

# **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)**

June 25, 2020 FEMA ORR

#### INVITATIONAL TRAVEL FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

## I. Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) sets out how Individual Assistance staff will request, implement, and process FEMA Invitational Travel for Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). The SOP is based on Chapter 11 of the FEMA Travel Manual 122-1-1, which outlines the policies and procedures for inviting non-federal employees to travel on behalf of the Agency.

# II. Scope

In limited situations during the early stages of a presidentially-declared major disaster, an authorized FEMA Official may utilize Disaster Relief Funds (DRF) to extend Invitational Travel to Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) personnel when deemed necessary to further FEMA's mission in an efficient and economic manner, and when the work to be performed directly benefits an authorized disaster activity necessary to carry out the purpose of the appropriations to be charged.

Use of Invitational Travel is limited to individuals who are either not employed, or employed intermittently, by the Government as consultants or experts and paid daily and for individuals serving without pay or at \$1 a year when they are acting in a capacity that is directly related to, or in connection with, official activities of the Government. FEMA may not approve IT to subsidize independent activities of voluntary organizations, including those that have response or recovery activities that are part of their standard activities. Invitational Travel may not be used to fund voluntary organization personnel engaged in activities that are not authorized under the Stafford Act.

The Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO)/Regional Administrator (RA)/IA Division Director (IADD) authorizing the Invitational Travel request will provide initial approval of the travel dates and activities to be performed by the travelers as identified by the requester. (*See* Invitational Travel Approval Process, Section IV.C., below). Allowable travel costs may include: transportation to/from the traveler's home and their duty station; transportation required to travel between the lodging location duty station and other requisite locations for the authorized dates (e.g., privately owned vehicles, rental vehicles); lodging and lodging taxes; meals; and incidental expenses. All Invitational Travel costs must be in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation.

# III. Authority

- A. Executive Order 12148, as amended, "Federal Emergency Management" (July 20, 1979).
- B. 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 5703 Agencies may use appropriated funds to pay for travel or transportation expenses for employees servicing intermittently in the United States Government service as an expert of consultant paid on a daily whenactually employed basis or serving without pay or at \$1 a year.
- C. 6 U.S.C. § 313(b)(1) –FEMA's primary mission.
- D. 31 U.S.C. § 1301(a)—Federal agencies may not use appropriated funds for purposes other than those for which they were intended.
- E. 31 U.S.C. § 1345 Agencies may not use appropriated funds to pay for travel, transportation, or subsistence costs (per diem) for a meeting for individuals who are not federal employees traveling on official business.
- F. 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207–Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), as amended.
- G. Title 41, Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), Subtitle F, Federal Travel Regulation System, Chapter 301–Temporary Duty (TOY) Travel Allowances.

#### IV. References

- A. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Financial Management Policy Manual (FMPM) § 7.7–Operational, Military, and Special Travel (August 6, 2018).
- B. FEMA Policy, Delegation of Authority to Regional Administrators–FDA 0106-01 (March 2, 2016).

# V. Responsible Office

The Voluntary Agency Coordination Group in the MCVCS Headquarters Branch is responsible for updating and maintaining this SOP current.

#### VI. Invitational Travel Authorized Activities/Uses

#### A. SLTT Initiated Request

FEMA may authorize Invitational Travel in response to a written request from a SLTT government when the proposed activity is authorized under the Stafford Act for the declared major disaster.

The SLTT will be subject to the applicable cost share requirements for any Stafford Act authorized activities.

#### 1. Mass Care Support

Support STTLs in the delivery of emergency mass care, including, but not limited to, the bulk distribution of food, water, and other consumables in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Provision of support also may include other statutorily authorized activities under ESF #6, such as shelter and feeding.

#### 2. State Donations Surge

Provide technical advice, expertise and/or support to the affected SLTT government in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Technical support may include provision of data systems and programs to support donations and warehouse management. Provision of support may include limited provision of trained volunteers to fill the shortage of labor capacity.

#### 3. Disaster Case Management Services Program

Refer to the Individual Assistance Program and Policy Guide (March 2019) Chapter 4.III. Disaster Case Management Program for information related to Invitational Travel to deliver disaster case management and case work.

#### **B. FEMA Initiated Request**

FEMA at its discretion may authorize Invitational Travel without a request from a SLTT for voluntary agency personnel only for a limited period of time when necessary to carry out one of the following activities as part of a pre-defined Program or activity authorized under the Stafford Act for the declared major disaster.

## 1. FEMA Conferences/Training to FEMA Staff

Voluntary organizations may provide subject matter expertise for presentations and training to FEMA staff. For purposes of Invitational Travel, the expectation is that the traveler must deliver the training or exercise that directly benefits FEMA. FEMA may only pay the travel expenses for the days the traveler is traveling to and from and the days the traveler is actually delivering the training or other presentations.

These are "a Steady State" request and cannot be funded by the DRF. Invitational Travel for these activities must be approved by the Regional Administrator or HQ IA Division Director, depending on the venue.

Additionally, <u>all conferences and training requests</u> must be coordinated and approved by the OCFO Risk Management & Compliance Division to ensure compliance with the DHS Conference Policy, specifically, Section 7.10 of the Financial Management Policy Manual (found at <a href="http://cfo-policy.dhs.gov/default.aspx">http://cfo-policy.dhs.gov/default.aspx</a>).

#### 2. Federal Donations Surge

When a disaster is likely to impact multiple-states, FEMA, at its discretion, may authorize Invitational Travel to provide SLTTS with technical advice, expertise and/or support, including the provision of data systems and programs to support donations, warehouse management, and volunteer donation center management.

#### 3. Recovery Training

In limited circumstances, FEMA may, at its discretion, authorize Invitational Travel to provide specialized disaster training and subject matter expertise to SLTTs with limited State Government capacity. Invitational Travel is not appropriate to authorize VOAD personnel to merely attend training; the traveler must be actively engaged in delivering specialized training at FEMA's request.

#### VII. Invitational Travel Request Requirements & Approval Process

All Invitational Travel requests submitted under this section, including State, Local, Territorial or Tribal (SLTT) and FEMA requests, must be coordinated and reviewed by FEMA OCFO's Travel Policy Office, comply with OCFO Guidance on Invitational Travel.

#### A. Request Requirements

All Invitational Travel requests submitted under section VI. of this SOP and must be coordinated and reviewed by FEMA OCFO's Travel Policy Office, comply with the OCFO Guidance on How to Request and Process Invitational Travel.

During the early stages of a presidentially-declared major disaster, the VAL Group Supervisor identifies a disaster activity need, develops a written proposal, in coordination with the requesting Program Office. Generally, an Invitational Travel proposal request must include the following:

- 1. Identify the active Stafford Act disaster program or activity need to be addressed;
- 2. Identify the scope of activities to be performed;
- 3. State the estimated length of service;
- 4. Demonstrate how the proposed activities are necessary and work supported by the proposed Invitational Travel directly benefit FEMA carry out its mission for the declared major disaster;
- 5. Contain a detailed budget, including specific travel, lodging and per diem costs;
- 6. Contain a justification for the proposed Invitational Travel costs;
- 7. Describe the reporting frequency of Exhibit C: Travel Participant Log that will demonstrate the success of the proposed activities for each authorized traveler;
- 8. In limited situations, on a case-by-case basis, FEMA may extend Invitational Travel extended to travelers under age of 18. However, the Invitational Travel request must contain a detailed justification for each minor traveler, delineate why the minor traveler is required and explain in detail how the activities the minor will perform directly benefit FEMA's mission.
- 9. Each Travel Request must be accompanied by a completed Resource Request Form (RRF).

#### **B.** Approval Process

- 1. All Invitational Travel requests must be fact specific and made on a case-by-case basis by an appropriate Approving Official, such as the FEMA Regional Office, FEMA Joint Field Office or the FEMA Joint Recovery Office, Regional Administrator (RA), Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), or IA Division Director (IADD).
- 2. All requests must be submitted to and coordinated with the HQ Voluntary Agency Liaison (VALs) for coordination. VAL will coordinate with the appropriate Program office requesting the Invitational Travel.
- 3. The VAL must secure approval for each Invitational Travel Request from FEMA's Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) at the office where the request is made.

- 4. The VAL must submit all requests involving conferences or training to the OCFO Risk Management Compliance Division for review and approval.
- 5. The VAL must submit the approved Invitational Travel request involving common carrier travel expenses only (e.g., commercial airplane, passenger train, bus, taxicabs) supported by the appropriate CBA account to OCFO to coordinate the issuance of Travel Authorizations (TAs).

However, when an Invitational Travel request includes non-common carrier expenses, such as the use of a private vehicle, the VAL must submit the request to the OCFO for review and approval prior to requesting the issuance of a TA.

## VIII. Invitational Travel Implementation

- A. Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) Responsibilities:
  - 1. During the early stages of a presidentially-declared major disaster, the VAL Group Supervisor identifies a disaster activity need, develops a written proposal, in coordination with the requesting Program Office;
  - 2. Once RA/FCO/IADD and OCC attorney approve the Invitational Travel request, the VAL Group Supervisor must obtain authorization from FEMA's OCFO before coordinating with JFO Travel and Finance to issue Travel Letters to travelers;
    - The Travel Authorization letters must be signed by the RA/FCO/IADD;
  - 3. The VAL Group Supervisor must coordinate with OCFO to request the issuance of Invitational Travel Letters to each authorized traveler. The Travel Letters must detail the statutory authority supporting the activities to be performed by the traveler, the dates of travel and the travel expenses to be reimbursed. (*See* Appendix A).
  - 4. The VAL Group Supervisor implements procedure for reporting, processing, tracking and supporting traveler(s) with JFO Invitational Travel POC;
  - 5. The VAL Group Supervisor contacts traveler(s) to discuss activities, reporting, point of contact (POC) and any additional expectations.
  - 6. The VAL Group Supervisor will e-mail each traveler the following documents:
    - a. Invitational Travel Letter;
    - b. Direct Deposit Form;
    - c. Guidance Direct Deposit Form Revised;
    - d. Local POV Mileage Log (if traveler is driving to destination).
  - 7. Once traveler(s) arrive, the VAL Group Supervisor sets up a schedule, confirms reporting and oversees the coordination process before traveler(s) travel to the authorized destination.
  - 8. During travel, the VAL Group Supervisor collects data denoting the number of traveler(s) participating in the authorized activity, the number of hours and days of service on Invitational Travel Participant Log. (See Appendix C).

9. Upon completion of Invitational Travel, the VAL Group Supervisor conducts a final meeting with the traveler(s) to gather reports and collects suggestions for best practices.

#### B. Concur Travel Services – Individual Travelers

- 1. Once the Invitational Travel request is approved by the Approval Official and OCC, the VAL Supervisor must coordinate the approval and issuance of the Travel Authorization (TA) Letter with OCFO. The Approving Official must sign each TA.
- 2. Each TA letter must be made in writing and promptly issued to the traveler via email, fax or USPS.
- 3. The VAL Group Supervisor must coordinate with FEMA Travel to ensure that a profile is created on the traveler's behalf in the Agency's financial management system. (See Appendix A for form and instructions).
- 4. Each authorized traveler must complete and sign the SF-1199A form and submit it to the FEMA Finance Center via email at: <u>FEMA-Finance-VendorMaintenance@fema.dhs.gov</u> or via fax: (540) 504-2625. This form enables FEMA to reimburse travel expenses via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).
  - a. If the traveler is under the age of 18 (e.g., dependent child), a separate financial management system profile must be added using the dependent's name in care of the parents or legal guardian. The parent(s) or legal guardian should provide their banking information for proper and legal reimbursement of travel funds on behalf of their dependent child.
  - b. Invitational Travel of children under age of 18 outside the continental United States, even if incidental, must be documented by a Permission to Travel Affidavit or a Notarized Minor Travel Consent Letter from both of the minor's parents or legal guardians in compliance with the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction Treaty of May 2017. (See Appendix E, Minor Travel Authorization/Affidavit).
- 5. Travelers may request to receive reimbursement via paper check rather than EFT. To do so, the traveler must inform FEMA and the inviting office may submit the traveler's mailing address, instead of the SF1199A, to Vendor Maintenance requesting approval to receive a financial management system profile for paper check reimbursement. However, such exceptions should only be requested if the traveler does not have an active financial account for EFT purposes.
- 6. Once a profile has been created in CONCUR by the Traveler (See Job Aid in Appendix) and a Travel Authorization (TA) has been created by the inviting FEMA office, it must be approved in CONCUR. Once approved, the inviting FEMA office will create an Invitational Travel Letter to be sent to the Approving Official (e.g., Regional Administrator, FCO or Director) for signature and final approval (See Appendix B for Invitational Travel letter). If the travel is not approved, the FEMA inviting office must cancel the TA and have the traveler cancel all travel arrangements in CONCUR.

- 7. A FEMA inviting office may request an exemption from the mandatory use of CONCUR on a case-by-case basis by submitting a waiver request to the Office of Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) and by contacting the FEMA Travel Help Line at (866) 333-1898.
- 8. If granted an exemption from the mandatory use of CONCUR, the Invitational Travel must be recorded, funded, and approved on a paper GSA Form 87, and then the obligation must be manually entered into the Agency's financial management system. (See Appendix C for GSA Form 87). The approved Travel Letter must also be sent to the invitee. The paper TA for IT will only be accepted if the approved waiver from the OCFO is attached.

#### C. Making Travel Reservations

- 1. CONCUR: The inviting FEMA Office should have the invitee call the Travel Management Center (TMC) at (800) 294-8283 and provide their name and TA number, provided on the Invitational Travel letter, and make their reservations by phone.
- 2. The TMC will assist the invitee with reserving travel accommodation and a travel itinerary to the Traveler. The traveler's common carrier transportation ticket must be billed to the FEMA Centrally-Billed Account (CBA). Other reservations (i.e. lodging, rental car, etc.) must be confirmed and billed to a personal charge card provided by the traveler.
- 3. When a FEMA Inviting Office elects to have the traveler make all authorized travel accommodations through the TMC, the Traveler must notify the inviting FEMA Office that travel accommodations have been made through the TMC.

#### D. Preparing Reimbursement Voucher

- Reimbursable expenses, including per diem, which were authorized and paid by the traveler, will be reimbursed via the travel voucher payment system, CONCUR.
- 2. Travelers that travel for more than two weeks are expected to voucher every two-week period Reimbursable.
  - Upon the traveler's return home, they must submit a voucher through CONCUR within five business days. If a FEMA Preparer is submitting the voucher on the traveler's behalf, all required receipts must be submitted to the FEMA Preparer within three business days, so the Preparer may meet the five-day requirement. In instances where the FEMA Preparer creates an electronic travel voucher in CONCUR on the traveler's behalf, the traveler will still need to electronically sign the voucher to validate the expenses.
- 3. Reimbursements are charged to the Disaster Relief Fund for a specific disaster. Time limits for reimbursements may apply. Travelers should be informed of time limitations.

# ACRONYM/ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

Code of Federal Regulations
Centrally-Billed Account
Department of Homeland Security
Electronic Funds Transfer
Emergency Management Assistance Compact
Emergency Support Functions
E-Gov Travel Services
Federal Coordinating Officer
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Financial Management Policy Manual
Joint Field Office
National Response Coordination Center
Office of Chief Counsel
Office of Chief Financial Officer
Outside Continental United States
Privately Own Vehicle
Regional Administrator
Regional Response Coordination Center
State, Local, Tribal and Territorial
Travel Authorization
Temporary Duty
Travel Management Center
United States Code
Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters
Volunteer Reception Center



Enter date here.
Recipient's Name,
Addressee, City, State, ZIP
Dear Recipient's Name:
On behalf of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), you are invited to participate in response and recovery operations, including critical emergency protective measures and human services activities, FEMA is coordinating for disaster assistance in declared counties in <u>DR-0000-STATE</u> . Specifically, you will be engaging in the following activities which directly benefit FEMA in its delivery of a mission approved under the Stafford Act for a declared disaster:
Coordination of this event will be held in the JFO, ADDRESS OF CITY, STATE beginning on Start Date and ending on End Date. As an invitational traveler for FEMA, you will be reimbursed while in travel status for expenses in accord with Federal Travel Regulations, including authorized costs for:

You will receive a daily Meal allowance (M&IE) for the locality where you are working and living. However, on your travel days your M&IE allowance will be reduced to 75% of the daily meal allowance.

You are authorized to travel by coach or equivalent class on commercial plane and/or common carrier. If a privately-owned automobile is authorized for all or part of your travel, you will be reimbursed for its official use at the rate of .535 cents per mile.

Your lodging is limited to the established government rate and applicable taxes per night for your locality.

For current lodging and per diem rates, please click on the following website to be taken to GSA's Per Diem Rates Look-Up utility: http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120.

Reimbursable travel expenses do not include lodging, meals, and transportation paid for by FEMA on your behalf and directly provided to you, e.g., lodging and meals in responder base camps or sharing of rental vehicles.

Travel expenses will not include salary compensation for travelers.

Reimbursement for your travel costs will be made via direct deposit to the account of your choosing. Invitational Travelers need an account with an Employee ID number from our Integrated Financial Management System (IFMIS). IFMIS accounts can be obtained by completing an SF-1199a Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form. Please complete an *SF-1199a*, *Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form*, immediately, prior to making reservations, and email it to: fema-finance-recordsmaintenance@fema.dhs.gov.

Timely submission of this form is imperative to your reimbursement of travel costs.

Your SF-1199a contains Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information that if compromised, puts your privacy at risk. You are encouraged to email the form through a secured method, such as encrypting (password protecting) your completed SF-1199a prior to attaching it to your email. The password should be sent in a separate email.

A copy of the Direct Deposit Form, SF-1199a, may be downloaded from: https://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/download/115702.

Your **common carrier transportation and lodging reservations** will be booked by FEMA's travel management center, National Travel: (800) 294-9283. Please identify yourself as an invitational traveler and request your common carrier cost be charged to FEMA's Centrally-Billed Account (CBA). The cost for lodging cannot be charged to the FEMA CBA but may be charged to your personal credit card and reimbursed by FEMA.

A voucher for all reimbursable travel expenses will be created for you by an assigned FEMA Travel Specialist in ConcurGOV, FEMA's travel management system. Please submit documentation, applicable receipts (except meals), to the FEMA Travel Specialist to support your expenses within five business days of completion of your trip.

Invitational Travel for voluntary agency partners in support of <u>NAME OF DISASTER 0000-DR-STATE</u> was approved by the Federal Coordinating Officer and the Individual Assistant Branch Director on <u>DATE OF APPROVAL</u>

Sincerely,				
<u>IDENTIFED.ST</u>	<u>AFF@fema.dhs.gov</u> or FEI	MA VAL <u>2NI</u>	DIDENTIFIED.S'	TAFF@fema.dhs.go
Any questions reg	garding your travel may be	addressed to	your FEMA Trav	vel POC:

NAME, Group Supervisor JFO, ANYWHERE, USA Group Supervisor

Appendix B:		
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You or your organization has been requested to support FEMA in coordination with the State of <u>STATE</u> and the <u>STATE</u> VOAD.

Organization requesting travel consideration:

Requested by:	Name	Contact info
FEMA Staff		
State Staff		
STATE VOAD		

Purpose for consideration, please check all that apply:

Delivering disaster recovery subject matter trainings, orientations, workshops to FEMA
personnel at FEMA's request.
Providing disaster casework or disaster case management
Providing technical support or systems, advice or labor capacity support to address the
gap in donations surge expertise in warehouse support or donations distribution centers.
Providing support for mass care in the distribution of emergency supplies such as food,
water, non-prescription medicine, and other consumables to disaster victims in the
immediate aftermath of a disaster.

Please complete the following for each traveler:

FIRST	LAST	EMA	HOME	HOM	HOM	HOM	CELL	STA	EN	*LODGI	DEST
NAME	NAME	IL	ADDRE	Е	Е	E ZIP	PHO	RT	D	NG	INATI
			SS	CITY	STA	COD	NE	DAT	DA	TYPE	ON
					TE	Е		Е	TE		

<sup>\*</sup>Lodging type refers to Responder Camp, Hotel, other lodging

Please return the form to:

### IDENTIFIED.STAFF@fema.dhs.gov

# $\underline{2IDENTIFIED.STAFF@fema.dhs.gov}$

An Invitational Travel STAFF PERSON will call each traveler to confirm information and email a packet of information to begin the travel.

Please do not arrange travel until you receive a Travel Authorization number.

We are looking forward to your support to FEMA in coordination with the State of X!

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

The Invitational Travel Team DR 0000



# Appendix C

# INVITATIONAL TRAVEL PARTICIPANT LOG

Today's Date: Disaster Number: DR-					
CHECK-IN					
	VALUE VIDENTIA				
	VOLUNTEEI INFORMATIO				
Please indicate the type of entity	for whom you are completing	this form:			
☐ Individual	☐ Team/Group		☐ Organization		
Last Name:	First Name:	Age:	Sex:		
			OMOF		
Address:	City:	State:	Zip:		
Home Phone:	Mobile Phone:	Email:			
Trome I none.	WIOONE I HONE.	Ellian.			
Relevant Skills and Licenses:		Program Area Assigned:			
	EMERGENCY CO	NTACT			
	INFORMATIO				
Name:	Relationship:	Home Phone:	Mobile Phone:		
	LODGING INFORM	IATION			
Name of Hotel:	Phone:	Address:			
	ORGANIZATIO	ON			
	DESCRIPTIO				
Organization/Team/Group Name	· ·	Number of Individuals wi	thin		
		Team/Group/Organization	n:		
Address:	City:	State:	Zip:		
11001000		Suite.	<del></del>		
	CHECK-OU'				
INVITATIONAL TRAVEL					
INFORMATION					

Travel Authorization Number(s):	Travel Start Date:	Travel End Date:		Did You Receive Invitational Travel?
Days Approved For	Invitational Travel	Cost Covered By	Your	Cost Not Covered:
Invitational Travel:	Received:	Organization:		\$
110 / 110		\$		<u> </u>
	\$	Ψ		
	VOU	CHER		
Final Voucher Completed?	Date Submitted:		Voucher	Number:
1				
○ Yes    No				

Name:	Today's Date	Disaster Number:
DR-		

VOLUNTEER WORI	K DESC	RIPTION		
On-site Start Date:	On-site	End Date:	Total Days:	Total Hours:
Please check all program	ms for w	hich you parti	cipated:	
□ Mass Care/Agency Support  Number of travelers Number of hours  Capacity: □ Regional Response Coord Center □ National Response Coord Center □ State Mass Care Coordinat □ □ Joint Field Office	dination	Nun	on Technology aber of travelers aber of hours	□ Donations Surge

#### Appendix E: Travel Authorization/Affidavit For Traveler Under Age 18

To Whom It May Concern: I/We, (Full Name(s) of Custodial and/or Non-Custodial Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s)) am/are the lawful custodial parent and/or non-custodial parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of: Traveler's full name: Date of Birth: Place of Birth: U.S. Passport Number: Date and Place of Issuance of U.S. Passport: , (Traveler's Full Name) has my/our consent to travel with: Full name of accompanying person: U.S. or foreign passport number: Date and Place of issuance of this passport: to travel to \_\_\_\_\_ during the period of \_\_\_\_\_. During that period, \_\_\_\_\_ (Traveler's Name) will be residing at the following address: Number/street address and apartment number: City, State/Province, Country: Telephone and fax numbers (work, cell phone and residence) Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s): Witnesses: Full Name: Signed before me, Signature: this \_\_\_\_\_(Date) at \_\_\_\_\_\_. (Name of Location) Full Name: Signed before me, Signature: this\_\_\_\_(Date)

Date:	at	. (Name of
	Location)	