

Notice

N(30)000-339

June 6, 2000

Upon Incorporation

Subject: Travel Gainsharing Savings Program **Cancel Date:** into the CCDM

Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to provide instructions and procedures for the Travel Gainsharing Savings Program. This program will be effective for all travel performed on or after June 1, 2000. These procedures apply to all field and National Office Chief Counsel employees who voluntarily wish to participate in this program. This program was initially suggested by the National Treasury Employees Union and is being implemented with their full cooperation.

General

The Government Employees Incentive Awards Act (GEIAA), 5 U.S.C. Sections 4501-4507, authorizes an agency to pay a cash award for "efficiency" or "economy." The Office of Chief Counsel Travel Gainsharing Savings Program will reward employees on temporary duty (TDY) travel who save government money through their own initiative. Although travelers may only receive Travel Gainsharing Awards for travel from June 1, 2000 to September 30, 2000 for FY 2000, this program will continue throughout FY 2001.

Program

Counsel employees on official travel may receive cash awards of 50% of the combined savings from the following four (4) categories:

- lodging costs that are less than the locality rate;
- sharing a hotel room with one other government traveler (each traveler saves ½ of the single daily lodging rate times the number of days);
- staying with friends or family which results in zero lodging costs; and
- using frequent flyer miles accumulated from government or personal travel to purchase an airline ticket for official use.

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Eligibility

All Counsel employees on official travel status, either foreign or domestic, who save a minimum of \$400 per fiscal year are eligible for Travel Gainsharing awards.

Awards

Counsel employees who save a minimum amount of \$400 per fiscal year will be eligible to receive 50% of the savings. For example, an employee who saves a combined total of \$550 in lodging and airline tickets during the fiscal year will receive \$275 at the end of the fiscal year. The employee will receive a SF-50 showing the award amount and the amount will be included on the employee's Form W-2. Taxes and other applicable deductions will be withheld from the award amount.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees must comply with all travel requirements in IRM 1763, the Travel Handbook, in order to qualify for the award.

Employees have the responsibility to track savings and submit the Travel Savings Form with each travel voucher filed where savings have resulted. Once an employee's aggregate savings reach or exceed \$400, the employee should notify his/her manager that the \$400 minimum savings has been reached and he/she is now eligible for a Travel Gainsharing Award.

Employees on travel during the last two weeks of the fiscal year should submit their forms no later than COB two weeks after the end of the fiscal year. Employees who do not submit completed forms timely will not receive awards for those periods.

Management Responsibilities

The manager should review and certify the Travel Savings Form in conjunction with the applicable travel voucher. After the \$400 minimum savings is reached, the approving official submits the signed Travel Savings Forms to the local office manager. The approving official should retain a copy of the signed forms and the supporting documents in the local files. At the end of the fiscal year, the approving official should submit the completed Form 9127, Recommendation for a Cash Incentive Award, for payment of the total savings award. In section 1 "Type of Recommendation," the "Other" block should be marked and the description "TRAVEL SAVINGS PROG" should be put in the appropriate space. In Section 4, "Certification of Funds", insert the full accounting code for payment of the Travel Gainsharing award below the block "Appropriation To Be Charged." The following codes will be used: 1236 for awards from domestic travel or 1237 for awards from foreign travel. The award is charged to the fiscal year in which the employee becomes eligible for the award.

Exclusions

- Relocation travel is not covered under this program.
- No Gainsharing awards will result from weekend travel to an alternate location.
- Awards will not be made to individual employees on travel where lodging savings were the result of being prearranged by someone else or prepaid by contract with the hotel.
- Hotel lodging costs must be paid with the government contractor issued charge card in order to qualify for inclusion under this program.
- Lodging costs incurred on personal time such as leave will not be counted as savings under this program.

Office of Chief Counsel Travel Savings Form

Employee Name:

Employee SSN:

Travel Dates							
Maximum Lodging Rate							
Minus Actual Cost							
Minus Excess Transp.							
Lodging Savings							

Travel Dates							
Maximum Lodging Rate							
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Frequent Flyer Benefits

Travel Dates	To:	From:
Origin City		
Destination City		
Government Contract Fare/Lowest Available Unrestricted Coach Fare	\$	
Amount of Frequent Flyer Benefits Savings	\$	

Summary Data

Description	Amount
Total Lodging Savings	\$
Total Frequent Flyer Benefits	\$
Total Savings	\$
Multiply by 50%	x .50
Award Amount to Employee	\$

I understand that claims for this program are subject to audit and the falsification of claims are subject to all penalties as provided by law. I also understand that the payments to me are taxable income.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approval Signature: _____ Date: _____

PRIVACY ACT NOTICE

In compliance with Privacy Act of 1974 the following information is provided: Solicitation of the information on this form is authorized by 5 U.S.C. Chapter 57 as implemented by the Federal Travel Regulations, E.O. 11609 of July 22, 1971, E.O. 11012 of March 27, 1962, and E.O. 9397 of November 22, 1943. The primary purpose of this information is to facilitate the review, approval, accounting, and advancement of funds for travel savings program to be incurred under appropriate administrative authorization. The requested information will be used by officers and employees of this agency who have a need for such information in the performance of their official duties. The information will be disclosed to appropriate Federal, State, local or foreign agencies, when relevant to civil, criminal, or regulatory investigations or prosecutions, or when pursuant to a requirement by this agency in connection with the hiring or firing of an employee, security clearances, or other investigations of the performance of official duty while in Government service. Your Social Security Number (SSN) is solicited for use as an employee identification number. Disclosure of the requested information is voluntary, however, failure to provide the information required may result in delay or suspension of your travel savings program request.

Instructions

Recording Lodging Savings

The maximum locality rate for lodging for each night must be recorded and is automatically calculated by the TRAS system. The actual lodging cost will be entered as well. The savings for lodging is determined by subtracting the actual lodging cost for each night from the maximum locality rate. Managers should ensure that the lodging amounts match the amounts shown on TRAS or manual voucher. Transportation costs to the TDY site and return to the hotel will be factored into computing the savings. Any transportation expenses that are more than the normal amount incurred from the TDY site to the more expensive lodging will be deducted from the lodging savings, and the remaining savings will be eligible toward the minimum savings of \$400. (These costs are referred to as "Excess Transportation" on the Travel Savings Form).

Redemption of Frequent Flyer Benefits

Employees who enroll in frequent flyer benefit programs and obtain a free coach class ticket with frequent flyer miles earned on official and/or personal travel are eligible for the travel savings award. Savings on transportation costs will be measured by the contract city pair rate in effect at the time of the flight. If no contract fare is available, then the lowest available non-restricted coach fare will be used as a basis for determining the savings. Where frequent flyer benefits are claimed, managers should verify government contract airfare with the designated government travel agency.

The Summary Data represents the savings to Counsel. The total savings, minimum of \$400, is multiplied by 50% to arrive at the award amount.

**Office of the Chief Counsel
Travel Gainsharing Program
Frequently Asked Questions**

1. I understand I have to save a minimum of \$400 per fiscal year to receive an award of \$200. Is there a maximum dollar amount I can receive as a gainsharing award? There is no limit on the maximum amount. You will get 50% of the total savings once you reach or exceed \$400.
2. How are the travel gainsharing awards funded? Gainsharing awards are funded from the travel dollars saved by the employee's action.
3. Will TRAS be updated to track my travel savings? No decision has been made to use TRAS to assist employees to track their gainsharing awards.
4. Am I eligible to receive a travel gainsharing award when my travel is paid by another government agency? No. There was no Counsel money saved as a result of this travel.
5. What is "excess" transportation? "Excess" transportation is the difference between the cost for transportation from the normal, more expensive lodging to the duty site from the cost for transportation from the cheaper lodging to the duty site. For example, when I travel to Las Vegas, I normally stay at a hotel within a block from my duty site. The lodging per diem is \$72 in Las Vegas. I incur no transportation expense because I walk from the hotel to the duty site and back. However, on this particular trip, I am saving \$72 because I am staying with a friend at no cost to the government. My friend lives 20 miles away and it costs \$20 to get from her house to the duty site and back. The \$20 round trip cost is "excess" transportation and reduces the \$72 savings to \$52. On some days my friend takes me to the duty site and picks me up and on those days the \$72 savings is not reduced by "excess" transportation.
6. I was supposed to be on travel status for 4 days but I completed my assignment one day early. May I claim the lodging expense that I did not incur as a savings? No. There was no savings because you were not in a travel status on the 4th day.
7. May I claim a lodging savings when I choose to fly out early in the morning and return the same day instead of spending the night at the duty location? No. There was no savings because you did not incur any reimbursable lodging expense.
8. May I claim a savings under the gainsharing program if I used my personal credit card to charge my lodging expense and the lodging expense is lower than the locality rate? No. You must use a government contractor issued travel charge card to pay the expenses and claim the savings under the gainsharing program.
9. May I claim the savings from choosing an airport that results in a lower government contract airfare? No. The only airline savings that qualifies for a gainsharing award is the savings realized when you use frequent flyer points to purchase a coach class ticket.
10. Is it against government policy to use frequent flyer points to purchase airline tickets? No, it is against the law and government policy to use frequent flyer points obtained through government travel for personal use.

11. May I combine the frequent flyer miles from personal trips with the miles earned on official trips to purchase airline tickets for official travel and claim the savings under the gainsharing program? Yes.
12. May I claim the savings from transferring frequent flyer points to a co-worker who uses them to purchase airline tickets for official travel? No travel dollars are saved by you for earning or transferring the frequent flyer points. The traveler who redeems the points to purchase the ticket is the person eligible to claim the savings towards the gainsharing award.
13. May I claim the savings if I park my car at a free parking lot instead of at the airport parking lot? No. The travel gainsharing program only includes savings realized from lodging expenses and airline tickets purchased with frequent flyer miles.
14. May I claim the savings if, instead of taking a cab, I ask my friend to drive me to the airport? No. See above answer.
15. May I claim the savings if I drive to my destination instead of fly there? No. See above answer.