

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 Tribal Travel Program Guidelines

Updated 6/15/2016

Purpose

EPA recognizes the importance of having resources available for tribal environmental staff, chief executives of Indian Tribes, and tribal council members to attend appropriate meetings, training and outreach efforts to obtain vital information for capacity building in environmental protection and to participate in dialogue and discussion that benefits each tribe's capacity-building goals and objectives. Part of this outreach includes activities to support the coordination and facilitation of training for tribes through EPA regional conferences and Regional Tribal Operations Committee meetings.

The Tribal Travel Program provides reimbursements to those tribal representatives attending EPA approved meetings, training courses and conferences that advance the GAP capacity-building efforts by tribes. The program will allow the participation of tribal representatives at environmental workshops, training, caucuses and other environmental capacity building functions they were unable to anticipate at the time the GAP workplan was prepared, by allowing grantees to obtain approval for modified workplans and (where necessary) adjust staff assigned in budgets to accommodate the unmet capacity-building need.

Eligibility

The use of the Tribal Travel Fund is subject to the limitations prescribed by the Uniform Grant Guidance under 2 CFR Part 200, and the *Guidance on the Award and Management of General Assistance Agreements for Tribes and Intertribal Consortia* (GAP Guidance), since the Tribal Travel Fund is itself a GAP Grant and intended for eligible capacity-building work by tribes. Trips supported by the Tribal Travel Fund must be clearly described in the traveler's GAP workplan, with associated outcomes, outputs, and indicators included. If the need for the travel does not appear in the approved GAP workplan, a modification may be requested to describe the needed support.

Tribal Environmental Program staff, tribal chief executives, tribal council members, or other staff who appear in the tribe's GAP Budget and Workplan, or who are included via a modification to either or both of those documents, are eligible to use the Travel Fund. Travel by a tribe's chief executive or tribal council member, where that individual does not appear in the GAP budget but where travel is clearly supported in the GAP workplan, may be eligible for reimbursement as long as the grantee receives prior written approval from EPA for such costs in accordance with 2 CFR §200.474.

Individuals not identified as 'personnel' under the GAP award budget, including contractors and consultants or staff of the tribe not engaged in the completion of the GAP workplan cannot utilize the tribal travel program.

Regulations Referenced

Expenditures under the GAP are governed by the Uniform Grant Guidance found at 2 CFR Part 200, which, among other things, provides direction to the Agency and grantees concerning allowable costs. For example, 2 CFR §§200.400-200.405 delineates basic requirements regarding allowable costs, while §200.444 pertains to the general costs of government and §200.474 deals with travel costs.

Administration of the Tribal Travel Program

The Tribal Travel Program is administered through a GAP grant from the Region 9 Tribal Section. The role of the Travel Fund Grantee is to process travel reimbursements that will enable eligible individuals to attend and participate in meetings, trainings, and other events that will develop tribal environmental capacity. As outlined in the Travel Fund Grantee's GAP work plan, the Grantee's administrative duties will include:

- Sending reimbursement forms and procedures to the EPA for dissemination to tribes throughout the Region;
- Revising forms as needed;
- Providing assistance to tribes regarding this document and the reimbursement process;
- Coordinating with the EPA Tribal Section if questions or issues arise regarding reimbursement requests;
- Processing travel reimbursement requests; and
- Providing EPA with a quarterly summary of reimbursements.

Process for Reimbursement

1. In compliance with internal tribal policies and procedures, tribal environmental staff may be required to obtain permission to travel from the authorized tribal official(s). Once permission is obtained from the tribe, the Travel Reimbursement Form is submitted to the EPA Tribal Section for review. Submissions should be provided as far in advance as possible, especially when airfare support is requested, but no later than one month before the anticipated travel. All the information requested on the form should be provided, including justification for the travel and costs. The Tribe should include a copy or a reference to the specific GAP workplan commitment that is being supported by the travel, and a copy of the GAP budget that includes the personnel that are travelling. If the GAP workplan does not contain a current commitment that adequately describes the need of the specific traveler to attend the specific event, a workplan modification should be requested and approved by the GAP Project Officer in advance of the submission of the Travel Reimbursement Form.
2. An email acknowledgement that the request was received by the EPA will be sent within three business days of receipt. Relevant Project Officers in the EPA Tribal Section will review submitted requests and make a determination to the Travel Fund Grantee based on the materials provided.
3. EPA will make a determination regarding the allowability of requested travel costs within two weeks of receipt. Once the request is reviewed and EPA makes a determination regarding the allowability of the travel costs, the EPA will email or fax the form back to the traveler and the Travel Fund Grantee. The form will indicate whether reimbursement is recommended.
4. Upon completion of travel, the traveler will submit the reimbursement form along with original receipts of actual expenditures to the Travel Fund Grantee within 15 days of completing trip. The level of reimbursement follows the requirements at 2 CFR 200.474(d), which refers also to 5 USC 5701-11 (“Travel and Subsistence Expenses; Mileage Allowances”) and General Services Administration guidelines for federal travel (i.e., hotel and transportation costs).

Contact Information

For additional information, please contact:

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