

For: FSA Offices

Reimbursing Employees for Official Local Travel

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Official Local Travel Reimbursement Procedure

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Background

Effective immediately, FMD, Accounting and Travel Policy Section (ATPS) will be responsible for the policy for reimbursement of local travel expenses. This policy will be incorporated into the FSA/FAS Travel Policy and Procedures Manual and will apply to **all** FSA employees.

ATPS will not be responsible for the procedures for processing reimbursements for local travel. Offices shall continue to process these reimbursements according to 97-FI or 115-FI, as applicable.

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Purpose

This notice provides policy for reimbursing employees for local travel.

Disposal Date	Distribution
May 1, 2003	All FSA Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

2 Determining If Local Travel

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Definition

Local travel is defined as official travel performed in the limits of the official duty station. The following terms apply to local travel.

- **Limits of the official duty station** means the corporate limits of the city or town where an employee is stationed **or** an established area around the official duty station having definite boundaries. Approving officials are responsible for defining the limits of the official duty station and ensuring that employees are aware of the limits for travel purposes. **In the absence of a definition by the approving official**, the limits of the official duty station will be an area within a **50-mile** radius of the official duty station.
- **Official duty station (ODS)** means the location of an employee's permanent work assignment; that is, the place where an employee is assigned administratively or functionally whether it be the office that maintains the employee on payroll or provides the employee work space. This could be the County Office to which an employee is assigned or if assigned to multiple County Offices, it is the place where the employee performs the major part of his or her duties or spends the greater portion of his or her time. For a field employee, ODS is **established by CED**, after considering the major area of work.
- **Official residence** means the home or abode from which the employee commutes daily to and from ODS. Travel between an employee's residence and ODS is not considered to be official business and employees may not be reimbursed mileage for expenses for travel between these locations regardless of the location, or whether regular, overtime, or call back overtime duty is performed.
- **Travel headquarters** means the designated place from where the employee begins official travel. Expenses may be reimbursed for travel beginning at this point. For most employees, this is ODS, but may be established at a residence for employees who routinely travel to various TDY stations from the residence to reduce transportation costs, per diem payments, or the employee's time away from duty.

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2 Determining If Local Travel (Continued)

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Authority for Travel

Supervisors/approving officials are responsible for determining and authorizing the **mode** of transportation and departure point that is most advantageous to the Government for local travel and conveying it to the employee. In most instances, the employee's personally owned vehicle (POV) will be cost advantageous; however, public transportation, if available, should be used. Taxicabs should not be used unless determined advantageous to the Government. Personal convenience is not justification for using a taxicab when other forms of mass transit are available. POV mileage is limited to the most direct, commonly traveled route unless unusual circumstances are cause for the approving official to otherwise authorize another travel route.

3 Local Travel Reimbursement Policy

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Policy

FSA's policy is to reimburse employees for local travel expenses in excess of their normal commuting costs to and from their workplace. Employees should not incur additional cost or receive a windfall as a result of performing local travel.

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Travel Within the Limits of ODS

If an employee travels to a location **within the limits** of ODS for training, meetings, or other official business, reimbursement is limited to those transportation costs that **exceed** the normal commuting costs and should be claimed as follows:

- if the employee normally commutes to ODS using POV, then the employee may only claim local travel expenses in excess of the normal POV commuting mileage, plus parking fees and tolls not normally incurred
 - if the employee normally commutes to a workplace using public transportation for which a charge per ride is assessed, then the employee may claim local travel expenses in excess of daily public transportation costs
 - if an employee normally commutes to a workplace using public transportation or a car pool or van pool where the employee pays on a weekly or monthly basis whether the employee rides or not, then the employee may claim all local travel expenses since the employee paid the commuting cost already.
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Notice FI-2541

3 Local Travel Reimbursement Policy (Continued)

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Examples of Travel Within the Limits of ODS

- For travel that begins and ends at ODS, the employee is reimbursed for actual mileage plus parking fees/tolls not normally incurred.
 - For travel that begins at the residence and ends at ODS or vice versa, the employee is reimbursed for actual mileage that exceeds the normal commuting mileage plus parking fees/tolls not normally incurred.
 - For travel that begins and ends at the residence, the employee is reimbursed for actual mileage that exceeds normal commuting mileage plus parking fees/tolls not normally incurred.
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Travel Outside the Limits of ODS

If the alternate duty point is not located within the limits of ODS, then normal commuting costs are not deducted.

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Examples of Travel Outside the Limits of ODS

- For travel that begins and ends at ODS, the employee is reimbursed for actual mileage plus parking fees/toll not normally incurred.
 - For travel that begins at the residence and ends at ODS or vice versa, the employee is reimbursed for actual mileage plus parking fees/tolls not normally incurred.
 - For travel that begins and ends at the residence, the employee is reimbursed for actual mileage plus parking fees/tolls not normally incurred.
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Travel to Multiple Sites

For travel to multiple sites that are located both within and outside the limits of ODS, the employee is reimbursed for actual mileage that exceeds the normal commuting mileage plus parking fees/tolls incurred. The theory behind this is that whenever an alternate site is visited that is located within the limits of ODS, deduction for normal commuting costs occurs.

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Contact

Direct questions about this notice to ATPS at 703-305-1408.
