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Agenda Item 8. Travel, Per Diem, Compensation

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Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission
Agenda Item 8 for Telephonic Meeting of August 19, 2009

**Overview of Travel, Per Diem and
Commissioner Compensation**

Below is a brief overview for Commissioners on how to arrange travel for Commission business, information surrounding per diem rates while on travel and information on keeping time records for purposes of receiving your compensation for serving as a Commissioner. Contact information for GSA subject matter experts are listed below if you choose to reach out to them with questions. Also, if you would like to review the federal travel regulations, they can be found at www.gsa.gov/fttr.

The forms that are referenced below will be sent to you separately the week of August 17, 2009.

I. Travel

1. Contact your travel provider and have your trip arranged. Commissioners may choose to go through his or her own travel agent or use GSA's ADTRAV program. Go to <http://www.adtrav.com> for further information on ADTRAV.
2. Fill out the Travel Authorization form, GSA87, and have it approved by the Executive Director (or the Chairman until the Commission's Executive Director is hired). Authorization will have costs of travel, i.e. air fare, plus estimate of expenses, i.e. estimated cab charges.
3. Submit the Travel Authorization form to the Executive Director (or the Chairman until the Commission's Executive Director is hired), if you would like to have the money obligated prior to travel.
4. Upon return, fill out the Travel Voucher, Standard Form 1012, and have it approved by the Executive Director (or the Chairman until the Commission's Executive Director is hired). The Voucher will include all reimbursable travel expenses, including per diem. The per diem rates for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area are below. To find per diem rates for other cities, check [GSA's per diem rates page](#).
5. Submit Travel Voucher to the Executive Director (or the Chairman until the Commission's Executive Director is hired).
6. Commissioners should be aware that federal travelers are required to use U.S. flag air carrier service for all travel funded by the U.S. Government. However, an exception to this requirement is transportation provided under a bilateral or multilateral air transportation agreement to which the U.S. Government and the government of a foreign country are parties, and which the Department of Transportation has determined meets the requirements of the Fly America Act.
7. Commissioners who fly business class, first class or other than coach will be personally responsible for the difference between the actual cost of the ticket and the cost of a coach ticket. However, it will be up to the individual Commissioner to determine which class of air travel that they want to fly.

8. If a Commissioner needs to fly other than coach due to medical reasons or the lack of available coach seats, the Commission will reimburse the full amount of the ticket if such travel is previously approved by the Executive Director (or the Chairman until the Commission's Executive Director is hired).
9. When on local travel, i.e. cab rides, approved expenses, etc., fill out a Standard Form 1164. This would also be submitted in the same fashion as the Travel Voucher.
10. Commissioners will obtain government travel cards (personal credit cards can be used until the government travel cards are issued). GSA will provide the travel card application forms for Commissioners. Commissioners should use the travel card when booking travel and hotels or paying for any travel related expenses when on Commission travel. Commissioners should not use the travel card for personal travel and expenses.
11. Commissioners and staff should be aware that they will be personally liable for any charges that are not authorized or approved by the Executive Director (or the Chairman until the Commission's Executive Director is hired).
12. Questions regarding travel may be directed to Doug Tripken at doug.tripken@gsa.gov (202-708-5702) or Kirk Martinelli at kirk.martinelli@gsa.gov (202-501-8913).

II. Per Diem

1. What is per diem?

Per Diem is the allowance for lodging, meals and incidental expenses. The General Services Administration (GSA) establishes per diem rates for destinations within the Continental United States (CONUS).

2. What is the per diem rate for Washington, D.C.?

The per diem rate for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area is as follows:

September 1 to October 31: \$233 for lodging excluding taxes
 \$ 64 for meals and incidental expenses(\$48 on first/last travel day)

November 1 to June 30: \$209 for lodging excluding taxes
 \$ 64 for meals and incidental expenses(\$48 on first/last travel day)

July 1 to August 31: \$165 for lodging excluding taxes
 \$ 64 for meals and incidental expenses(\$48 on first/last travel day)

Rates are subject to change.

3. What constitutes the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area?

The Washington, D.C. metropolitan area covers the District of Columbia; the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax, and the counties of Arlington and Fairfax in Virginia; and the counties of Montgomery and Prince George's in Maryland.

4. Are lodging taxes included in the per diem rate?

Lodging taxes paid by the federal traveler are reimbursable as a miscellaneous travel expense limited to the taxes on reimbursable lodging costs. However, some states and local governments may exempt federal travelers from the payment of taxes.

For more information regarding tax exempt status, travelers should visit the GSA website at www.gsa.gov/perdiem and click in the "State Tax Exemption" link. This site contains the proper forms travelers may use to claim tax exempt status and other information. If a state is not listed on this site, travelers are to assume that they are not exempt from taxes.

5. How much per diem are you allowed without receipts?

You must provide a receipt to substantiate your claimed travel expenses for lodging and a receipt for any authorized expenses incurred costing over \$75.

6. What is the meal reimbursement rate during the first and last travel day?

Federal employees are only eligible for 75 percent of the total Meals and Incidental Expense rate for the location to which they are traveling on the first and last day of travel. The amount for first and last travel day in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area is \$48.00.

7. What is included in incidental expenses?

Incidental Expenses are: A. Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, and hotel maids. B. Transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at a location that does not require transportation. C. Mailing cost associated with filing travel vouchers and payment of Government charge card billings.

8. What do I do if there are no hotels available at per diem?

If lodging is not available on travel, the Executive Director (or the Chairman until the Commission's Executive Director is hired) may authorize or approve the maximum per diem rate of up to 300% of per diem for the location where lodging is obtained.

9. Do I receive a meal reimbursement for day travel away from my regular duty station?

Commissioners are entitled to 75% of the prescribed meals and incidental expenses for one day travel away from your location if it is longer than 12 hours.

10. Can hotels refuse to honor the per diem rate to federal government employees?

Hotels are not required to honor the government's per diem rates. It is a business decision.

11. Is the GOV rate the same as per diem?

Instead of offering the per diem rate, hotels sometimes offer a "GOV" rate. This may be higher than the per diem rate in your location and would therefore require approval by the Executive Director (or

the Chairman until the Commission's Executive Director is hired) for actual expense prior to travel.

III. Submitting Time for Purposes of Compensation

Commissioners should keep his or her time for any day, or portion of the day, spent on Commission business. A copy of the GSA payroll calendar is attached. A Commissioner's time should be submitted to the Executive Director (or the Chairman until the Commission's Executive Director is hired), on a bi-weekly basis on the dates indicated by a square on the GSA payroll calendar. Commissioners will then be paid on the following Friday.

The Chairman or his designee will initially e-mail all time records to Linda Sims at Linda.Sims@gsa.gov. Once the computer interfaces are established, and the Commission has access to the GSA payroll site, Commissioners and staff time will be entered directly into the GSA payroll system by the Commission.

For payroll questions, the Commission's contact is Linda Sims and her number is 816-926-1168.