

PART 304-1—ACCEPTANCE OF PAYMENT FROM A NON-FEDERAL SOURCE FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 5701-5709; 31 U.S.C. 1353; E.O. 11609, 36 FR 13747, 3 CFR, 1971-1975 Comp., p. 586.

SOURCE: 57 FR 53289, Nov. 9, 1992, unless otherwise noted.

§304-1.1 Authority.

This part is issued under the authority of 31 U.S.C. 1353 and 5 U.S.C. 5701-5709.

§304-1.2 General.

(a) *Applicability.* This part applies to agency acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel, subsistence, and related expenses with respect to the attendance of an employee in a travel status (and/or the accompanying spouse of such employee when applicable) at any meeting or similar function relating to the official duties of the employee. This part does not authorize acceptance of such payments by an employee or the accompanying spouse of an employee in his/her personal capacity (see, however, §304-1.8(a)).

(b) *Solicitation prohibited.* An employee shall not solicit payment for travel, subsistence, and related expenses from a non-Federal source. However, after receipt of an invitation from a non-Federal source to attend a meeting or similar function or in the course of discussions of an event to be sponsored jointly by the agency and the non-Federal source, the agency or employee may inform the non-Federal source of this authority.

(c) *Definitions.* As used in this part, the following definitions apply:

(1) *Agency.* “Agency” means an executive agency as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105, and includes an independent agency as

well as an agency within the Executive Office of the President.

(2) *Employee.* “Employee” means an appointed officer or employee of an agency, including a special Government employee as defined in 18 U.S.C. 202, or an expert or consultant appointed under the authority of 5 U.S.C. 3109.

(3) *Meeting or similar function.* “Meeting or similar function” means a conference, seminar, speaking engagement, symposium, training course, or similar event that takes place away from the employee’s official station, and is sponsored or cosponsored by a non-Federal source. This term does not include a meeting or other event required to carry out an agency’s statutory or regulatory functions (i.e., a function that is essential to an agency’s mission), such as investigations, inspections, audits, site visits, negotiations, or litigation. The term also does not include promotional vendor training or other meetings held for the primary purpose of marketing the non-Federal source’s products or services. A meeting or similar function need not be widely attended for purposes of this definition, and includes but is not limited to the following:

(i) An event at which the employee will participate as a speaker or panel participant, including an event at which the employee will give an oral presentation focusing on his/her official duties or on the policies, programs, or operations of the agency;

(ii) A conference, convention, seminar, symposium or similar event the primary purpose of which is to receive training other than promotional vendor training, or to present or exchange substantive information concerning a subject of mutual interest to a number of parties;

(iii) An event at which the employee will receive an award or honorary degree, which is in recognition of meritorious public service that is related to the employee’s official duties, and which may be accepted by the employee consistent with the applicable standards of conduct regulation.

(4) *Non-Federal source.* “Non-Federal source” means any person or entity other than the Government of the United States. The term includes any

individual, private or commercial entity, nonprofit organization or association or international or multinational organization (irrespective of whether an agency holds membership in the organization or association), or foreign, state, or local government (including the government of the District of Columbia).

(5) *Payment*. "Payment" means funds paid by a non-Federal source for travel, subsistence, and related expenses by check or similar instrument to an agency, or payment in kind.

(6) *Payment in kind*. "Payment in kind" means goods, services, or other benefits provided by a non-Federal source for travel, subsistence, and related expenses in lieu of funds paid to an agency by check or similar instrument for the same purpose.

(7) *Travel, subsistence, and related expenses*. "Travel, subsistence and related expenses" means the same types of expenses payable under chapter 301 of this subtitle or analogous provisions of chapter 100 of Volume 6 of the Foreign Affairs Manual (6 FAM 100)¹ or Volume 1 of the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR).² Also encompassed in this definition are such expenses as conference or training fees (in whole or in part) as well as benefits which cannot be paid under the applicable travel regulation and which are provided in kind and made available by the sponsor(s) to all attendees incident to and for use at the meeting or similar function.

§ 304-1.3 Policy.

(a) *Acceptance of payment for employee*. As provided in this part, an agency may accept payment from a non-Federal source (or authorize an employee to receive such payment on its behalf) with respect to attendance of the employee at a meeting or similar function which the employee has been authorized to attend in an official

capacity on behalf of the employing agency.

(b) *Acceptance of payment for an accompanying spouse*. An agency may accept payment under this part from a non-Federal source for an accompanying spouse when the spouse's presence at the meeting or similar function is in the interest of the agency. A spouse's presence at an event may be determined to be in the interest of the agency if the spouse will:

(1) Support the mission of the agency or substantially assist the employee in carrying out his/her official duties;

(2) Attend a ceremony at which the employee will receive an award or honorary degree described in § 304-1.2(c)(3); or

(3) Participate in substantive programs related to the agency's programs or operations.

(c) *Administration and delegation of authority*. Payment acceptance must be in accordance with internal agency procedures. Agencies shall ensure that officials delegated authority to determine the propriety of accepting payments under this part are at as high an administrative level as practical to ensure adequate consideration and review of the circumstances surrounding the offer and acceptance of the payment.

(d) *Payment in excess of regulatory limitations*—(1) *Subsistence expenses*. When a non-Federal source makes full payment for subsistence expenses, acceptance of payment for, and when applicable, reimbursement by an agency to, an employee (and/or the accompanying spouse of such employee when applicable) under this part are not subject to the maximum per diem or actual subsistence expense rates prescribed in chapter 301 of this subtitle or by the Secretary of Defense in Civilian Personnel Per Diem Bulletins published periodically in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(2) *Transportation expenses*. When a non-Federal source makes full payment for common carrier transportation expenses, acceptance of payment for, and when applicable, reimbursement by an agency to, an employee (and/or the accompanying spouse of such employee when applicable) under this part are not subject to the transportation class of service limitations applicable to premium-class other than

¹Chapter 100 of Volume 6 of the Foreign Affairs Manual (6 FAM 100) is available from the Department of State, Publishing Services, Washington, DC 20520-0854.

²Volume 1 of the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) is available from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

first-class accommodations, as prescribed in chapter 301 of this subtitle or the JFTR. Acceptance of payment for first-class transportation accommodations is allowed only when the use of first-class transportation accommodations is authorized in accordance with §301-3.3 of this subtitle.

(e) *Reduced per diem rate in partial payment situation.* If the designated agency official determines in advance of the travel that a payment covers some but not all of the per diem costs to be incurred by the employee (and/or the accompanying spouse when applicable), the agency should authorize a reduced per diem rate, in accordance with §301-7.12 of this subtitle or analogous provisions of 6 FAM 100 or the JFTR, as applicable, that is commensurate with the known subsistence expense levels.

[57 FR 53289, Nov. 9, 1992, as amended by FTR Amdt. 32, 58 FR 58244, Oct. 29, 1993]

§304-1.4 Conditions for acceptance.

(a) An agency may accept payment for employee and/or spousal travel from a non-Federal source when a general authorization to accept payment (rather than an item-by-item authorization) is issued in advance of the travel following a determination by the agency official designated in accordance with §304-1.3(c) that the payment is:

(1) For travel relating to an employee's official duties (including attendance because the employee's presence at the meeting is necessary to permit participation in the meeting by another employee or because a spouse's presence at the meeting or similar function is in the interest of the agency) under an official travel authorization issued to the employee, and to an accompanying spouse when applicable;

(2) For attendance at a meeting or similar function (as defined in §304-1.2(c)(3) relating to the official duties of the employee; and

(3) From a non-Federal source that is not disqualified under §304-1.5 on conflict-of-interest grounds.

(b) Payments may be accepted from multiple sources under paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) If a meeting or similar function does not concern a subject of mutual

interest to the employee's agency and the non-Federal source, acceptance of payment from the non-Federal source under paragraph (a) of this section is limited to payment in kind and to the types of services the non-Federal source generally provides; e.g., air passenger transportation services provided by a commercial airline.

§304-1.5 Conflict-of-interest analysis.

(a) Payment from a non-Federal source shall not be accepted if the authorized agency official determines that acceptance under the circumstances would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of all the facts relevant to a particular case to question the integrity of agency programs or operations. In making this determination, an authorized agency official shall be guided by all relevant considerations, including, but not limited to:

(1) The identity of the non-Federal source;

(2) The purpose of the meeting or similar function;

(3) The identity of other expected participants;

(4) The nature and sensitivity of any matter pending at the agency affecting the interests of the non-Federal source;

(5) The significance of the employee's role in any such matter; and

(6) The monetary value and character of the travel benefits offered by the non-Federal source.

(b) The authorized agency official may find that, while acceptance from the non-Federal source is permissible, it is in the interest of the agency to qualify acceptance of the offered payment by, for example, authorizing attendance at only a portion of the event or limiting the type or character of benefits that may be accepted.

§304-1.6 Payment guidelines.

(a) *Payment other than in kind.* Payments from a non-Federal source for an employee and/or accompanying spouse, other than payments in kind, shall be by check or similar instrument made payable to the agency. Any such payment received by the employee on behalf of the agency for his/her travel and/or that of the accompanying spouse is accepted on behalf of the agency and is to be submitted as soon

as practicable for credit to the agency appropriation applicable to such expenses. When the acceptance of payment has been approved in advance by the designated agency official, the agency, or employee on behalf of the agency for his/her travel (and/or that of the accompanying spouse, when applicable), may, in accordance with the provisions of §304-1.3(d), accept payment in excess of applicable limitations, provided that the accommodation or other benefit furnished is comparable in value to that offered to, or purchased by, other similarly situated individuals attending the meeting or similar function. When the applicable limitation will be exceeded, payment should be required in advance of the travel.

(b) *Payment in kind.* When the acceptance of payment has been approved in advance by the designated agency official, the employee, for his/her travel (and/or that of the accompanying spouse, when applicable), may, in accordance with the provisions of §304-1.3(d), accept payment in kind in excess of applicable limitations, provided that the accommodation or other benefit furnished is comparable in value to that offered to, or purchased by, other similarly situated individuals attending the meeting or similar function.

§304-1.7 Reimbursement claims for official travel expenses.

(a) The employee (and/or accompanying spouse when applicable) shall submit to the employing agency on authorized reimbursement forms all travel expense reimbursement claims, and shall itemize all expenses incurred which exceed applicable limitations (see §304-1.3(d)). Generally, the employee, and/or accompanying spouse when applicable, shall be reimbursed an amount not to exceed applicable limitations. However, when the non-Federal source, in accordance with the provisions of §304-1.3(d), makes full payment in excess of applicable limitations for reimbursable subsistence expenses or common carrier transportation expenses incurred, reimbursement shall be the amount of the payment from the non-Federal source. Reimbursement for expenses in excess of regulatory limitations shall not in any

case exceed the amount of the expenses incurred.

(b) The agency may reimburse the employee (and/or accompanying spouse of such employee when applicable) for only the types of expenses defined in §§301-7.1 (b)(6) and (c) of this subtitle or in analogous provisions of 6 FAM 100 or the JFTR, as applicable, for per diem allowances, transportation expenses, or other miscellaneous travel expenses.

(c) If an accepted payment covers only a portion of one or more types of the expenses incurred (e.g., \$50.00 per night for lodging in a locality with an \$85.00 per night maximum lodging allowance), the agency shall reimburse the employee (and/or accompanying spouse when applicable) only the amount to which he/she otherwise would be entitled under applicable regulation (chapter 301 of this subtitle, 6 FAM 100, or the JFTR). (See §304-1.3(e) regarding reduced per diem rate situations.)

(d) If an accepted payment covers in full one or more types of expenses described in paragraph (b) of this section (e.g., payment for lodging accommodations) but does not cover all of the travel expenses incurred, the agency shall reimburse the employee (and/or accompanying spouse of such employee when applicable) for those expenses that are not covered by the payment, not to exceed applicable limitations established in chapter 301 of this subtitle or in analogous provisions of 6 FAM 100 or the JFTR.

§304-1.8 Limitations and penalties.

(a) This part is the only authority under which an agency may accept payment from a non-Federal source, or authorize an employee to accept such payment on behalf of the agency, in connection with the attendance of its employee (and/or the accompanying spouse of such employee when applicable) at a meeting or similar function. An agency may not accept, under an agency gift statute or other similar authority, payment for travel, subsistence, and related expenses incurred by an employee and/or accompanying spouse to attend a meeting or similar function. However, nothing in this part prohibits an agency or employee from accepting payment as follows:

(1) When authorized under 5 U.S.C. 4111 or 5 U.S.C. 7342;

(2) When payment is for travel to be performed for a partisan rather than an official purpose in the case of an employee who is exempt from the Hatch Act under 5 U.S.C. 7324(d);

(3) When authorized pursuant to an agency gift statute or similar statutory authority and payment is for attendance at or participation in an event (other than a meeting or similar function) relating to the official duties of the employee; or

(4) When consistent with the applicable standards of ethical conduct regulation concerning personal acceptance of gifts.

(b) An employee who accepts any payment in violation of this part is subject to the following:

(1) The employee may be required, in addition to any penalty provided by law and applicable regulations, to repay for deposit to the general fund of the Treasury, an amount equal to the amount of the payment so accepted; and

(2) When repayment is required under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the employee shall not be entitled to any reimbursement from the Government for such expenses.

§304-1.9 Reports.

(a) *Agency reports.* Each agency shall submit semiannual reports of payments (see definition of payment in §304-1.2(c)) which total more than \$250 per event, and which have been accepted under this part with respect to the attendance at, or participation in, a meeting or similar function by an agency employee, and/or accompanying spouse of such employee when applicable. Negative reports are required.

(1) *Submission.* The head of each agency (or his/her designee) shall submit the semiannual report to the Director of the Office of Government Ethics (OGE), 1201 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005-3917. The report shall be based on when payment is received rather than when travel is performed, and shall be submitted as follows:

(i) Not later than May 31 of each year with respect to payments received in

the preceding period beginning on October 1 and ending on March 31; and

(ii) Not later than November 30 of each year with respect to payments received in the preceding period beginning on April 1 and ending on September 30.

(2) *Information required.* Except as provided in paragraph (a)(6) of this section, the report shall specify the following information in the order presented:

(i) The name of the agency submitting the report;

(ii) Each event (meeting or similar function) for which an agency accepts payment under this part of more than \$250 for an employee and spouse together, or for either the employee or the spouse separately, including:

- (A) The sponsor(s) of the event;
- (B) The location of the event;
- (C) The date(s) of the event; and
- (D) The nature of the event;

(iii) The name of each employee for whom such payment was accepted in connection with the event, including:

- (A) The employee's Government position; and
- (B) The employee's travel date(s) in connection with attendance at the event;

(iv) The name of the accompanying spouse, if applicable, for whom payment was accepted in connection with the event, including:

- (A) The name of the employee accompanied by the spouse;
- (B) The employee's Government position; and

(C) The spouse's travel date(s) in connection with attendance at the event;

(v) The identity of any non-Federal source from which payment was accepted in connection with the event;

(vi) An itemization of the benefits accepted by the agency in connection with attendance at the event, including for each benefit:

(A) A description of the benefit, provided that benefits accepted as a part of a conference or training fee need not be reported separately;

(B) The method of payment (payment in kind or by check or similar instrument);

(C) The individual for whom payment was accepted (employee or spouse);

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(D) The non-Federal source that provided the benefit; and

(E) The amount of the payment; and

(vii) The total value of the payments accepted for the employee and/or spouse in connection with the event identified as follows:

(A) The total amount of payments provided by check or similar instrument; and

(B) The total value of payments provided in kind.

(3) *Valuation of payments in kind.* In the case of conference, training, or similar fees waived or paid by the non-Federal source, report the amount charged other participants. In the case of transportation or lodging, report the cost to the non-Federal source, or indicate the rate that would have been charged a similar non-Federal source for a similar benefit at the time the benefit was provided. In the case of meals or other benefits that are not provided incident to transportation, lodging, or a conference, training, or similar fee, report the cost to the non-Federal source or provide a reasonable approximation of the market value of the benefit.

(4) *Valuation of noncommercial benefits furnished by a non-Federal source—(i) Transportation.* In the case of transportation on a chartered, corporate or other private aircraft, report the first-class rate that would have been charged by an air common carrier at the time the transportation was provided or, if common carrier transportation was unavailable between the two locations, report the cost of chartering a similar aircraft using a commercially available service.

(ii) *Lodging.* In the case of lodging for which no commercial rate is available, report the maximum lodging rate prescribed in chapter 301 of this subtitle; section 925, a per diem supplement to the Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas); or Civilian Personnel Per Diem Bulletins issued by the Secretary of Defense, as applicable.

(5) *Public availability of reports.* Except as provided in paragraph (a)(6) of this section, the Director of OGE shall make any report filed pursuant to this section available for public inspection and copying within 30 days after the

applicable due date or within 30 days after the date OGE actually receives the report, whichever is later.

(6) *Exemption.* To the extent that information is protected from disclosure by statute, an agency is not required to furnish information otherwise required to be reported. Information that may be disclosed shall be submitted to OGE and made available to the public in accordance with paragraph (a)(5) of this section. Information that is not disclosed because it is protected from disclosure by statute shall be made available by the reporting agency for review by properly cleared OGE personnel.

(b) *Employee reports.* Payments properly accepted under this part are accepted by the agency. Receipt of a benefit by an employee and/or the accompanying spouse, when applicable, on behalf of the agency under the authority of this part is not required to be reported as a gift on any confidential or public financial disclosure report that the employee is required to file pursuant to law or OGE regulation. Acceptance of payment by an employee for himself/herself and/or the accompanying spouse, when applicable, under authorities other than this part may be subject to other reporting requirements such as those required by the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, as amended, including reporting the payment on the employee's financial disclosure report.

PART 304-2—REDUCTIONS IN MEETING AND TRAINING ALLOWANCE PAYMENTS

Sec.

304-2.1 Authority.

304-2.2 Applicability.

304-2.3 Conditions for approval of contributions or payments.

304-2.4 Agency responsibilities.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 4111(b); E.O. 11609, 36 FR 13747, 3 CFR, 1971-1975 Comp., p. 586.

SOURCE: 56 FR 9881, Mar. 8, 1991, unless otherwise noted.

§ 304-2.1 Authority.

This part is issued under the authority of 5 U.S.C. 4111(b).