the cost of the most direct travel. Reimbursement is limited to the actual cost or the estimated direct cost, whichever is less.

G. Travel During Which an Employee Takes Annual Leave

When the amount of leave for a trip is greater than one-half of the number of hours in the employee's work day and the leave time is after official travel begins or ends, it should be noted on the travel authorization. This will ensure that the approving official has sufficient information prior to approval. Refer to Part 3, Per Diem, for the effect of annual leave on per diem.

A more detailed explanation is required when the number of days of annual leave exceeds the number of days of official business, when the travel is to a resort area, or when the employee is deviating from the authorized itinerary or mode of transportation. This should be attached to the travel authorization when forwarded for approval.

For employees traveling on Type A, B, or N authorizations, leave should be noted on a copy of the authorization and attached to the travel voucher for that particular trip.

H. Interview Travel

Payment of travel expenses for interview travel is at the discretion of the Agency. Prior to authorizing travel, the procedures in Handbook 32-PM must be followed for approval of these expenses for GS employees and Handbook 27-PM, Paragraph 460, for CO employees.

I. When to Prepare AD-202s

AD-202s must be issued before travel begins. This is important because the authorization:

- provides the employee with a list of their authorized expenses
- protects the employee in the event of an accident or death by providing proof of official travel status
- may be used as a basis for obligating funds to cover anticipated expenses
- ensures the legal liability of the government to reimburse the employee

J. Post Approval of AD-202s

When urgency of travel or other extenuating circumstances make it impossible to issue an AD-202 in advance of travel, an AD-202 must be prepared at the earliest possible date and must contain a statement that the travel is post approved and the reason why prior approval was not possible.

K. Responsible Agency

For FSA employees, the division or office sponsoring or paying for the travel is responsible for preparing the AD-202. When employees travel for another Departmental agency, the agency paying for the travel is responsible for preparing and controlling the travel documents.

For FAS employees, special requirements, listed below, should be followed:

- When traveling for another agency or organization, the traveler's office prepares the AD-202 for appropriate FAS clearances, stating that all expenses (or which part) will be assumed by the agency or organization sponsoring the travel.
- When outside agency employees or non-government personnel are traveling for FAS, the sponsoring office within FAS is responsible for preparing the AD-202.

New hires, non-government personnel, employees from other government agencies, or any other personnel who are traveling for either FSA or FAS for the first time must be established in NFC's Travel System prior to processing a travel transaction with NFC. Appropriate offices should contact NFC's Travel and Transportation Section at 504-255-4878, prior to submitting the first AD-202, to establish the traveler in a supplemental name file. This will allow NFC to process transactions without delay. Offices should provide the following information on the traveler to NFC:

- traveler's full name
- traveler's social security number
- mailing address (home/agency)
- T&A contact
- accounting classification code

The above information can also be faxed to the Attention of the NFC Inquiry Supervisor at 504-255-5255; however, for a quicker response it is best to call NFC.

In addition, the Vendor Table in FFIS must be updated prior to submission of the first AD-202 and AD-616 for new hires, non-government personnel, employees from other government agencies, or any other personnel who are traveling for FSA or FAS. An e-mail containing the same traveler information required by NFC should be sent to:

- For FSA, Marsha Stevens (mlstevens@kcc.usda.gov)
- For FAS, James Flowers (james_flowers@fsa.usda.gov) or Luedella Dickens (luedella_dickens@fsa.usda.gov)

NOTE: Vendor tables should not have to be updated if new hires and casual (non-permanent) employees have already been added to the personnel files.

L. Expenses Which Must Be Explicitly Pre-Authorized

It is not expected that a traveler and/or approving official will be able to foresee all expenses that will reasonably be incurred on official business. However, some expenses are of such a nature (high cost or high *potential* cost or liability to the government) that they **must** be explicitly approved in advance on a AD-202. These include:

- transportation expenses for other than local travel (see Part 2, Making Travel Arrangements)
- use of a non-contract air carrier (on routes for which they exist) (see Part 2, Making Travel Arrangements)
- per diem or actual subsistence expenses (see Part 3, Per Diem, and Part 4, Reimbursement of Actual Subsistence)
- rental cars (see Part 2, Making Travel Arrangements)
- relocation expenses (see Part 8, Domestic Relocations)

M. Amending AD-202s

Previously established AD-202s should be amended to reflect changes or additions to that data. An AD-202 should be amended whenever estimated costs of a trip change by more than \$500, dates change by 5 days or more, itineraries change, significant expense items change, or items such as rental car or actual subsistence are approved after the fact.

In the event that scheduled trips are canceled, then the travel authorization for that trip must also be canceled.

2 AD-202 Preparation

A. Information Needed to Prepare AD-202

You need to know the following information to complete AD-202:

- AD-202 number
- travel purpose code
- Accounting Classification Code
- itinerary/estimated dates of travel
- estimated costs
- traveler's name and social security number
- Originating Office Number
- amount of cash advance

Step-by-step instructions for completion of AD-202s can be found in the **NFC Procedures Manual** (Title II, Chapter 2, Section 1, Travel System) dated September 1997.

B. Types of AD-202s and Who Uses Them

Type of Authorization	Definition	Is Used By
Unlimited open authorization (Type A)	An unlimited open authorization permits travel for any official purpose for the entire year. "Type A" authorizations are issued annually and are approved by the Secretary or the Under Secretary only.	The Administrator only .
Limited open authorization (Type B)	A limited open authorization is an authorization issued annually for employees required to perform frequent, routine, repetitive travel within a work related geographic area (foreign or domestic). This is called a "Type B" authorization.	STC, SED, DD, compliance specialist, Farm Loan Program employee, warehouse examiner, and similar positions requiring frequent, routine non-local travel within a specified work-related geographic area such as a state, county, region or district. For non-routine travel, a Type C authorization is required.
Trip-by-trip authorization (Type C)	A trip-by-trip authorization is an authorization issued for a specific trip that identifies purpose, itinerary, and estimated costs. This is the most commonly used type of travel authorization.	<p>All other travelers for trips with specific non-local itineraries, including permanent change of station.</p> <p>Travelers with Type B authorizations for travel outside the specified work-related geographic area.</p> <p>Note: Travelers with Type A/B/N authorizations that attend training and/or conferences.</p>

B. Types of AD-202s and Who Uses Them, *continued*

Type of Authorization	Definition	Is Used By
Local travel authorization (Type L)	A local travel authorization is an authorization to permit employees of offices to be reimbursed for local travel and related expenses (mileage, tolls, parking, etc.). Local travel is official travel conducted within the boundaries of the official duty station. "Type L" authorizations are issued annually, to be renewed at the beginning of each fiscal year.	Employees traveling within the area of their official duty station.
Nation-wide travel authorization (Type N)	A nation-wide travel authorization can be issued to an official who would qualify as a Type B traveler, except whose responsibilities require regular, nation-wide, travel. "Type N" authorizations are also issued annually and are approved by the traveler's approving official.	Deputy Administrators, Special Approving Officials, and those positions designated by Deputy Administrators in writing.

Type A, B, N, and L AD-202s can be completed on an annual basis.

Examples of AD-202's can be found in the **NFC Procedures Manual** (Title II, Chapter 2, Section 1, Travel System, dated September 1997).

Note: During a period when a continuing resolution is in effect, an FI Notice will be issued with instructions outlining which specific types of AD-202s should be used for both GS and CO employees until final appropriations are passed.

C. Numbering AD-202

A standard format consisting of 13 positions is used for numbering the AD-202. Each issuing office shall assign their own numbers using this numbering system.

Sample authorization number for FSA GS employees: **3CSFA02550001**

POSITION	FORMAT DESCRIPTION (FSA)
1st	Last digit of fiscal year.
2nd	Type of authorization: A - unlimited open travel B - limited open travel C - individual trips L - local travel N - nationwide travel
3rd	S - single traveler M - multiple travelers on a single authorization (Note: Used by FSA for local (Type L) travel authorizations only).
4 th -5th	2-position alpha-numeric agency code (FA for FSA). Note: The agency code must be the agency paying for the travel expenses if traveler is being reimbursed directly (as opposed to Agency being reimbursed via a transfer of funds).
6 th -9th	Budget organization code. Note: All offices except Farm Loan Program employees located in county offices use "0" plus the first three digits of the budget organization code. Farm Loan Program employees located in county offices use "A" plus the first three digits of the budget organization code. FSA employees should refer to Handbook 98-FI (Rev. 6) for budget organization codes.
10 th -13th	4-position sequential number, beginning with 0001 each fiscal year that is issued by the traveler's office. Use leading zeroes if the code is less than 4 positions (e.g., 0001, 0002, ...).

Sample authorization number for **FSA CO** employees: 3CSCESSCCCXXX

POSITION	FORMAT DESCRIPTION
1st	Last digit of the fiscal year
2nd	Type of authorization: B - limited open travel C - individual trips L - local travel
3rd	Number of travelers – use “S” for single traveler and “M” for multiple travelers
4th and 5th	Agency code “CE” for all County Offices
6th through 10th	The 2-digit State code and 3-digit county code
11th through 13th	Sequential number – begin with “001” and continue issuing numbers sequentially for remainder of FY

Example: 3CSCE40119001

Sample authorization number for **FAS** employees: 3CS1000933069

POSITION	FORMAT DESCRIPTION (FAS)
1 st	Last digit of fiscal year
2 nd	Type of authorization: A - unlimited open travel B - limited open travel C - individual trips L - local travel N - nationwide travel
3 rd	S - single traveler M - multiple travelers on a single authorization
4th-7th	Agency code (1000 for FAS)
8th-9th	“9” plus last digit of fiscal year
10th-13th	4 position sequential number. Contact the International Accounting Branch (IAB) at 305-1257 for number. Indicate whether the travel to be performed is domestic or international.

Information regarding travel codes for FAS is contained in the Financial Accounting System Coding Manual.

D. Travel Purpose Codes

Show one of the following travel purpose codes on Type C authorizations.

If the purpose of travel is...	then the purpose code is...
A "site visit" to perform operational or managerial activities	01
An "information meeting" to discuss general operations	02
For "training"	03
To make a "speech or presentation"	04
To "attend a conference" for observation or education	05
For "relocation"	06
For "entitlement travel" for eligible service outside the continental U.S., such as tour renewal agreement travel.	07
A "special mission", such as a National defense emergency	08
For "emergency travel" from a temporary duty location to the location of the emergency.	09
"Other purposes"	10
"Pre-employment " interview travel	11
For "first post of duty" relocation expenses for new appointee	12
For "rest and recuperation"	13
For "educational" purposes	14
For "informal training"	15

E. Estimating Costs

Type A, B, C, and N AD-202s must show an estimated cost so that travel funds can be obligated. Estimated costs for Type C AD-202s must be broken down by these categories and calculated using actual rates, if known, as applicable:

- per diem or actual subsistence
- car rental
- other reimbursable costs (includes taxicabs, meeting rooms, special services, etc.)
- airfare, or other transportation costs
- POV mileage
- excess fare or baggage expenses

F. Accounting Classification Codes

All AD-202s for **FSA GS** employees must show the accounting classification code. The accounting classification code format consists of 14 digits:

Sample accounting classification code for **FSA GS** employees: 38405684010000

Digit	Description
1 st	Last digit of fiscal year
2 nd and 3 rd	Fund Code "84" only
4 th through 8 th	5-digit organization code
9 th and 10 th	2-digit sub-object code Note: Use sub-object codes 01 through 15 and 17 through 24, under BOC 2111 in Exhibit 27 of Handbook-98FI (Rev. 6).
11 th through 14 th	4-digit project code number. Always "0000" unless tied to a specific project.

The accounting classification format for **FSA CO** employees' travel documents beginning in FY 2003 is as follows:

Sample accounting classification code structure for **FSA CO** employees: Y87SSCCCXX0000

POSITION	EXPLANATION
Y	Last digit of the fiscal year.
87	Fund code to be used by all CO employees.
SS	Numeric state code.
CCC	Numeric county code.
XX	2-digit sub-object code. Note: Use sub-object codes 01 through 15 and 17 through 24, under BOC 2111 in Example 27 of Handbook 98-FI (Rev 6)
0000	All zeros and shall be used for all CO employees unless advised otherwise.

Example: 38740119010000

Note (FSA only): Listings of specific codes issued for each office are contained in Handbook 98-FI. Offices should ensure that 98-FI (Rev.6) or most recent version of the handbook is used.

Sample accounting classification codes for FAS: 301051304933069

First Field (3 digits)	Second Field (4 digits)	Third Field (2 digits)	Fourth Field (6 digits)
Last digit of fiscal year and 2 digit fund code (301)	Program area (0513)	Activity code (04)	Last 6 digits of travel authorization number (933069)

Note (FAS only): Information regarding FAS accounting classification codes can be found in the Financial Accounting System Coding Manual. Contact the International Accounting Branch (IAB) at (703) 305-1257.

G. Approving Authorities (FSA)

Travel authorizations/vouchers must be approved as summarized in this table.

Traveler	Authorization Approval Authority
Administrator	Secretary/Undersecretary
Associate Administrator	Administrator
Deputy Administrator	Administrator/Associate Administrator
Washington Division or Staff Director	Deputy Administrator
Washington Division or Staff employee	Division/Staff Director, Branch/Staff Chief
Director, KCAO, KCCO or APFO Director, KCFO Director, KCITSD or KCITST	Deputy Administrator Director, FMD Director, ITSD
KC office employee (includes KC employee in St. Louis offices)	Division Chiefs
KCCO, KCITSD, KCITST Division Directors	Director, KCCO, KCITSD, KCITST (Note: May redelegate to Deputy Directors)
APFO employee	Director, APFO

G. Approving Authorities (FSA only), *continued*

Traveler	Authorization Approval Authority
Chairperson, STC	DAFO (Note: Travel vouchers approved by the SED; may redelegate to the AO). Info copy of voucher must be sent to DAFO)
STC member, SED	Chairperson, STC (Note: Travel vouchers also approved by Chairperson, STC)
State office employee, other than SED (CONUS TDY) Note: Official travel outside of State or to contiguous State(s) does not require prior approval from DAFO	SED; may redelegate to AO (Note: Travel vouchers also approved by SED; may redelegate to AO)
Farm Loan Manager (CONUS TDY)	District Director (DD) (Note: Travel vouchers also approved by DD)
Federal credit employee (CONUS TDY)	DD may redelegate to Farm Loan Manager (Note: Travel vouchers also approved by DD may redelegate to FLM)
Non-USDA employee (Note: Payment of travel for pre-employment interview is at discretion of agency)	SED (Note: Requires prior clearance from DAFO) Travel voucher approved by SED; may redelegate to AO
Chairperson, COC	Chairperson, STC (Note: Travel voucher is approved by DD)
COC member	Chairperson, COC
CED	Chairperson, COC (Note: Travel voucher also approved by Chairperson, COC)
CO employee	Chairperson, COC; may redelegate to CED (Note: Travel vouchers also approved by Chairperson, COC; may redelegate to CED)

H. Authority for "Acting" Officials

Individuals formally designated as “acting” for any official designated above does not require a separate delegation of authority and acts with the authority of the office in which they are “acting.” The “acting” individual’s name, title, and social security number should be entered in the appropriate “approving officials” blocks on both the AD-202 and/or AD-616. Processing of the documents by the NFC system may require offices to establish these individuals in the NFC security system.

I. Distribution of Copies of AD-202

For FSA employees (domestic travel):

- Original for employee
- NFC, with travel voucher (if not using NFC on-line system)

For FAS employees (domestic travel):

- Original for employee
- Two copies for International Accounting Branch (STOP 0581)
- Issuing office until original is returned
- NFC, with travel voucher (if not using NFC on-line system)