



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Financial Officer and
Assistant Secretary for Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

July 31, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: Bureau Chief Financial Officers

FROM: Gordon T. Alston
Director
Office of Financial Reporting, Policy, Internal Controls, and Travel

SUBJECT: Travel Guidance for the Current and New Fiscal Year

In order to secure travel and transportation services prior to receiving appropriations for the new fiscal year (FY), each operating unit and Department office must establish adequate procedures for ensuring that all year-end obligations for travel for FY 2020 and obligations for FY 2021 are made in accordance with the provisions of Title 31 of the United States Code. Specifically, 31 U.S.C. 1341 prohibits an officer or employee of the U.S. Government to make or authorize an expenditure or obligation exceeding an amount available in an appropriation or fund, or to involve the Government in a contract or obligation for the payment of money before an appropriation is made.

Accordingly, employees are advised to consult with their budget or finance office to determine the availability of funds before scheduling travel for FY 2021.

Each operating unit and Department have unique appropriations; however, the following guidance is provided, as appropriate:

Operating units and Department offices with multi-year funding available for obligations properly attributable to FY 2020 and beyond FY 2021 may authorize travel occurring in or extending into FY2021 using these funds, provided there is a fund balance sufficient to cover the travel to be performed. The authorized travel should be for the purpose for which the funds were appropriated, and those operating units and Department offices are advised to state on the travel order: "Approved to purchase ticket for FY 2021 with prior-year funds due to multi-year funding/no-year funding."

Operating units and Department offices with one-year funds are encouraged not to arrange or plan travel that will require tickets to be issued on or after October 1, 2020. This procedure will be in effect until a continuing resolution or annual appropriations act for FY 2021 year has been enacted into law.

Travel Orders

For operating units and Department offices with one-year funds, all travel orders prepared in FY 2020 for travel beginning or ending in FY 2021 should be annotated to reflect the following statement:

“Approval of travel scheduled to be accomplished on or after October 1, 2020, is contingent upon the availability of FY 2021 funds. No such travel may be undertaken or fiscal obligations related to such travel may be incurred until such funds have been appropriated and become legally available for obligation.”

This statement shall be reflected on all temporary duty (TDY) travel orders until an appropriation is available for obligation. Travelers are prohibited from providing the travel management service providers any signed paper travel orders unless funding is available.

Purchase of Transportation Tickets

Roundtrip transportation tickets for travel beginning in FY 2020 and ending in FY 2021 will be charged to the current appropriation, whether obtained using a Citibank centrally-billed travel account or individually-billed travel card.

However, for operating units and Department offices with one-year funds, if the return portion of the ticket cannot be used and a separate return ticket for travel on or after October 1, 2020, must be purchased, then the FY 2021 appropriation will be charged. FY 2020 funds may not be used to purchase transportation that begins and ends in FY 2021.

Please note that the Department’s ETS2 vendors (SAP Concur for USPTO and CWTSatoTravel for all others) cannot guarantee fares or flights for any FY 2021 booking if the airline has not provided the fares or identified the contract carrier for the new fiscal year.

Temporary Duty Per Diem, Mileage, and Other Expenses

Charges for per diem, mileage, and other expenses must be charged to an appropriation available for the fiscal year in which the expenses are actually incurred because fiscal obligations for such expenses are incurred daily.

For operating units and Department offices with one-year funds, travel vouchers filed for travel that spans the two fiscal years should allocate the expenses accordingly and indicate the appropriate fiscal year accounting classification codes charged as shown on the travel order. In such a case, FY 2020 funds may not be used to pay for any travel expense incurred on or after October 1, 2020. For example:

- All per diem, mileage costs, ground transportation, and other travel-related costs that are incurred in September 2020 will be charged to the FY 2020 appropriation.

- All per diem, mileage costs, ground transportation, and other travel-related costs that are incurred on or after October 1, 2020, will be charged to the FY 2021 appropriation.

Permanent Change of Station Moves

All organizations must record as an obligation the estimated amount of all travel and transportation expenses of a transferred employee against an appropriation available for obligation at the time the employee is issued a valid travel order irrespective of when the relocation will be completed. (See 64 Comp. Gen. 45).

Local Travel

Local travel charged to one-year funding occurring during the end of September 2020 may be claimed in FY 2021 and paid using FY 2020 funds.

Lapse in Appropriations

In the event, FY2021 appropriations are not enacted into law prior to the start of the fiscal year and employees are in a travel status at midnight leading into October 1, 2020, DOC will advise operating units and Department offices whether it is necessary to have the employees return to their permanent duty stations.

Please ensure that your employees prepare travel orders and travel vouchers in accordance with these guidelines.

If you or members of your staff have questions, please contact Cecelia Kizer at (202) 482-1818 and via the OFM-DOC Travel Policy Helpdesk at OFMDOCTravelPolicyHelpdesk@doc.gov. If you have any questions for USPTO and SAP Concur, please forward an email to the USPTO Travel mailbox at Travel@uspto.gov.

cc: Travel Contacts
PMO/ETS2
USPTO (SAP Concur)
CWTSatoTravel
SP3 PMO/Citibank