

U.S. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (USEITI) Advisory Committee

Invitational Travel and Reimbursement Procedures

When you are traveling to attend a meeting of the USEITI Advisory Committee, you are on Invitational Travel Orders and must follow the policies and procedures set forth for all Government employees or invitees.

Except for initial commercial transportation (i.e. common carrier modes of transportation via air or train), Invitational Travelers must use their own personal funds for all other expenses (hotels, rental cars, meals and incidentals, luggage fees, etc.).

The Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) will reimburse primary members of the USEITI Advisory Committee for travel expenses in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) contained in 41 United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Chapters 300 through 304, which implements statutory requirements and Executive branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at the Government's expense.

The ONRR will reimburse alternate members of the USEITI Advisory Committee for travel expense (in accordance with the FTR) only when they have been designated to attend a meeting on behalf of a primary member.

It is the primary member's responsibility to notify the main USEITI Advisory Committee travel point of contact – Rosita Christian at Rosita.ComptonChristian@onrr.gov (202-513-0597) of their designated alternate. Travel cannot be arranged for a designated alternate until the POC has been notified by the primary member.

In order to be reimbursed for your invitational travel expenses, you must complete the **Vendor Request Form**. If you have already completed the form, you do not need to do this again. If you have never completed the form, you are required to complete it before travel can be booked. The form contains personally identifiable information, so all forms must be faxed to: Rosita Christian at (202) 513-0682.

Note: All primary and alternate USEITI Advisory Committee members must submit a completed Vendor Request Form within one week of receiving this guidance.

Arranging Travel

As an authorized Invitational Traveler, you must fill out and submit the attached **Vendor Request Form** before any authorized, approved travel can be arranged.

- For Invitational Travelers, the Government will only arrange and pay for common carrier modes of transportation via air or train in advance of authorized travel.
- Invitational Travelers must arrange for and use their own personal funds for all other travel related expenses (hotels, rental cars, meals and incidentals, luggage fees, etc.).

Invitational Travelers should contact the SATO Travel desk to book your travel. Call SATO at 1-866-486-6135. Follow the prompts and press 2, more selections will be presented and press 4.

Inform the travel agent that you are booking invitational travel, and you are not a Federal Government employee. Once the travel agent has made your reservation you will be provided with a locator number. That locator number must be emailed to your Government representative, Rosita Christian at Rosita.ComptonChristian@onrr.gov in order for your travel to be confirmed.

Rosita will contact SATO with the locator number and provide the travel desk with the Government credit card to pay for your travel. After your travel is paid for you will receive an email confirmation with your ticketed invoice.

DO NOT pay for your airfare with your own credit card.

DO NOT reserve your hotel or your rental car through the SATO travel desk.

Travel Authorization

Your Government Point of Contact (POC) will work with you to complete a travel authorization. The travel authorization is a critical component of the invitational travel. You cannot be reimbursed for travel unless you have a travel authorization completed before your trip. The travel authorization serves as your official travel orders and is necessary to obtain the Government rate at your hotel and for a rental car.

If you do not reside in the metro area where a FACA committee meeting is being held, you are authorized to travel and check into your hotel one day prior to the first day of the meeting, and you are authorized to check out and travel home one day after the last day of the meeting. For instance, if the meeting is held on a Tuesday and Wednesday, you are authorized to travel and check in on Monday and you must check out and return home no later than Thursday.

The costs of travel beyond these authorized travel dates must be borne by you and will not be arranged for or paid by the Government.

Common Carrier Guidance

Under 5 U.S.C. 5733, travel must be by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable and commensurate with the nature and purpose of the duties. As such, Invitational Travelers must select the method of travel most advantageous to the Government, when cost and other factors are considered.

- Travel by common carrier is presumed to be the most advantageous method of transportation and must be used when reasonably available.
- Contract city-pair fare flights must be booked unless a non-contract carrier flight results in less cost to the Government, or a city-pair flight is not available.
- Coach class accommodations must be used.

Travel should originate from the nearest common carrier outlet to the travelers residence and/or business. If you do not travel by the method of transportation required by regulation, any additional expenses you incur will be borne by you the traveler. Your reimbursement will be limited to the cost of travel by a direct route or on an uninterrupted basis, and you will be responsible for any additional costs.

If you are travelling with others, such as family members or colleagues not approved for invitational travel, you must make separate arrangements for them. We cannot make travel arrangements for people that are not covered by the Vendor Request Form.

Hotel Reservations & Expenses:

Invitational travelers must make their own hotel reservations and use their personal credit card to guarantee and pay for their hotel room. Lodging will be reimbursed at the Government lodging per diem rate. If the lodging cost is below the established per diem rate, you will be reimbursed at that lower actual cost. It is recommended that reservations are made at least two weeks in advance of the meeting dates to guarantee that you receive the Government rate.

In addition to reimbursement of the Government per diem lodging rate (or the lower actual rate if applicable) you can be reimbursed for lodging taxes as they appear on your final, paid hotel bill. However, any other expenses you incur to your lodging bill will not be reimbursed as a lodging expense. You are reimbursed through the Meals & Incidental Expense (M&IE) portion of the per diem rate for your meals and can be reimbursed for other expenses, such as parking, separate from your lodging reimbursement.

Rental Car Reservations & Expenses:

Invitational travelers must make their own rental car reservations and use their personal credit card to guarantee and pay for their rental car. Your Travel Authorization allows you to rent a vehicle under the Government contract; therefore, you should show your Invitational Travel Authorization to the rental car agency attendant to assure that you receive the contracted Government rate.

You should reserve a **compact** rental car, and it should be booked at the lowest rate possible when all factors are considered; i.e., rental car agencies servicing the area, availability, and number of passengers—if sharing a car with other meeting participants, etc. Additional expenses, such as pre-paid gas, GPS devices and upgrades are not authorized expenses and cannot be reimbursed.

Before signing your rental car agreement, please make sure that you decline the insurance because you are traveling as a Government employee and are automatically covered under the insurance. Additionally, ensure that the Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS) language appears on the contract before you sign it.

Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Expenses:

If you are an out-of-town traveler, approval to travel to the meeting location by a privately owned vehicle (POV) must be requested and approved in advance. If approved, POV reimbursements will be made at a rate commensurate with travel by commercial carrier (most beneficial to the Government). We can only reimburse your mileage up to the cost of the common carrier transportation and related travel expenses (parking, mileage to/from airport, and tolls, etc.).

Round-trip POV mileage between your residence and/or business and the airport is a reimbursable expense. This POV mileage will be at the current Government mileage rate of \$0.565/mile.

Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE):

You will be compensated for meals and incidental expenses at the Government MI&E per diem rate. You will not be compensated for the actual cost of meals, so you do not need to keep receipts for meals. For travel days (the first and last days of your trip) you will be reimbursed for per diem at 75% of the daily rate. For all other days of your trip, you will be reimbursed at the full (100%) per diem rate.

Government Per Diem Rates:

Per diem is the allowance for lodging (excluding taxes), meals and incidental expenses. The General Services Administration (GSA) establishes per diem rates for destinations within the Continental United States (CONUS). Information on per diem rates is available at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>.

Travel Reimbursement

Invitational Travelers must submit all receipts (or other documentation of paid expenses) **within one week of completing their authorized travel.**

Please recognize that our office is regularly audited and must be able to document and show that public funds are spent in a fiscally responsible manner. To that end, we need your full and prompt support to assure that we receive accurate documentation.

Again, you must have a current Vendor Request Form on file in our office in order to be reimbursed for travel expenses.

Accurate documentation is required for all expenses. Keep all your receipts to include airfare and expenses incurred for baggage fees, lodging, rental car and associated gas, tolls, taxi/shuttle, parking, POV mileage, etc. You must also submit copies of your boarding passes to show proof of travel. **DO NOT THROW AWAY YOUR BOARDING PASSES.**

You will be compensated for meals at the Government per diem rate so you do not need to keep receipts for meals.

Summary of Reimbursable Expenses:

1. Hotel Costs – *Lodging Per Diem Rate (or less)*
2. POV Mileage – *Round trip between residence (or business) and airport*
3. Meals and Incidentals – *MI&E Per Diem Rate (only 75% on first and last days of travel)*
4. Rental Car
5. Gasoline (for rental car)
6. Parking
7. Tolls
8. Taxicab Fares (plus tip)
9. Airline Baggage Fees – *You are authorized one bag within the weight limits. You will not be reimbursed for overweight baggage fees.*
10. Lodging Taxes

Please submit your travel reimbursement request by listing your expenses, copying all of your receipts, scanning the information, and emailing it to:

Rosita Christian at Rosita.ComptonChristian@onrr.gov

If you cannot scan and email the documentation, then you may fax it to (202) 513-0682.

All of your reimbursement information must be received **within one week** of completing your travel.

Once your information and receipts are received and verified, a Travel Voucher will be completed **within one week** for your review and signature. Rosita Christian will complete your travel voucher and email an electronic copy to you. Please review it for accuracy and sign and date, and mail it back to Rosita. The finance department requires an original signature for reimbursements.

Mail to: U.S. Department of the Interior
Attention: Rosita Christian, ONRR
1849 C Street NW, MS 4211
Washington DC 20240

The signed travel voucher and the relevant documentation will be submitted to our servicing financial office for audit and then submitted to our servicing procurement office for payment.

Under normal circumstances financial and procurement processing can take up to four weeks. Therefore, your cooperation in providing timely and accurate information and responses to requests is critical to ensure prompt and proper payment.

Additional Information

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of the following individuals:

- Rosita Christian at RositaComptonChristian@onrr.gov or 202-513-0597