

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		NUMBER: 4050-572-001
SUBJECT: Payment of Travel and Transportation Expenses for New Appointees and Pre-Employment Interviews	DATE: February 3, 2011	
	OPI: Office of Human Resources Management	

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to set forth the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) policy for the payment of travel and transportation expenses for new appointees and pre-employment interviews.

2. REFERENCES

This directive must be used in conjunction with:

- a. Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.), sections [5706b](#) and [5723](#);
- b. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), [Part 572](#) – Travel and Transportation Expenses; and
- c. [41 CFR 301-304](#) – Federal Travel Regulations (FTR).

3. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

This directive supersedes USDA Personnel Letter No. 572-1, Payment of Travel and Transportation Expenses for New Appointments and Interviews, dated March 5, 1991.

4. POLICY

It is USDA's policy to allow employing agencies and staff offices discretion to pay travel and transportation expenses for a new appointee's first post of duty and for an applicant's pre-employment interview. Each decision is unique to the position or vacancy being filled and does not require a like determination by any other agency filling similar positions. In making the decision to use this authority, Staff Office and Agency Heads or their designees will consider the availability of funds and whether or not use of this authority is necessary to entice a candidate to accept the position, or to assess a candidate's qualifications, particularly when considering other recruitment incentives that may have been offered. Payment of these expenses will be made in accordance with the FTR.

5. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The authority to pay an appointee's travel expenses to the first post of duty or for pre-employment interview expenses currently resides with the Director, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM). This authority is hereby delegated to Agency or Staff Office Heads and may be redelegated to Human Resources Officers or lower levels of the organization, as appropriate.

6. DEFINITIONS

- a. Agency. An organizational unit of the Department, other than a staff office as defined below, whose head reports to an Under Secretary.
- b. Agency Head. The head of a USDA agency or an official who has been delegated the authority to act for the head of the agency in the matter concerned.
- c. Staff Office. A Departmental administrative office whose head reports to the Secretary or Assistant Secretary.
- d. Staff Office Head. The head of a staff office or an official who has been delegated the authority to act for the head of the staff office in the matter concerned.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The Director, OHRM, is responsible for:
 - (1) Establishing USDA's policy for payment of travel and transportation expenses for new appointees and pre-employment interviews and providing technical assistance and advice to agencies or staff offices;
 - (2) Monitoring compliance with Departmental policy; and
 - (3) Reporting to the Office of Personnel Management, as required.
- b. Agency or Staff Office Heads are responsible for:
 - (1) Justifying the need to pay for a new appointees travel and transportation expenses to the first post of duty and for a candidate's pre-employment interview expenses.
 - (2) Ensuring judicious and equitable use of this authority;
 - (3) Monitoring and assessing compliance with this Departmental policy;
 - (4) Ensuring the advancement of USDA's equal employment opportunity objectives when using this authority; and
 - (5) Reporting to OHRM, as requested.

8. PERSONS COVERED

- a. New Appointee.
 - (1) An individual who is employed with the Federal Government for the very first time (including an individual who has performed transition activities under section 3 of the Presidential Transition Act of 1963 (3 U.S.C. 102), as amended, and is appointed in the same fiscal year as the Presidential inauguration);
 - (2) An employee who is returning to the Federal Government after a break in government service of at least 90 days (except an employee separated as the result of a reduction in force or a transfer of functions and is reemployed within one year after such action); or
 - (3) A student trainee assigned to the Federal Government upon completion of his/her college work.

- b. Applicant for Pre-Employment Interviews. An individual who is being considered for employment by an agency or staff office. He or she may be a current Federal Government employee.

9. REQUIREMENTS

An agency or staff office may pay travel and transportation expenses for a new appointee in accordance with provisions in this regulation only after he/she agrees in writing to remain in the Federal Government's service for 12 months from the date of the appointment, unless separated for reasons beyond his/her control, which are deemed acceptable to the agency or staff office, such as through management initiated reassignments or reduction-in-force actions.

10. RECORDKEEPING

Each agency or staff office will maintain records in the Human Resources Office of positions for which payments are made under this authority and will make those records available to OHRM upon request. The Human Resources Office will dispose of these records in accordance with records retention requirements for recruitment and merit promotion case files. At a minimum, each Human Resources Office must maintain a record of the amount of expenses paid along with the following documentation:

- a. Appointee or Pre-employment Interview Information. Record the employee/candidate name, title, pay plan, series, grade and duty station for the position to which he/she is appointed or has applied and for which travel and/or transportation expenses are paid;
- b. Method of Appointment/Recruitment. If travel expenses are paid to a new appointee's first post of duty, record the type of appointment used (e.g., reinstatement, career-conditional appointment, etc.). If travel expenses are paid to an applicant for a pre-employment interview, record the recruitment source (e.g., vacancy announcement, certificate of eligibles, etc.);
- c. Delegations of Authority. Record the name, title, and signature of the person who has been delegated the authority to approve the final action and the date of approval; and

- d. Basis for Decision. Prepare a statement setting forth the rationale for the decision and a description of how payment of travel expenses meets the requirements of 5 CFR 572.

11. REPORTS

Reports on the use of this authority may be requested periodically by OHRM.