

# MANAGING YOUR TRAVEL PROGRAM

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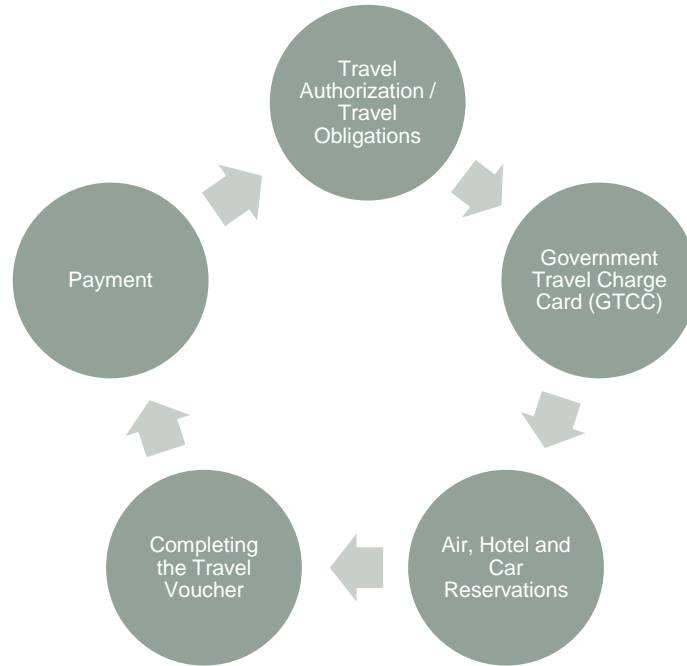
Chief, Travel Management & Policy Branch,  
AOUSC

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# Today's Topics

- Travel Cycle
- Travel Authorizations & Recording Travel Obligations
- Government Travel Citibank Charge Cards (CBAs & IBAs)
- Airfare, Hotels and Rental Cars

# Travel Cycle



# Travel: Recording the Obligation

*The Guide's* Vol. 19, Ch. 4 provides the following:

## § 420.20.10 Authorization and Obligation of Travel

Once travel is authorized, funds for expected travel-related expenses must be obligated prior to the initiation of travel. For guidance on charging travel to the proper fiscal year, **see:** Chief Financial Officer's memo, July 23, 2015.

[ <http://jnet.ao.dcn/financial-management/accounting/guidance-charging-travel-expenses-proper-fiscal-year> ]

In general, travel obligations may be accomplished as followed:

- 1) Obligate for one person going on one trip
  - 2) Obligate for one person going on multiple trips
  - 3) Obligate for a group going on the same trip
  - 4) Obligate for a group going on multiple trips
- Please see the Controller's memo dated, March 16, 2016 at <http://jnet.ao.dcn/financial-management/accounting/obligation-travel-expenses> for detailed information about obligations
  - Training Classes on how to record an obligation were announced in July. See the Controller's Memo from July 20, 2016. <http://jnet.ao.dcn/financial-management/travel/travel-obligation-webinars>
  - The use of JETS should satisfy the new policy.

# Government Travel Card Coordinators

- Each court unit has an Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC) to oversee their respective program; each A/OPC should have a back up.
  - A/OPCs have the authority to add alternate A/OPCs and the responsibility to delete those individuals who have left the organization
    - NOTE: If the cardholder is transferring to another judiciary unit, the cardholder should inquire if they will need the card at their new location; if so, the A/OPC at the current organization should transfer the GTCC to the new unit; no need for a new account
  - Centrally Billed Accounts (CBA) and the Individually Billed Accounts (IBA) have their own hierarchy, which is listed on all reports
  - The hierarchy numbers should be readily available to the A/OPC in case he or she needs to call Citibank

# Government Travel Card Coordinators

## Judiciary Citibank Contact Information

**Verlene Alexander-Reed**

Sr. Client Service Officer

Citi Commercial Cards

Ph: (855) 241-0728, option 2, then ext. 9541101

Option 1-Helpdesk Assistance

Option 2-General Maintenance

[commercialcardcso@citi.com](mailto:commercialcardcso@citi.com)

# Gov't Travel Cards: On-line Access

- Citibank has on-line access for A/OPCs
  - CCMS is the name of Citibank's web application
    - CCMS allows you to close accounts, change addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses.
    - CCMS allows you to review an individual's transaction history prior to the monthly reports
    - A/OPCs should review the IBA accounts monthly
  - CCRS is the name of Citibank's on-line reporting system
    - Citibank has several reports available for your use
      - Examples include: Account Activity Report, ATM Report and Card Delinquency Report
    - A/OPCs should reconcile the CBA accounts monthly
    - Once an A/OPC is set up, he or she will have the ability to run reports within CCRS
    - A/OPCs may also sign up to receive electronic copies of monthly reports (prospectively only)

# Why Should You Use the Gov't Cards?

- The Judiciary benefits, via a rebate, from employees' use of the CBAs and IBAs. The rebate is based on the amount the cards are used and the on-time payment of these accounts. These funds assist with the payment of JETS fees.
- Use of the government card when booking a rental car provides the employee with additional insurance coverage.
- Transparency.
- Use can be easy. Employees can obtain the CBA number/expiration date/PIN from Finance and save this account into their National Travel on-line booking tool profile so all airline tickets are charged to the CBA cards.



# Airfare Issues

- Prior to booking travel, employees should know the “upper limit” of reimbursement for airfare (i.e., the GSA-contracted City Pair Rate). <http://cpsearch.fas.gsa.gov/> These rates are shown as one-way fares, exclusive of any baggage fees and applicable taxes.

**GSA** U.S. General Services Administration Federal Acquisition Service

[GSA Home](#) [City Pairs Program](#) **Airline City Pairs** [Back](#) [Help](#)

**Origin: DCA Destination: DAL**  
[Click on the Fare link for Fuel Surcharge and Baggage Fees](#)

Origin Airport	Destination Airport	Airline	Serv	Govt YCA Fare	Govt -CA Fare	Govt -CB Fare	Contract Effective Date	Contract Expiration Date
<a href="#">WASHINGTON DULLES INT'L AIRPORT</a>	DALLAS/FT. WORTH INT'L AIRPORT	American	N	<a href="#">376.00</a>	<a href="#">168.00</a>	0.00	10/01/2015	09/30/2016
<a href="#">BALTIMORE/WASHINGTON INT'L AIRPORT</a>	LOVE FIELD, DALLAS	Southwest	N	<a href="#">335.00</a>	<a href="#">185.00</a>	0.00	10/01/2015	09/30/2016
<a href="#">WASHINGTON DULLES INT'L AIRPORT</a>	LOVE FIELD, DALLAS	Delta	C	<a href="#">259.00</a>	<a href="#">194.00</a>	0.00	10/01/2015	09/30/2016
<a href="#">BALTIMORE/WASHINGTON INT'L AIRPORT</a>	DALLAS/FT. WORTH INT'L AIRPORT	American	N	<a href="#">445.00</a>	<a href="#">199.00</a>	0.00	10/01/2015	09/30/2016
<a href="#">RONALD REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT</a>	DALLAS/FT. WORTH INT'L AIRPORT	American	N	<a href="#">432.00</a>	<a href="#">229.00</a>	0.00	10/01/2015	09/30/2016
<a href="#">RONALD REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT</a>	LOVE FIELD, DALLAS	Southwest	N	<a href="#">305.00</a>	<a href="#">155.00</a>	0.00	11/01/2015	09/30/2016

# Airfare Issues

- Only government employees traveling on official government business (i.e., use of these rates for personal travel is not permitted). Additionally, contractors may not utilize these rates, even if performing duties for the Judiciary.
- Use of these rates is generally considered advantageous to the Judiciary. If, however, an employee is approved to obtain a discounted, non-government contract airfare:
  - The approving official should weigh the costs & benefits of using a discounted, non-government fare.
  - Any penalties or additional fees for a cancellation or other change in the reservation will be paid **ONLY** when the change is made for official reasons or for reasons beyond the employee's control.
  - Financial management staff must track any unused vouchers issued to employees for cancelled discounted non-government airfare. These vouchers should be utilized for the employee's next official travel arrangements. Under no circumstances should a voucher be utilized by the employee for personal travel – even if the voucher must expire unused.

# Airfare Issues

- A new policy for early boarding, seat assignment and preferred seating fees was included in the new *Guide* update allowing this expense when related to business purposes. Advance approval is required.
- Trip insurance, sometimes offered when purchasing airfare, is non-reimbursable. Government contract fares purchased with a government card affords all of the protections and more.
- Be leery of airline fees charged for baggage that exceeds the weight, size or number of pieces carried free by a common carrier. Would a prudent traveler take a few minutes to shift contents between baggage and carry-on, etc.?

# Hotel Issues

- Incidental expenses, which are part of the per diem and M&IE allowance, include: (1) fees or gratuities for services and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, room stewards, sky caps and others; and (2) transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the temporary duty site.
- Be careful when booking through Orbitz, Expedia, etc. if you do not know the terms of cancellation; these reservations may be non-refundable. The preferred method of obtaining a room is to guarantee the room with a credit card; pre-payment is not suggested given official travel may be cancelled with little notice.
- While the Ritz Carlton may offer government contract rates, you should be mindful of public perception. Be discreet and always remember that you are stewards of taxpayer funds; public trust is difficult to regain once lost.

# Rental Car Issues

- Reimbursement of the costs of a rental car is permitted when the authorizing official determines – BEFORE TRAVEL – that the use of a rental car is more advantageous to the judiciary than the use of a taxi, airport limousine, or other mode of transportation.
- Sub-compact or compact vehicles are standard for employees. Other classes of vehicles are not prohibited, but consider the Prudent Traveler Rule and all relevant factors (e.g., are you carrying equipment; are there a number of travelers, etc.). Also, be mindful of public perception – seeking an upgrade while on government status is not ideal.
- **Please** seek the government rental rate over any other rates. While it may be more expensive, the government rate includes all insurance necessary. And pay with your government travel charge card as it provides additional insurance protection, assuming you file claims timely.
- As with trip insurance, car rental insurance is NOT reimbursable.
- Be mindful of the costs associated with the return empty options. Sometimes these are astronomically expensive.

# Special Issues

- To avoid travel-related problems, advise employees, “When in doubt, use National Travel.” This way, employees do not have to worry about GSA City Pair/Government contract rates, etc.
- Is a traveler’s subsistence allowance automatically reduced on the first and last day of travel?
  - The full M&IE locality rates apply without any reductions to the first and last day of travel; the 75% reduction for the “First and Last Day of Travel,” discussed on the GSA website and in the Federal Travel Regulations, does not apply to the Judiciary.

See <http://jnet.ao.dcn/sites/default/files/pdf/ofb041.pdf>

- Each authorizing official, however, may elect to adopt the 75% reduction for the first and last calendar day of travel as a local internal policy to contain costs.
- On an individual traveler basis, the authorizing official may authorize a “reduced per diem rate when the authorizing official knows in advance that lodging and/or meal costs will be lower than the prescribed locality per diem rate for the temporary duty location.” *Guide to Judiciary Policy*, Vol. 19 § 450.40.40 (emphasis added).

# Contacts

- **Relocation\_and\_Travel\_Help\_Desk@ao.uscourts.gov**
- **Travel and Payment Help Desk – (202) 502-1290**
- **Judges’ Non-Case Travel – (202) 502-4740**
- Elisa West, Management Analyst – (202) 502-2237
- Estefania Borda, Management Analyst – (202) 502-2228
- Michele Peterson, Accountant – (202) 502-2185
- Kim Bell, Accountant – (202) 502-1132
- Stacy Slette, Chief – (202) 502-3294