

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

<b>DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION</b>	NUMBER: DR 2300-001
SUBJECT: Government Travel Charge Card Regulation	DATE: June 24, 2021
OPI: Office of the Chief Financial Officer	EXPIRATION DATE: June 24, 2026

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Purpose	1
2. Special Instructions/Cancellations	2
3. Scope	2
4. Background	2
5. Policy	3
6. Roles and Responsibilities	17
7. Inquiries	28
Appendix A – Acronyms and Abbreviations	A-1
Appendix B – Definitions	B-1
Appendix C – Authorities and References	C-1
Appendix D – Sample A/OPC Appointment Letter and Duties	D-1
Appendix E – Acknowledgement and Acceptance Statement	E-1
Appendix F – US Bank Access Online Reports	F-1
Appendix G – Inter-Departmental Hierarchy Transfer Request Worksheet	G-1
Appendix H – Examples of Memoranda to Employees from A/OPCs	H-1
Appendix I – NFC Salary Offset	I-1
Appendix J – USDA Senior Federal Travelers	J-1
Appendix K – Government Employees Standards of Conduct	K-1

## 1. PURPOSE

This Departmental Regulation (DR) prescribes the policies and procedures governing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) travel charge card program. The Government travel charge card program was developed to procure transportation services, subsistence, and other allowable travel and transportation expenses incurred during official travel. This regulation supplements 41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), [Subtitle F, Parts 300 through 304](#) (commonly known as the *Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)*); both are used throughout this DR. The FTR is issued by the General Services Administration (GSA) and

implements statutory requirements and Executive branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at government expense. Provisions included in this regulation follow applicable Federal regulations, including the FTR.

## 2. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/CANCELLATIONS

- a. This regulation supersedes DR 2300-001, *Government Travel Card Regulation*, dated October 20, 2003.
- b. This DR contains policies Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices must follow for official travel performed using the travel charge card after the date of this regulation.
- c. The requirements listed in this DR remain in effect and must be followed unless or until superseded by subsequent changes in applicable laws or revised by the Department.
- d. Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices must update their processes and procedures in accordance with this DR within 180 calendar days of the effective date.

## 3. SCOPE

- a. The law requires the mandatory use of the travel charge card by Federal employees unless they are exempted, as identified in Section 5e, *Use of the Travel Charge Card*, below. The use of the travel charge card is limited to expenses incurred in conjunction with official travel. The provisions of this regulation apply to all employees of USDA who have been issued or are applying for a travel charge card.
- b. This regulation provides policy governing the use of the travel charge card by USDA employees. Proper use of the travel charge card supports mission accomplishment and preserves the reputation of the Department and its employees. The travel charge card is to be used appropriately and in compliance with the provisions within this regulation. The USDA will not tolerate misuse or abuse of the travel charge card.
- c. Possession and use of the travel charge card do not relieve the employee from abiding by the rules and regulations governing official travel, including use of Government city-pair contract carriers, American Flag carriers, Government car rental agreements, Government approved lodging facilities, or a Travel Management Center (TMC).

## 4. BACKGROUND

- a. *Travel and Transportation Reform Act (TTRA) of 1998*

The TTRA (Public Law [\(P.L.\) 105-264](#), 112 Stat. 2350, as amended by the *Government Charge Card Abuse Act of 2012*, [P.L.112-194](#), Oct. 5, 2012, 126 Stat. 1448) authorizes

the GSA Administrator, after consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, to require Federal employees use the travel charge card established pursuant to the United States Travel and Transportation Payment and Expense Control System, or any Federal contractor-issued travel charge card, for all payments of expenses of official Government travel.

b. GSA Exemption

The FTR, as allowed by the TTRA, authorizes the GSA Administrator to exempt any payment, person, type or class of payments, or type or class of personnel from any requirement established under the preceding sentence in any case in which:

- (1) It is in the best interest of the United States to do so;
- (2) Payment through a travel charge card is impractical or imposes unreasonable burdens or costs on Federal employees or Federal agencies; or
- (3) The Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of Transportation (with respect to the Coast Guard) requests an exemption with respect to the members of the uniformed services.

c. Federal Agency Exemption

The FTR, as allowed by the TTRA, authorizes the head of a Federal agency, or the designee of such head, to exempt any payment, person, type or class of payments, or type or class of Federal agency personnel from the above if the agency head or the designee determines the exemption to be necessary in the interest of the Federal agency. Not later than 30 days after granting such an exemption, the head of such Federal agency or the designee shall notify the GSA Administrator in writing of such exemption stating the reasons for the exemption.

d. *Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012*

The *Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012* (which amends Section 2 of the TTRA; and the Note to [5 United States Code \(U.S.C.\) 5701](#)) requires each executive agency with employees who use travel charge cards to establish and maintain internal control activities to ensure proper, efficient, and effective use of travel charge cards.

## 5. POLICY

a. Records Retention

Per the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) General Records Schedule ([GRS](#)) [1.1](#) – *Financial Management and Reporting Records*, Item 090,

*Government purchase card and travel credit card application and approval records; and [GRS 5.1](#), *Common Office Records*, [Item 010](#), *Administrative records maintained in any agency office*, documents related to the travel charge cards (e.g., applications, appointment letters, acknowledgement and acceptance statements, training certification) should be destroyed when the employee leaves the organization, but longer retention is authorized if required for business use. Document retention may be in the form of paper files or electronic files.*

b. Obtaining a travel charge card

- (1) The contract bank may obtain credit scores for new applicants, if given authorization, before issuing a card. If authorization is not given or the applicant's credit score is below the threshold (660) set by the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) [Appendix B to Circular No. A-123](#), *A Risk Management Framework for Government Charge Card Programs*, then a card can or will be issued with more stringent restrictions.
- (2) Per OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, if obtaining a credit score is not possible (e.g., the applicant refuses to provide consent or does not have a credit history), an alternative credit worthiness assessment should be completed to determine whether the individual possesses a satisfactory credit history. To complete the alternative credit worthiness assessment, the Mission Area, agency, or staff office must ensure it first conducts an alternative creditworthiness assessment to determine whether the individual possesses a satisfactory credit history.
- (3) Specifically, the Mission Area, agency, or staff office must review the applicant's most recent Standard Form ([SF 85P](#), *Questionnaire for Public Trust Positions*, Section 24, *Financial Record*; or [SF 86](#), *Questionnaire for National Security Positions*, Section 26, *Financial Record*); or use a similar vehicle containing the same type of questions as in the forms and sections noted and use the information provided to assess creditworthiness. In either case, the vehicle used must not be older than one year. Neither the SF 85P nor SF 86 is to be shared with the servicing contractor.

c. Spending Limit

- (1) The spending limits on travel charge cards should be in line with the actual needs of each cardholder. The Departmentwide default spending limit for new standard accounts is \$7,500 and \$3,500.00 for restricted cards; the Mission Area, agency, or staff office can decide to maintain lower spending limits for their cardholders. Restricted accounts can become standard accounts in two ways:
  - (a) If the account is restricted due to a low credit score, then cardholder can contact the bank to authorize or request another credit check; or

- (b) If the account was restricted for other than a low credit score, and there have been no outstanding issues with the account for 12-months, the Mission Area, agency, or staff office program coordinator (A/OPC) can raise the limit to the Departmentwide default spending limit.
- (2) Mission Area, agency, or staff office A/OPCs can temporarily increase card limits on accounts to meet mission operations; the temporary spending limit should be reduced as soon as the need for the increase is complete. Table 1 below shows the authorized approval levels for temporary limit increases.

**TABLE 1 – AUTHORIZED APPROVAL LEVELS FOR TEMPORARY LIMIT INCREASES**

<i>Type of Card</i>		<i>Default</i>	<i>Secondary A/OPC</i>	<i>Primary A/OPC</i>	<i>Departmental A/OPC</i>
<b>Unrestricted (Standard Account) (Note 1)</b>	<b>Credit</b>	\$7,500	\$10,000	\$20,000	No Maximum
	<b>Cash (Note 3)</b>	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$4,000	
<b>Restricted (Note 2)</b>	<b>Credit</b>	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$5,000	No Maximum
	<b>Cash</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	

Note 1: Unrestricted account limit increases are based on mission requirements and are limited to no more than 12 months.

Note 2: Restricted account limit increases are based on mission requirements; they require prior justification and written approval from a manager to the A/OPC. The increase is limited to 60 days.

Note 3: Cash amounts equate to 20% of the available credit limit.

- (3) The default spending limit for the Office of the Secretary and Senior Federal Travelers (listed in Appendix J, *USDA Senior Federal Travelers*) can be set at \$25,000, based on their position and/or travel schedules. To maintain permanent limits above the default limit, submit written justification to the Department Coordinator in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), signed by the Mission Area, agency, or staff office’s Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Senior Accountable Travel Official (SATO).
- d. Training Requirements
- (1) General travel charge card training requirements:

- (a) All program participants must be trained prior to appointment;
  - (b) All program participants must take annual (calendar year) refresher training; and
  - (c) All program participants must certify that they have received the training, understand the regulations and procedures, and know the consequences of inappropriate actions.
- (2) A/OPCs must receive training on:
- (a) Cardholder responsibilities;
  - (b) Procedures for identifying and reporting suspected fraud, misuse and delinquencies;
  - (c) Proper card management (e.g., account setup, authorization controls, account close-out, available bank reports);
  - (d) Control and oversight tools, and techniques;
  - (e) Using the bank's electronic access system (or applicable system, to include data analytics tools) to manage their program; and
  - (f) Data analytics tools, techniques and reports.
- (3) Cardholders must receive training and information on:
- (a) Government official travel policies and local travel;
  - (b) Mission Area, agency, or staff office specific travel charge card policies and procedures and proper card use;
  - (c) Relevant portions of the FTR; and
  - (d) Use of the card generates refunds and other benefits to the USDA.
- e. Use of the Travel Charge Card

The card will be used whenever and wherever possible for airline and other common carrier transportation services, lodging expense, meals, automobile rental and fuel, and other expenses incurred incidental to official travel.

- (1) Employees are prohibited from using the travel charge card to procure airline or rental car transportation services from a commercial source (e.g., Expedia, Hotwire,

Priceline, ORBITZ), or a vendor's website, for official travel unless a specific FTR exception applies. Employees can use these sources to conduct research; however, they must use the USDA's official Electronic Travel System (ETS) or their Mission Area, agency, or staff office's TMC to book reservations ([FTR Part 301-50, Arranging for Travel Services](#)). This does not prevent the employee from using the travel charge card to make necessary travel adjustments while at the point of embarkation or debarkation directly from an airline vendor.

- (2) Employees who acquire common carrier transportation with their travel charge card and either lose the ticket or fail to use all or part of the ticket are responsible for obtaining a credit for the unused ticket or reporting a loss to the carrier. Failure to obtain a credit from the carrier will result in the employee being financially liable for the entire amount of the ticket.
- (3) Employees should not submit unused tickets, paper or electronic, charged to their individually billed account (IBA) with their travel voucher. The unused ticket should be returned to the TMC or follow procedures prescribed by Mission Area, agency, or staff office travel policy.
- (4) Employees are prohibited from using the travel charge card to procure lodging services from a commercial source (e.g., Airbnb, HomeAway, VRBO), or a vendor's website, for official travel unless a specific FTR exception applies.

Employees can use these sources to conduct research; however, they must use the USDA's official ETS or their agency's TMC to book reservations, giving preference to FedRooms, meeting the *Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990*, [P.L. 101-391](#), requirements, whenever possible.

- (5) Employees may use their travel charge card to pay for rental car expenses when authorized to use this method of transportation as part of an official trip. The employee must use the USDA's official ETS or the TMC to make the reservations; this ensures vendors participating in the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement are selected. The advantages of renting a car through the [DTMO](#) rental car program are:
  - (a) The rental contract must be ready upon arrival;
  - (b) If the size or class of the vehicle you reserved is not available, the rental company must offer an upgraded vehicle at the same rate;
  - (c) There are no blackout dates or minimum rental periods and you enjoy unlimited mileage (except for one-way rentals);
  - (d) Rates can vary but may not exceed established ceiling rates;

- (e) There is no additional cost for additional authorized drivers (other Government employees) or drivers between the ages of 18-25; and
  - (f) Insurance is included under Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS). When “GARS” is listed on the rental contract, travelers receive Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), and Supplemental Liability insurance at no additional cost. All other insurance coverage should be declined.
- (6) Employees will not be reimbursed, and are not authorized to use their travel charge card, for purchasing pre-paid refueling options when renting a vehicle for official travel ([per FTR 301-10.450 \(d\)](#)). Therefore, employees should refuel prior to returning the vehicle to the drop-off location. If it is not possible to refuel completely prior to returning the vehicle because of safety issues or the location of closest fueling station, the employee can request reimbursement for vendor refueling charges. The employee should submit proper supporting documentation for this reimbursement.
- (7) Employees may use their travel charge card for payment of an advance room deposit when required by the lodging facility. Complete a pre-trip voucher when the advance payment is made to allow timely reimbursement of the expense.
- (8) The USDA prohibits the use of the travel charge card to obtain contract city-pair fares except for the employee when on official travel. EXCEPTION: the travel charge card may be used for family members travel during an official transfer of station.
- (9) The USDA prohibits the use of the travel charge card to obtain contract city-pair fares for personal trips taken in conjunction with official travel. Official travel flights must be purchased first, on the travel charge card, then exchanged for personal tickets, where appropriate and authorized.
- (10) The USDA restricts most Merchant Category Codes (MCC) that offer non-travel related services or products. As a precautionary measure for those merchants who are mis-classified within the travel charge card program, employees are prohibited from using the travel charge card to procure or pay for the following:
- (a) Book and Magazine Subscriptions;
  - (b) Membership Fees;
  - (c) Training and Conference Fees;
  - (d) Higher Education Expenses;
  - (e) Theme Parks;



- (f) Management Consulting Services;
  - (g) Automobile Purchases; Car Repairs and Services;
  - (h) Clothing, Lingerie, Outerwear, Shoes, and Furniture;
  - (i) Hair Services, Cosmetics, Tattoos, and Massages;
  - (j) Emergency Medical Services;
  - (k) Office Supplies;
  - (l) Computers, Televisions, or Telecommunication Equipment;
  - (m) Rental Global Positioning Systems; and
  - (n) Any service or product obtained for personal, family, or household purposes.
- (11) The USDA prohibits the use of the travel charge card to purchase fuel and procure minor maintenance services on GSA fleet or Mission Area, agency, or staff office-owned vehicles. The USDA fleet card is the appropriate payment method for purchases incurred while operating Government-owned vehicles.
- (12) While in a travel status, employees may use the travel charge card for non-reimbursable expenses incident to official travel such as in-room movie rentals, room service and exercise facility fees. This includes purchasing alcoholic beverages, incidental to a meal (the meal and beverage must be on the same receipt). Although these expenses may be purchased on the travel charge card, they will not be reimbursed.

f. Exemptions to the Use of the Travel Charge Card

- (1) Employees must apply for a contractor-issued Government travel charge card to perform official travel, unless they receive an approved exemption. Employees must use the travel charge card for official travel related expenses. The travel charge card gives employees financial flexibility and convenience while traveling on official Government business. Advantages of the travel charge card include direct purchase of common carrier tickets and the opportunity to reserve lodging and rental cars when authorized in advance by the Mission Area, agency, or staff office.
- (2) If a Mission Area, agency, or staff office desires to exempt additional payments, persons, type or class of payments, or type or class of Mission Area, agency, or staff office personnel (not already included herein) from the use of the travel charge card, then they must submit a written request for this exemption to OCFO, via the Departmental Coordinator, prior to authorizing the exemption. If the exemption is

determined to be necessary and in the best interest of the USDA, then the OCFO will provide written notification to the GSA within 30 days of the approved exemption. This policy applies to any employee paid through the National Finance Center (NFC).

- (3) The following class of Mission Area, agency, and staff office personnel are exempt from mandatory use of the travel charge card (although exempt, these travelers are not prohibited from applying for and using the travel charge card):
  - (a) Infrequent travelers – those who conduct official Government travel fewer than three times in a 12-month period;
  - (b) Temporary employees (whose terms of appointment are less than 180 days);  
and
  - (c) Intermittent or temporary consultants and experts (who are paid on a daily, basis when employed), serving less than 1 year.

Mission Areas, agencies and staff offices have the discretion to require employees to obtain travel charge cards, regardless of how often they travel.

NOTE: The USDA is working with the contractor bank and card vendor to make virtual card accounts (i.e., single use accounts or ghost cards) available to employees. Once this solution is available, the exemptions described above will be rescinded or terminated.

- (4) Expenses for which payment through the travel charge card is impractical (e.g., vendor does not accept credit cards) or imposes unreasonable burdens or costs (e.g., fees are charged for using the card) are exempt from use of the travel charge card.

Other expense items (or situations) that *may* be exempted from travel charge card use (at the discretion of the Mission Area, agency, or staff office SATO) include:

- (a) Laundry and dry cleaning;
- (b) Parking;
- (c) Local transportation systems (e.g., train, bus);
- (d) Taxi (to include transportation and innovative mobility network companies – Transportation Network Company (TNC), Innovative Mobility Technology Company (IMTC));
- (e) Tips;

- (f) Meals (when use of the card is impractical, e.g., group meals or when the travel charge card is not accepted);
- (g) Official phone calls;
- (h) When an employee has an application pending for the travel charge card;
- (i) When individuals are traveling on invitational travel;
- (j) New agency employees who must travel before receiving their travel charge card; and
- (k) Relocation allowances, except for enroute travel and house hunting trips.

g. USDA Zero Tolerance Policy

This regulation sets forth the “USDA Zero Tolerance Policy” for any inappropriate charges and delinquencies. The objective of this policy is to eliminate misuse and abuse in the travel charge card program and mitigate the need to impose disciplinary procedures on any USDA employee. Proper use of the travel charge card reduces the need to cancel card privileges; eliminates the administrative burden of acting against employees; preserves the reputation of USDA; and allows employees to achieve mission goals with integrity.

The USDA Zero Tolerance Policy prohibits the following misuses of the card:

- (1) Making unauthorized charges and charges not associated with official travel;
- (2) Allowing family members, another employee, or friends to use the card;
- (3) Using the card while not in an official travel status;
- (4) Using the card in the vicinity of the official duty station or residence when not on official travel;
- (5) Paying for another employee’s official travel expenses;
- (6) Allowing your account to become delinquent;
- (7) Failure to reconcile your monthly travel charge card statement;
- (8) Failure to pay accounts with sufficient funds;
- (9) Making cash withdrawals from automated teller machines (ATM) earlier than 3 business days before the start of official travel (domestic or international) or after the final day of official travel;

- (10) Obtaining cash advances from ATMs located in a casino or other gaming establishment;
- (11) Failure to use split disbursement to repay travel related expenses to the travel charge card issuing bank;
- (12) Withdrawing credit balances from the card via an ATM;
- (13) Procuring fuel or minor maintenance services on GSA, Mission Area, agency, or staff office-owned vehicles;
- (14) Pre-paying for fuel when renting a vehicle for official travel
- (15) Paying for conference registration fees or training courses, unless the lodging and registration are in one combined transaction;
- (16) Paying for alcoholic beverages not incident to a meal; and
- (17) Paying for meals for everyone at the table or in the party and being reimbursed in cash.

h. Delinquencies

Delinquencies associated with the Government travel charge card are prohibited. The following administrative actions can be imposed for delinquent travel cardholders:

- (1) Suspend employee accounts once they reach 61 days past the statement date;
- (2) Instruct the charge card vendor to cancel cards, withhold account reinstatement, initiate collection efforts, notify credit bureaus, and assess late fees; and
- (3) Initiate salary offset to collect any undisputed, delinquent travel charge card amount via direct deduction from an employee's payroll disbursement or retirement annuity on behalf of the travel charge card vendor, Mission Area, agency, or staff office.

i. Automated Teller Machines Cash Advances

- (1) ATM cash advance withdrawals can only be taken when in an official travel status; withdrawals are allowed no earlier than 3 calendar days before official travel (domestic or international) begins and no later than the last day of official travel. Cash advances are limited to the meals and incidental expenses rate (M&IE) for the location of the temporary duty location and other cash expenses identified in Section 5f of this policy. Cash needs for M&IE expenses should not exceed \$100 per day (domestic) or \$150 per day (international).

- (2) The USDA will reimburse travelers for service fees incurred for ATM advances, when using their Government issued travel charge card, not exceeding the daily location rate multiplied by the number of calendar days in travel status. Cash obtained from the ATM in amounts greater than required for the travel duration are considered excessive cash advances and a misuse of the travel charge card.

j. Transportation Network and Innovative Mobility Network Companies

- (1) Employees traveling on official business may use their Government issued travel charge card, and be reimbursed, for expenses related to the use of this type of special conveyance. Certain jurisdictions may have limits or prohibit the operation or use of innovative mobility technology companies. Federal employees must follow all laws, including those related to transportation network and innovative mobility technology companies, as well as choose the most cost-effective level of service.
- (2) These companies, (e.g., Uber, Lyft, Sidecar, ZipCar, Bike Share), may be an efficient and cost-effective alternative to taxis and rental cars for ground transportation. Employees must obtain a receipt for reimbursement when the cost exceeds \$25 and upload the receipt to the travel voucher.

k. Laundry and Dry Cleaning

Employees can use their travel charge card for paying laundry and dry-cleaning expenses, when their domestic temporary duty (TDY) trip lasts a minimum of four consecutive nights. Employees using other than coin-operated machines for these services will need to provide an itemized receipt from the TDY location for reimbursement, regardless of cost, and upload the receipt to the travel voucher.

l. Internet Access and Service Fees

Employees may use their travel charge card, and be reimbursed, for internet access fees when necessary to conduct official business while in a TDY status. The estimated cost must be listed as an expense, and reimbursement authorized, on the travel authorization in advance of scheduled travel. If authorized, this expense can be placed on the travel charge card. Employees need to provide a receipt from the TDY location for reimbursement, regardless of cost, and upload the receipt to the travel voucher.

m. Travel Voucher Reimbursement

- (1) An employee must prepare and submit a final travel voucher, together with any required receipts, to their approving official within 5 business days after completion of an official business trip or period of travel; if on continuous travel (longer than 45 days), then a voucher can be submitted weekly, bi-weekly, or every 30 days, depending on Mission Area, agency, or staff office guidance.

- (2) Employees will be reimbursed for travel and transportation expenses authorized and allowable under the FTR, [DR 2300-005](#), *Agriculture Travel Regulation* [ATR], and Mission Area, agency, or staff office specific policies. Adherence to these policies will help to ensure reimbursement in enough time to the pay the travel charge card monthly billing statement. However, the cardholder is required to pay their bill in full by the established due date, regardless of whether their voucher has been paid.

n. Cumulative Use of Travel Charge Card Reports

Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices will use cumulative 12-month charge activity reports for the purposes of determining whether employees meet program eligibility criteria, the level of participation and for establishing budget estimates for travel.

o. Travel Charge Card Operations During National and State Declared Emergencies

Employees who are activated to perform emergency or first responder duties, or participate as a continuity of operations (COOP) team member, are exempt from travel charge card deactivation and cancellation requirements. Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices should contact the Level 3 or Level 4 A/OPC to ensure the cardholder accounts are identified as such within the contractor bank's electronic access system.

p. Deactivation and Reactivation

The Departmental Coordinator will work with the contractor bank to perform semiannual deactivation of cards that remain inactive during a 12-month period. In addition, the A/OPC should deactivate cards upon notification from the employee's immediate supervisor of travel charge card ineligibility. Employees with a deactivated travel charge card will need to contact their A/OPC at least 3 business days prior to travel commencement to have their travel charge card reactivated.

q. Collection of Delinquent Payments from Employee Pay

- (1) In accordance with the cardholder agreement, employees are obligated to pay the undisputed balance within 30 days of the statement date, regardless of whether they have received payment from their properly completed and submitted voucher. Undisputed, delinquent IBA balances are eligible for the USDA travel charge card salary offset program. The USDA may offset an employee's pay to recover undisputed delinquent amounts due to the travel charge card contractor. Salary offset may also apply to an exiting employee's final pay, provided the due process requirements were followed.
- (2) The USDA will not initiate a salary offset request if the employee has filed a timely voucher and it has not yet been paid. Upon receipt of written notice of the intent to administer salary offset, the employee must inform the NFC, in writing within 5 business days, using the contact information in the notification, if the employee has not been reimbursed, then follow the instructions provided in Appendix I, *NFC*

*Salary Offset* (to provide the name and phone number of the employee's travel voucher-approving official for confirmation).

- (3) No offset of disputed debts will be made except pursuant to the garnishment regulations [5 CFR Part 582](#), *Commercial Garnishment of Federal Employees' Pay*.

r. Suspension or Cancellation of Travel Charge Cards

- (1) USDA officials do not have the authority to override the contractor bank's policy regarding the suspension or cancellation of employee accounts. The current card contractor, US Bank, will not reinstate an IBA for the following reasons:
  - (a) Poor Fair Isaac Corporation (FICO) score;
  - (b) Too many non-sufficient funds (NSF) or returned payments;
  - (c) Poor payment history; or
  - (d) Account was charged off (requires new application).
- (2) The travel charge card contractor bank will suspend an account once an undisputed transaction remains unpaid for 61 days or more from the billing or closing date on the statement in which the unpaid charges first appeared. The contractor bank will cancel an account once undisputed transactions remain unpaid 120 days or more from the closing date on the statement in which the unpaid charges first appeared. An account may also be canceled if it has been suspended twice during the preceding 12 months, then becomes past due again.
- (3) The card contractor bank will not suspend any account for disputed charges. Upon payment of the undisputed principal amount, the contractor bank will automatically reinstate a suspended account. The automatic reinstatements are only allowed on suspended accounts less than 120 days delinquent. The travel charge card contractor bank maintains a suspension, cancellation, and reinstatement file on all accounts.
- (4) Employees who need to perform official travel but have lost their charge card privileges due to cancellation by the bank because of a delinquency or using the card for non-official purposes, must charge their common carrier transportation to their Mission Area, agency, or staff office centrally billed account. The employee can request a travel advance (within the ETS) to pay for other travel related costs or can use personal funds and be reimbursed after their trip.
- (5) A cancelled travel charge card account reflects unfavorable past performance. For this reason, employees with cancelled travel charge card accounts are considered high risk in the repayment of travel advances.

- (6) In the case of hardship, employees who have lost their travel charge card privileges may request written approval for a travel advance on a trip-by-trip basis from their agency SATO or CFO.
- (7) Consideration of such requests will be made on a case-by-case basis, and approval should not be assumed. A written record of all such approvals, as well as the basis for each approval, will be maintained by the approving office and a copy forwarded to the NFC Administrative Payments Section for system processing. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) must regularly review this record during program specific audits.
- (8) Employees must comply with this policy by promptly resolving any outstanding balance on the travel charge card. The use of personal funds to finance travel expenses (except transportation tickets) for official travel is authorized when an employee has been cancelled from the use of an official travel charge card. When personal funds are used, employees will be reimbursed for qualifying travel expenses by submitting a proper travel voucher. Questions regarding travel charge cards may be directed to the Departmental Coordinator.

TABLE 2 – CONTRATOR BANK SUSPENSION AND CANCELLATION STATUSES

Code	Account Status	Description
Z1	Pre-Suspended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government Travel account is 45 days past due</li> <li>- Authorizations are still approved</li> <li>- Credit Rating will change to Open if payment is received</li> </ul>
Z2	Suspended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government Travel account is 60 days past due</li> <li>- Decline all authorizations</li> <li>- Declines reissue</li> <li>- Pick up Status on Card (automatic)</li> <li>- Status automatically removed if past due amount is paid in full</li> <li>- Credit Rating will change to Open if payment is received</li> </ul>
Z3	Pre-canceled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government Travel account is 120 days past due</li> <li>- Or Early Closure</li> <li>- Decline all authorizations</li> <li>- Declines reissue</li> <li>- Pick up Status on Card (automatic)</li> <li>- Status not automatically removed when paid</li> <li>- This status is never removed by customer service</li> <li>- Reinstatement request is needed to re-open account. Reinstatement rules vary by Mission Area, agency, or staff office.</li> </ul>



Code	Account Status	Description
		-
Z5	Canceled	- Government Travel account is 126 days past due - OR Closed by credit due to 2nd returned or NSF Returned payment - Decline all authorizations - Declines reissue - Requires Reinstatement to be reopened

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Unless otherwise stated below, the provisions of this regulation follow the delegations of authority listed in Section 4, *Responsibilities*, of the DR 2300-005. The following offices and individuals have direct responsibilities for monitoring the use of the travel charge card:

- a. The Head of the OCFO Financial Policy and Planning, Fiscal Policy Division (FPD) will:
  - (1) Serve as the Departmental Coordinator;
  - (2) Ensure the implementation of statutes and regulations related to use of the travel charge card;
  - (3) Issue and interpret Departmental policy and procedures on the use of the travel charge card;
  - (4) Serve as the liaison to the contractor and GSA, with the assistance of the contracting officer, on issues dealing with the program;
  - (5) Promote standardization, centralization, and automation of the program throughout USDA. Establish Departmentwide operating limits for card usage;
  - (6) Review, on a periodic basis, any MCCs allowed on travel charge cards; and restrict or block any MCCs not appropriate for use during official travel;
  - (7) Monitor Mission Area, agency, and staff office compliance regarding the use of travel charge card through the use of data mining and other techniques, in compliance with the OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B;
  - (8) Review travel charge card usage monthly and alert A/OPCs of trends and instances of potential inappropriate use and abuse;
  - (9) Promote and maximize travel charge card rebates;

- (10) Develop or make available, annual training on the travel charge card policy and use; and
  - (11) Submit an annual travel charge card management plan and quarterly performance reports to OMB.
- b. Mission Area, Agency, and Staff Office Human Resources Office (HRO) Heads will:
- (1) Assist managers and supervisors in selecting and implementing appropriate administrative actions, including disciplinary and adverse action up to and including removal from Federal Service, resulting from misuse or abuse of travel charge card and account delinquencies. See [DR 4070-735-001](#), *Employee Responsibilities and Conduct*;
  - (2) Collect necessary information and data as required by the Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM) regarding travel charge card misuse and account delinquencies and report it quarterly; and
  - (3) Ensure supervisors are held accountable for disciplinary actions to employees that misuse or abuse their travel charge card.
- c. Mission Area, Agency, and Staff Office Heads will:
- (1) Appoint one or more A/OPCs for their organization to meet the requirements of this regulation;
  - (2) Establish internal procedures to promote the use of the card and to monitor fraud, waste, and abuse of the travel charge card;
  - (3) Ensure their employees receive information on how the travel charge card program operates, proper use of the travel charge card, safeguards to the travel charge card, and conveyance of the USDA Zero Tolerance Policy to all cardholders;
  - (4) Conduct their program in accordance with the FTR and the current GSA SmartPay charge cards contract, by taking advantage of services, technology, and rebates offered;
  - (5) Ensure proper execution of the travel charge card program by all cardholders within their respective Mission Area, agency, or staff office in accordance with the provisions of this regulation;
  - (6) Ensure Mission Area, agency, and staff office employees take annual travel charge card training, which includes how the travel charge card program works, proper use of the travel charge card, safeguards for the card, and enforcement of the USDA Zero Tolerance Policy to cardholders;

- (7) Designate managers and supervisors to authorize and approve employee travel, and by extension, travel charge card use. Ensure appropriate administrative or disciplinary actions are taken when employees misuse or abuse their travel charge card;
- (8) Assign employee(s) as primary and alternate(s) to act as Level 3 and/or Level 4 A/OPCs to administer the travel charge card program for IBAs and centrally billed accounts (CBAs) within their Mission Area, agency, or staff office and appropriate operating unit(s). An example appointment letter and a list of the roles and responsibilities for each A/OPC level, are available in Appendix D, *Sample A/OPC Appointment Letter and Duties*. Appointment letters for Level 3 and Level 4 A/OPCs should be sent to the Departmental Coordinator via email ([TPM@usda.gov](mailto:TPM@usda.gov));
- (9) Determine which employees are eligible for a travel charge card; and, if necessary, then sign the certification block on the Employee Acknowledgment and Acceptance Statement. Mission Area, Agency, and Staff Office Heads may delegate the signature authority to travel approving officials;
- (10) Ensure employees activate their travel charge cards within 60 days of receipt; and take appropriate disciplinary action (i.e., verbal or administrative counseling) for those employees who do not activate their cards on time;
- (11) Establish procedures to classify and evaluate travelers for appropriate travel charge card limits. The limits should be issued based on the frequency and duration of official travel, and estimated expenses to be incurred. Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices are generally cautioned about increasing an employee's travel charge card limit to accommodate a traveler who has failed to pay his or her travel charge card bill in full or on time;
- (12) Establish procedures to periodically review program to identify frequent and infrequent travelers and determine whether a cardholder has a need for the travel charge card;
- (13) Ensure the A/OPC functions are adequately staffed, that the A/OPCs are aware of their program responsibilities, and that the A/OPCs complete initial and recurring (annual) training;
- (14) Establish procedures for use and monitoring your Mission Area, agency, or staff office CBA, including the requirement to reconcile the account each month, to make sure the account is paid in a timely manner, and to mitigate delinquent account balances;
- (15) Establish an internal Mission Area, agency, or staff office reporting process to ensure the results of A/OPCs monitoring activity are transmitted to a central point in

the Mission Area, agency, or staff office. Also, document examination and referral activity related to travel charge card misuse, to include disciplinary actions taken;

- (16) Establish administrative procedures for employees detailed to other Mission Area, agencies, or staff offices or Departments. If the employee continues to travel using a USDA issued travel charge card, then the Mission Area, agency, or staff office must have procedures to review travel charge card use and take administrative action for misuse and delinquency. If adequate procedures cannot be established, then the travel charge card must be deactivated or cancelled until the employee's detail has ended;
- (17) Establish an administrative review process to provide due process to employees that have delinquent travel charge card balances or are potentially involved in misuse/abuse of their card. The process should include what administrative actions, if any, will be imposed on delinquent cardholders; and
- (18) Before amounts are offset from an employee's pay for travel debts owed to the Government, due process requirements must be satisfied.

Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices should use Form Agriculture Department [\(AD\)-343](#), *Payroll Action Request*, to initiate billings for employees who are paid through the NFC for items other than salary overpayments, such as travel debts. The completed form must be submitted to the address preprinted on the form. The applicable office should retain a copy for their files.

After NFC receives and processes Form AD-343, they will begin due process notification to the employee, following the requirements contained in *Federal Salary Offset*, [7 CFR Part 3, Subpart G](#); or *Pay Administration – Collection by Offset From Indebted Government Employees*, [5 CFR Part 550, Subpart K](#); as applicable. NFC will produce and mail [Form NFC-631](#), *Demand Notice for Payment*, to the employee. The debt package shows the amount owed and the Mission Area, agency, or staff office intent to collect the delinquent amount from the employee's disposable pay prior to initiating the action.

Provide the employee an opportunity to:

- (a) Inspect records regarding the claim;
- (b) Make a written agreement with the contractor bank to repay the delinquent amount; and
- (c) Review the decision to collect the amount through the offset program with appropriate agency personnel.

d. Managers and Supervisors will:

- (1) Identify lower level A/OPCs by sending an official appointment letter to the Level 3 (or Level 4) Mission Area, agency, or staff office A/OPC. An example appointment letter and a list of the roles and responsibilities for each A/OPC level, are available in Appendix D;

NOTE: If A/OPC responsibilities are maintained at the mission area (Level 3), additional delegations to lower level A/OPCs is not mandatory or necessary.

- (2) Authorize the issuance of travel charge cards to employees, as needed;
- (3) Ensure employees are properly utilizing their travel charge cards;
- (4) Implement appropriate administrative actions to address instances of delinquencies greater than 60 days, and card misuse, or abuse;
- (5) Notify employee of any questionable transactions or delinquencies; give the employee the opportunity to explain the charges or delinquency; and maintain a written record or case file of the notification and the explanation received from the employee;
- (6) Consult with the servicing HRO to select and implement appropriate administrative actions, including disciplinary and adverse action up to and including removal from Federal Service, resulting from employee misuse of travel charge card and account delinquencies; and maintain documentation of referrals to the Mission Area, agency, or staff office servicing HRO and document resolution of the incident;
- (7) Ensure the A/OPC deactivates or cancels the card if there is a pattern of misuse or abuse or insufficient explanation for repeated delinquencies;
- (8) Notify the A/OPC when an employee is transferring between Mission Areas, agencies, or staff offices within the USDA; and
- (9) Sign the [AD-139](#), *Final Salary Payment Report*, and notify the A/OPC when an employee leaves USDA.

e. Agency/Organization Program Coordinators (A/OPC) will:

- (1) Acknowledge their appointment as an A/OPC and comply with requirements identified on their official appointment letter;
- (2) Complete initial and recurring (annual) training (USDA and GSA designated courses);
- (3) Be familiar with the responsibilities listed within this regulation, those on their appointment letter (see Appendix D), and applicable courses available via the US Bank [Access Online Training Portal](#);

- (4) Regularly utilize the contractor bank's online tools to manage and monitor the travel charge card program for potential card misuse and delinquency trends;
- (5) Provide the contractor bank a listing of the primary and alternate A/OPC names, mailing addresses and telephone numbers, and forward a copy of this information to the Departmental Coordinator in the OCFO Fiscal Policy Division at [TPM@cfo.usda.gov](mailto:TPM@cfo.usda.gov);
- (6) Make available to cardholders a copy of the Departmental and Mission Area, agency, or staff office specific travel charge card regulation and guidance;
- (7) Complete sections designated for Mission Area, agency, or staff office information and authorization on the employee travel charge card application;
- (8) Forward the original copy of the application to card vendor, via the contractor bank's electronic access system, fax, or email when required or necessary;
- (9) Retain a file of the signed Employee Acceptance and Acknowledgment Statement (in Appendix E, *Acknowledgement and Acceptance Statement*), along with a copy of the employee's application (unless submitted electronically), for all employees who are cardholders until the employee transfers or retires;
- (10) Monitor the contractor bank's monthly charges and delinquency reports provided via their electronic access system (see Appendix F, *US Bank Access Online Reports*). Use electronic and web-based reports whenever possible to reduce paperwork per the *Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995* ([44 U.S.C. Chapter 35](#));
  - (a) Review contractor's reports to identify employees who:
    - 1 Have left USDA;
    - 2 Have violated the USDA Zero Tolerance Policy;
    - 3 Have had additional administrative restrictions placed on their accounts;  
or
    - 4 Are using the travel charge card while not on official travel;
  - (b) Review cardholder spending limits quarterly; and
  - (c) Ensure cardholders are assigned to the correct hierarchy;
- (11) Review OCFO data mining reports of potential misuse for your Mission Area, agency, or staff office cardholders; and report review results to OCFO within established and directed timeframes;

- (12) Notify the appropriate manager, supervisor, and the employee, per Mission Area, agency, or staff office procedures, of possible misuse or delinquencies of 60 days or more. Sample notification letters are available in Appendix H, *Examples of the Memoranda to Employees from the A/OPC*;
- (13) Notify the contractor bank of any mission-related extenuating circumstances for which an employee's delinquent account should not be suspended.
- (14) Monitor monthly delinquency reports for employees who are in a pre-suspension status; and forward reports to supervisors for appropriate administrative action, including counseling;
- (15) Annually review spending limits of travel charge cards above the Departmental default limit (\$7,500.00 for unrestricted accounts and \$3,500.00 for restricted accounts) to determine whether the higher limit is still needed;
- (16) Complete a hierarchy change request worksheet to transfer an employee's account between USDA Mission Areas, agencies, or staff offices (see Appendix G, *Inter-Departmental Hierarchy Transfer Request Worksheet*);
- (17) Deactivate an account when notified an employee's card has been suspended because of inappropriate use or delinquency; or when an employee leaves, retires or transfers to another Government agency. Deactivation is done by reducing the spending limit to \$1.00 or temporarily or permanently closing the account using the contractor bank's electronic access system;
- (18) Reactivate travel charge cards when employees are authorized for travel;
- (19) Suspend, cancel, or void accounts under their purview (the GSA Contracting Officer also has this authority); maintain documentation of the reason for the suspension, cancellation, or voiding of the account; and notify the OIG and the contractor bank of potential fraud;
- (20) Request re-instatement of a suspended or cancelled IBA by submitting an email (to the Departmental Program Coordinator at [TPM@usda.gov](mailto:TPM@usda.gov) (only Level 3 A/OPCs may submit the request; lower level A/OPCs should submit the request to the next higher level A/OPC). The email should include an updated signed copy of the USDA Government Travel Charge Card Acceptance and Acknowledgement Statement (Appendix E), a recent copy of the AgLearn Travel Charge Card training certification (dated within the last 30 days), and answers to the following questions:
  - (a) Why does the cardholder's account need to be re-opened?
  - (b) Did the employee receive supervisory approval to have the account re-opened?

- (c) Was the cardholder notified of past due amount prior to account becoming suspended or cancelled?
  - (d) What is the current balance due on the card?
  - (e) What is the past due amount on the account?
  - (f) When will the past due amount be paid in full?
  - (g) What actions will the employee take to prevent account from becoming suspended or cancelled again?
  - (h) Does the employee have voucher(s) pending for payment?
  - (i) If so, then how much is the voucher payment(s)?
  - (j) What is the expected pay date of the pending voucher(s)?
  - (k) What caused the delay in paying the balance due to the card?
- (21) Inform new applicants that credit scores may be obtained by the contractor bank, if given authorization. If authorization is not given or the applicant's credit score is below the threshold (660) set by the OMB Appendix B to Circular No. A-123, then a card can be issued with more stringent restrictions.
- (a) The USDA will work with the contractor bank to implement one or more of the additional restrictions listed in Section 6.3.2, *First time travel charge card applicants with a credit score less than 660*, of Appendix B to Circular A-123, which include:
    - 1 Reduce the overall dollar limit for the card;
    - 2 Reduce the monthly card limit;
    - 3 Limit (or further limit, if applicable) the types of transactions allowed;
    - 4 Issue a pre-paid, stored value, or declining balance card that automatically restricts dollar amount and transaction types;
    - 5 Limit (or further limit, if applicable) the monthly or cycle limit on the account;
    - 6 Limit (or further limit, if applicable) the length of time a card remains active, such as for the length of time in travel status only; and
    - 7 Restrict (or further restrict, if applicable) use at ATMs.



- (b) The USDA staff will not have access to the applicants' credit score. Restricted cardholders may request their score directly from the contractor bank using the customer service number provided on the back of the travel charge card.
  - (c) Procedures to move from restricted to unrestricted status have been developed with the contractor bank. Cardholders can consult with their A/OPC to obtain the process to re-evaluate their credit score after 1-year.
- (22) Manage and monitor CBA usage; to include approving use of the account, reconciling the account monthly, and ensuring the account is paid in a timely manner. This account is charged directly to the Mission Area, agency, or staff office and therefore must be closely and carefully monitored:
- (a) The maximum allowable 61+ day delinquency rate for CBAs is fifteen percent (15%). The delinquency rate is reported monthly, when the US Bank billing cycle closes. Per OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B, the delinquency rate for charge cards equals the total payments past due at the end of a reporting period divided by outstanding balances on all accounts at that time;
  - (b) The third consecutive time a Mission Area, agency, or staff office exceeds the established maximum delinquency rate, the CBA will be "suspended." The Departmental Coordinator will temporarily close the CBA if the maximum delinquency rate is exceeded for a second 3-consecutive-month period within 12 months.
- (23) Request a suspended or closed CBA be re-opened:
- (a) If the account is suspended or closed by the contractor bank or suspended by the Department Coordinator, then email the request to the Departmental Coordinator. Include the information below in the request:
    - 1 Current amount over 60 days delinquent;
    - 2 Amount to be paid within 48 hours of account opening; and
    - 3 When payment(s) will be processed.
  - (b) If the account is closed by the Departmental Coordinator, then the Mission Area, agency, or staff office CFO or SATO must send a request memorandum to the USDA Associate CFO for Financial Policy and Planning, detailing the information below:
    - 1 Why the account had to be closed;
    - 2 Why the account should be re-opened;

3 Corrective actions taken or to be taken to prevent future delinquencies;  
and

4 Current delinquent amount.

f. Employees who apply for and are issued a travel charge card will:

- (1) Assume the responsibility to use the card for official travel purposes and pay their charges in a timely manner;
- (2) Employ prudent travel practices and to observe rules and regulations governing travel as set forth in the FTR, the ATR, the “*USDA Zero Tolerance Policy*,” and Mission Area, agency, and staff office specific policies and procedures;
- (3) Complete the USDA Travel Charge Card Training;
- (4) Complete the travel charge card account application;
- (5) Complete and sign the Employee Acknowledgment Statement recognizing receipt and understanding of the policies and procedures related to the use of the travel charge card;
- (6) Obtain the approving official or immediate supervisor signature, as designated by their Mission Area, agency, or staff office, on the Employee Acknowledgment Statement;
- (7) Forward the application and acknowledgment statement to their A/OPC for processing. If the A/OPC is unknown, then contact the Departmental Coordinator;
- (8) Read and adhere to the information contained in the contractor bank’s Cardholder Guide for Travel;
- (9) Activate the travel charge card within 60 days of receipt;
- (10) Update their ETS profile with the travel card account information;
- (11) Use the card to pay for their own official travel-related expenses only; and will not use the card for another employee expenses (e.g., holding a room reservation), or allow a family member to use the card;
- (12) Conform to the *Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch*, [5 CFR Part 2635](#). As a Federal employee, standards of conduct for public trust positions apply. The standards require employees to pay each financial obligation in a proper and timely manner;

- (13) File necessary travel vouchers using the ETS, within 5 business days after their official business trip ends, to make a payment directly to the travel charge card via split-disbursement;
- (14) Promptly pay the full account balance due, unless in dispute, by the date indicated on the monthly statement. Employees are not relieved of the obligation to pay the travel charge card bill, despite any delay in their Mission Area, agency, or staff office reimbursing their claim on travel voucher;
- (15) Pay for all items billed to the card, unless a charge is disputed, or the card was reported lost or stolen;
- (16) Secure the travel charge card in the same manner as a personal charge card. The card must not be stored or kept by anyone other than the employee;
- (17) Keep their travel charge card account personal contact information current with the contractor bank (e.g., personal contact information and official email address);
- (18) Use the contractor's bank electronic system to access account to make payments, changes to mailing address, telephone numbers, or email address. Travel charge cardholder's billing statements and other charge card correspondence should not be sent to the official duty station address;
- (19) Contact the contractor bank to dispute charges they did not make or any unrecognizable charges. Disputes must be filed in writing within 60 days of the date the charge first appears on the billing statement. The contractor bank can be reached by calling the customer service number provided on the monthly billing statement or on the back of the travel charge card. The contractor bank will need the following information:
  - (a) Employee name and account number;
  - (b) Reference number of the disputed charge;
  - (c) Establishment where charge was incurred;
  - (d) Amount of the charge;
  - (e) Statement date; and
  - (f) Reason for dispute.
- (20) Notify the A/OPC when transferring between USDA Mission Area, agency, or staff office; and
- (21) Complete annual travel charge card policy training.

g. The National Finance Center (NFC) Head, the Departmental Coordinator, and A/OPCs will:

- (1) Following due process, the NFC will initiate procedures to collect undisputed delinquent amounts from an employee's disposable pay. Salary offset from the employee's disposable pay may not exceed 15% of disposable pay unless the cardholder authorizes a higher amount. In addition to the amount owed to the contractor bank, a processing fee will be charged to the employee to recover the NFC's processing costs; and
- (2) The USDA will not initiate a salary offset if the employee filed a timely voucher and it has not been paid. Upon receipt of written notice of the intent to administer salary offset, the employee must inform NFC in writing within 5 business days if he/she has not been reimbursed, then follow the instructions provided in their salary offset letter. For travel debts owed to the travel charge card vendor, see the salary offset procedures the USDA and the contractor bank established in Appendix I, *NFC Salary Offset*.

## 7. INQUIRIES

Mission Areas, agencies, and staff offices should direct questions and inquiries regarding this DR to the OCFO at the Travel Policy Management (TPM) mailbox: [TPM@usda.gov](mailto:TPM@usda.gov).

-END-

## APPENDIX A

### ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Agriculture Department (Prefix for Departmental Forms)
A/OPC	Agency/Organization Program Coordinator
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
ATR	Agriculture Travel Regulation
CBA	Centrally Billed Account
CDW	Collision Damage Waiver
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CFPB	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COOP	Continuity of Operations
CPP	City Pair Program
DR	Departmental Regulation
DTMO	Defense Travel Management Office
ETS	Electronic Travel System
FICO	Fair Isaac Corporation
FPD	Fiscal Policy Division
FTR	Federal Travel Regulation
GARS	Government Administrative Rate Supplement
GRS	General Records Schedule
GSA	General Services Administration
HRO	Human Resources Office
IBA	Individually Billed Account
ID	Identification
IOD	Insights on Demand
IMTC	Innovative Mobility Technology Company
LDW	Loss Damage Waiver
M&IE	Meals and Incidental Expenses
MCC	Merchant Category Code
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NFC	National Finance Center
NSF	Non-Sufficient Funds
OCFO	Office of the Chief Financial Officer
OHRM	Office of Human Resource Management
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
P.L.	Public Law
SATO	Senior Accountable Travel Official
SF	Standard Form
SSN	Social Security Number

TBR	Total Business Reporting (US Bank Reporting Hierarchy or levels)
TDY	Temporary Duty
TMC	Travel Management Center
TNC	Transportation Network Company
TPM	Travel Policy Management
TTRA	Travel and Transportation Reform Act
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VRBO	Vacation Rental By Owner
YCA	Standard City Pair Airfare

## APPENDIX B

### DEFINITIONS

Abuse. Use of a government payment solution to buy authorized items, but at terms (e.g., price, quantity) that are excessive, for a questionable government need, or both. Examples of such transactions would include purchase of items such as a day planner costing \$300 rather than one costing \$45, allowable refreshments at an excessive cost, and year-end or other bulk purchases of supplies or services for a questionable government need. (Source: GSA, [Glossary of the common GSA SmartPay program terminology](#) “SmartPay Glossary”)

Account Deactivation. A method to temporarily block the cardholder's ability to make transactions on the account without canceling the account altogether. While the account is deactivated, any transaction that the cardholder attempts to make will be declined at the point of sale. The agency can deactivate and reactivate an account through the charge card vendor's Electronic Access System (EAS) or by calling the charge card vendor. (Source: OMB, [Appendix B to Circular No. A-123, A Risk Management Framework for Government Charge Card Programs](#), August 27, 2019)

Agency. Organizational units of the Department, other than staff offices, whose Heads report to officials within the Office of the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Assistant to the Secretary. (Source: USDA, [DR 0100-001, Departmental Directives System](#), January 4, 2018)

Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC). This individual serves as the focal point for answering management, task order administration, establishing and maintaining accounts, and issuance and destruction of cards. The A/OPC oversees the card program(s) for his or her Agency/Organization and establishes guidelines. The A/OPC helps set up accounts; serves as liaison between the cardholder and the purchase card contractor; provides on-going advice; audits purchase card accounts as required; and keeps necessary account information current. (Source: OMB, Appendix B to Circular No. A-123)

Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Services. Government contractor-provided ATM services that allow cash withdrawals from participating ATMs to be charged to a Government contractor-issued charge card. (Source: FTR, Subchapter A, *Introduction*, [41 CFR Part 300-3, Glossary of Terms](#), Last Reviewed: January 29, 2021)

Billing Error. A reflection on or with a periodic statement of an extension of credit that is not made to the consumer or to a person who has actual, implied, or apparent authority to use the consumer's credit card or open-end credit plan. (Source: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), [12 CFR Part 1026, Truth in Lending \(Regulation Z\)](#), Subpart B – *Open End Credit*)

Cancelled Account. An account that is canceled due to an undisputed balance remaining unpaid 120 calendar days after the date of the statement of account on which the charge first appeared.

An account may also be canceled for numerous suspensions. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Cash Advances. The withdrawal of cash from an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) or financial institution, up to a certain limit. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Centrally Billed Account (CBA). A card or account established by the charge card vendor at the request of the mission area, agency, or staff office. These may be card or cardless accounts. Payments are made directly to the charge card vendor by the agency. (Source: OMB, Appendix B to Circular No. A-123)

City-Pair Fares (YCA). The term used for the airfares under the City Pair Program; identifies a highly discounted unrestricted fare on a U.S. flag carrier, under contract for a Government traveler on official travel. (Source: GSA, [Airfare Rates - City Pairs Programs](#), Resource Library, *Dual Fares*, Last Reviewed: July 15, 2020)

Data Mining. An automated process used to scan databases to detect patterns, trends, or anomalies for use in risk management, spend patterns, and other areas of analysis. More specifically, travel charge card transactions oversight process used to help identify instances of potential inappropriate card use. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Delinquency. An undisputed charge card account balance that is unpaid for more than 61 days past the statement date; a debt for which payment is overdue, according to an established payment schedule. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Disposable Pay. That part of current basic pay, special pay, incentive pay, retired pay, retainer pay, and in the case of an employee not entitled to basic pay, other authorized pay remaining after the deduction of any amount required by law to be withheld (other than deductions to execute garnishment orders in accordance with 5 CFR §581 and §582). Among legally required deductions that must be applied first to determine disposable pay are levies pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code (Title 26 U.S.C.) and deductions described in 5 CFR §581.105(b) through (f). (5 CFR §550.1103). (Source: OMB, Appendix B to Circular No. A-123)

Dispute. A situation in which a customer agency or organization or account holder questions the validity of a transaction that was registered to an agency or organization account. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

External Fraud. Any felonious act of corruption or attempt to cheat the Government or corrupt the Government's agents by someone other than Government officials. Otherwise known as third party fraud. (Source: OMB, Appendix B to Circular No. A-123)

Fraud. See Internal Fraud and External Fraud.

Fraudulent Activity. The use of government payment solutions to transact business that is not



sanctioned, not authorized, not in one's official government capacity, not for the purpose for which the card was issued, or not as part of official government business. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Ghost Card. A charge card number that is specific to an agency or organization or an entity within an agency or organization. Purchases made are then charged back to the agency or organization or the entirety within the agency or organization to which the charge card number was issued. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Individually Billed Account (IBA). A government contractor-issued charge card used by authorized individuals to pay for official travel- and transportation-related expenses for which the contractor (bank) bills the employee, and for which the individual is liable to pay. Individually Billed Accounts may only be issued to Federal employees or employees of Tribes or Tribal Organizations. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Infrequent Traveler. Unless otherwise determined by agency guidance, an employee who travels less than three times over a 12-month period. NOTE: Once a virtual account or card solution is available for USDA travelers, this definition will become obsolete.

Innovative Mobility Technology Company (IMTC). An organization, including a corporation, limited liability company, partnership, sole proprietorship, or any other entity, that applies technology to expand and enhance available transportation choices, better manages demand for transportation services, or provides alternatives to driving alone. (i.e., ZipCars, Bike Share, etc.). (Source: FTR, 41 CFR Part 300-3, *Glossary of Terms*)

Interim Travel Voucher. A weekly, bi-weekly or monthly voucher filed by an employee on extended TDY (for more than 45 consecutive days) to be reimbursed for official travel expenses.

Internal Fraud. Any felonious act of corruption or attempt to cheat the Government or corrupt the Government's agents by Government Purchase Charge Card Program officials. Use of the Government purchase, travel, fleet or integrated charge card(s) to transact business that is not sanctioned, not authorized, not in one's official government capacity, not for the purpose for which the card was issued, not as part of official government business. (Source: OMB, Appendix B to Circular No. A-123)

Merchant Category Code (MCC). A four-digit code used to identify the type of business a merchant conducts (e.g., gas stations, restaurants, airlines). The merchant selects its MCC with their bank. The code controls what purchases are allowable. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*).

Mission Area. A group of agencies with related functions that report to the same Under or Assistant Secretary. Research, Education, and Economics (REE) is an example of a Mission Area. (Source: USDA, DR 0100-001)

Misuse (Inappropriate Use). Unintentional use of the purchase, travel, fleet and/or integrated charge card in violation of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation, FTR, Agency Supplements, or Agency Policies/Procedures. These actions are the

result of ignorance and/or carelessness, lacking intent, to include honest mistakes. (e.g., for personal travel expenses, excessive cash advances, obtaining cash advances from ATMs located in a casino or other gaming establishments, using the card at a commercial vendor to procure services for official travel, like Expedia, Hotwire, Priceline, getaroom.com, and Hotels.com). (Source: OMB, Appendix B to Circular No. A-123)

Non-refundable fare. A fare offered by a private-sector supplier of air, rail or bus transportation. This type of fare will not be refunded if a trip is cancelled.

Official Travel. Travel under an official travel authorization from an employee's official station or other authorized point of departure to a temporary duty location and return from a temporary duty location, between two temporary duty locations, or relocation at the direction of a Federal agency. (Source: FTR, 41 CFR Part 300-3, *Glossary of Terms*)

Official Travel Expense. An authorized expense incurred as a result of official travel. Authority to incur travel expenses is generally authorized in the travel order.

Pre-trip Voucher. A voucher filed, in advance of trip start date, to be reimbursed for an official travel expense (e.g., airfare or lodging).

Restricted Card. A Travel card issued to an applicant with a low creditworthiness score or an applicant who refuses a credit check and contains more stringent controls (i.e. ATM withdrawals are not allowed). (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Salary Offset. The collection of an undisputed, delinquent amount via a direct deduction from an employee's payroll disbursement or retirement annuity on behalf of the Contractor. Offsets are normally initiated subsequent to the employee's failure to pay their account on a timely basis. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Single-Use Account. An electronic, charge card-based payment solution that leverages a single 16-digit virtual account number for each payment. The limit on each account is set to the specific payment amount. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Staff Office. Departmental administrative offices whose heads report to officials within the Office of the Secretary. (Source: USDA, DR 0100-001)

Suspension. The process by which an account is deactivated due to delinquency or multiple pre-suspension actions. Temporary termination of travel charge card privileges after the travel charge account is 60 calendar days past the closing date of the billing statement. (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Training. Annual (calendar year) requirement for program participants to ensure they understand the regulations and procedures regarding the travel charge card and know the consequences of inappropriate actions (e.g., fraud, misuse, abuse).

Transportation Network Company (TNC). A corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, or other entity, that uses a digital network to connect riders to drivers affiliated with the entity in

order for the driver to transport the rider using a vehicle owned, leased, or otherwise authorized for use by the driver to a point chosen by the rider; and does not include a shared-expense carpool or vanpool arrangement that is not intended to generate profit for the driver. Certain jurisdictions may have limits or prohibit the operation or use of TNCs. Federal employees are expected to follow all laws, including those related to TNCs, as well as choose the most cost-effective level of service. (e.g., Uber, Lyft). (Source: FTR, 41 CFR Part 300-3, *Glossary of Terms*)

Travel Advance. Prepayment of a percentage of estimated travel expenses provided to an employee via electronic funds transfer. (Source: FTR, 41 CFR Part 300-3, *Glossary of Terms*)

Travel Charge Card. An individually or centrally billed, government contractor-issued charge card used by authorized individuals to pay for travel- and transportation-related expenses in compliance with the applicable regulations and in support of official government business. (Source: OMB, Appendix B to Circular No. A-123)

Travel Management Service (TMS). A service for booking common carrier (e.g., air, rail, and bus confirmations and seat assignments), lodging accommodations, and car rental services; fulfilling (i.e., ticketing) reservations; providing basic management information on those activities; and meeting other requirements as specified in §301-73.106 of this title. A TMS may include a travel management center (TMC), Commercial Ticket Office (CTO), an electronically available system, other commercial methods of arranging travel, or an in-house system. (Source: FTR, 41 CFR Part 300-3, *Glossary of Terms*)

Oversight Insights on Demand (IOD). An artificial intelligence powered audit and risk management platform that analyzes 100% of charge card spend data, regardless of purchase method or source system, to automatically identify waste and misuse across the organization. (Source: [Oversight](#) website)

Virtual Cards. One time use account numbers that may be used during a limited time, for a limited amount and possibly for a specific vendor (e.g. single-use accounts, “ghost” cards). (Source: GSA, *SmartPay Glossary*)

Travel Voucher. A written request, supported by documentation and receipts where applicable, for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of official travel, including permanent change of station (PCS) travel. (Source: FTR, 41 CFR Part 300-3, *Glossary of Terms*)

## APPENDIX C

### AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

[5 U.S.C. § 5701](#), *Definitions*

*Commercial Garnishment of Federal Employees' Pay*, [5 CFR Part 582](#)

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), [12 CFR Part 1026](#), *Truth in Lending (Regulation Z)*, Subpart B – *Open End Credit*

Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO), [U.S. Government Rental Car Program](#) website

*Federal Salary Offset*, [7 CFR Part 3, Subpart G](#)

*Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)*, Subchapter A, *Introduction*, [41 CFR Part 300-3](#), *Glossary of Terms*

*Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)*, [41 CFR Parts 301-304](#)

[41 CFR Part 301-10.450](#), *What are the policies when authorized to rent a vehicle for official travel?*

[41 CFR Part 301-50](#), *Arranging for Travel Services*

[41 CFR Part 301-51](#), *Paying Travel Expenses*

[41 CFR Part 301-52](#), *Claiming Reimbursement*

[41 CFR Part 301-54](#), *Collection of Undisputed Delinquent Amounts Owed to the Contractor Issuing the Individually Billed Travel Charge Card*

[41 CFR Part 301-70](#), *Internal Policy and Procedure Requirements*

[41 CFR Part 301-71](#), *Agency Travel Accountability Requirements*

[41 CFR Part 301-76](#), *Collection of Undisputed Delinquent Amounts Owed to the Contractor Issuing the Individually Billed Travel Charge Card*

*Government Charge Card Abuse Act of 2012*, [P.L. 112-194](#), October 5, 2012

GSA, [Airfare Rates - City Pairs Programs](#), *Resource Library, Dual Fares*

GSA, [Glossary of the common GSA SmartPay program terminology](#) “*SmartPay Glossary*” website

GSA, SmartPay [Training for Account Holders](#) website

GSA, SmartPay [Travel for Agency/Organization Program Coordinators](#) website

GSA SmartPay 3 Training – *Travel Card Agency/Organization Program Coordinators* handout, dated November 06, 2018

*Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990*, [P.L. 101-391](#), September 25, 1990

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), [General Records Schedule \(GRS\) 1.1, Financial Management and Reporting Records, Item 090, Government purchase card and travel credit card application and approval records](#), April 2020

NARA, [GRS 5.1, Common Office Records, Item 010, Administrative records maintained in any agency office](#), July 2017

OMB, [Appendix B to Circular No. A-123, A Risk Management Framework for Government Charge Card Programs](#), August 27, 2019

OMB, Memorandum [M-13-21, Implementation of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012](#), September 6, 2013

Office of Personnel Management (OPM), [SF-85P, Questionnaire for Public Trust Positions](#), December 2017

OPM, [SF-86, Questionnaire for National Security Positions](#), November 2016

[Oversight](#) website

*Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995*, [P.L. 104-13](#), May 22, 1995, codified at [44 U.S.C. Chapter 35](#)

*Pay Administration – Collection by Offset From Indebted Government Employees*, [5 CFR Part 550, Subpart K](#)

*Prompt Payment*, [5 CFR Part 1315](#)

*Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch*, [5 CFR Part 2635](#)

*Travel and Transportation Reform Act (TTRA) of 1998*, [P.L. 105-264, 112 Stat. 2350](#), October 19, 1998

*Travel, Transportation, and Subsistence*, [5 U.S.C. Part III, Subpart D, Chapter 57](#)

USDA, [AD-139, Final Salary Payment Report](#), May 2001

USDA, [AD-343, Payroll Action Request](#), November 1995

USDA, [DR 0100-001](#), *Departmental Directives System*, January 4, 2018

USDA, [DR 2300-005](#), *Agricultural Travel Regulation*, December 8, 2015

USDA, [DR 4070-735-001](#), *Employee Responsibilities and Conduct*, October 4, 2007

USDA, [NFC-631](#), *Demand Notice for Payment*, August 8, 2018

USDA, OCFO, [USDA Travel Express](#) website

## APPENDIX D

### SAMPLE A/OPC APPOINTMENT LETTER AND DUTIES

**TO:** (Address letter to the designated individual)

**FROM:** Appointing Official Name

**SUBJECT:** Appointment as Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (A/OPC)

You are hereby appointed as a Level (*insert level*) A/OPC for (*insert Mission Area, agency, or staff office*).

As the Travel Charge Card Program A/OPC for (*insert Mission Area, agency, or staff office*), you are responsible for the day-to-day management of travel charge card accounts and oversight for the program as outlined in the *Federal Travel Regulation* (FTR), the Department's Departmental Regulation ([DR](#)) [2300-001](#), *Government Travel Charge Card Regulation*, the Agency [or Mission Area or staff office] Travel Regulation, and any subsequent guidance and internal procedures.

You must become thoroughly familiar with your role and responsibilities; giving specific attention to the FTR [Part 301-70](#), *Internal Policy and Procedures Requirements*, Subpart H, *Policies and Procedures Relating to Mandatory Use of the Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card for Official Travel*, Sections 301-70.700 through 708).

Furthermore, you are required to complete and review the following information annually:

- a. The USDA Travel Charge Card and GSA A/OPC training courses currently available in AgLearn (or via [GSA SmartPay](#));
- b. The Travel Charge Card trainings listed on the GSA *SmartPay*® 3 Training – Travel Card Agency/Organization Program Coordinators handout (dated November 06, 2018) and available from US Bank's Access Online website; and
- c. The Oversight Insights on Demand (IOD) training available on the US Bank Access Online website and review the Oversight Help Center Resources information from the IOD website.

As the (*insert Mission Area, agency, or staff office*) Level 3 A/OPC, you are the liaison responsible for establishing, administering, maintaining, and reporting to the Department Level 2 A/OPC, through the appropriate chain of command, for the Travel Charge Card Program (Program). Other agency [or Mission Area or staff office] Program participants should be aware of the resources available to manage and understand the Program. In addition to information

which may be available on your agency [or Mission Area or staff office] website, there is information available on the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) USDA Travel Express website. <https://www.ocfo.usda.gov/TravelExpress>.

After completing the designated AgLearn training courses, and reviewing the regulations and other information listed above, please acknowledge that you have read, understand, and accept responsibilities as an A/OPC. This appointment will remain in effect until rescinded, you depart the agency (or Mission Area or staff office), or you separate from Federal Service.

**A/OPC ACKNOWLEDGMENT and ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT**

I acknowledge my appointment as a Level (*insert level*) A/OPC for (*insert Mission Area, agency, or staff office*). I have read and understand the policies and regulations that govern the use of the Government Travel Charge Card; including the FTR 301-70, Subpart H, as listed above. I also completed the required USDA Travel Charge Card and GSA A/OPC training courses currently available in AgLearn (or via the [GSA SmartPay Training for Account Holders website](#)); the Oversight Insights on Demand (IOD) training available on the US Bank Access Online website; and reviewed the Oversight Help Center Resources information from the IOD website. I further certify that I have read, understand, and accept responsibilities as an A/OPC, as outlined in the Department's *Government Travel Charge Card Regulation* and other applicable guidance.

\_\_\_\_\_  
A/OPC Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Typed A/OPC Name



## **TRAVEL CHARGE CARD A/OPC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

There are multiple levels of Agency/Organization Program Coordinators (A/OPCs) within the travel charge card program. The roles and responsibilities of the A/OPCs consist of the topics documented in the following pages. Please note this is not an all-encompassing list, as new topics and concerns within the travel charge card program occur frequently.

### **1. Level 2 Travel Charge Card Program A/OPC.**

The Level 2 A/OPC serves the USDA at a high-level, providing guidance, policy, and oversight for the travel charge card program (Program) within the USDA. The USDA has a very large Program; one of the Level 2 A/OPCs primary responsibility is to manage program risk. This is accomplished by routinely analyzing the Program, strengthening programmatic controls, and maintaining a close relationship with the card issuing vendor. The Level 2 A/OPC is not responsible for providing individual help-desk support to the various program areas within each Mission Area, agency, or staff office. Each Mission Area, agency, and staff office is responsible for the proper management and oversight of their respective Programs.

Level 2 A/OPCs will:

- a. Ensure the USDA's Program follows OMB Circular A-123, Appendix B including:
  - (1) Develop and maintaining the annual Charge Card Management Plan;
  - (2) Establish training requirements;
  - (3) Implement risk management controls, policies and procedures including:
    - (a) Maximize refunds while minimizing risk;
    - (b) Monitor Split Disbursement;
    - (c) Monitor Salary Offset; and
    - (d) Maintain and report data and performance metrics quarterly;
- b. Monitor Program issues, including pending legislation related to travel to provide accurate information and policy updates; and
- c. Analyze account activity to prevent unauthorized use and misuse including:
  - (1) Restrict questionable Merchant Category Codes (MCCs);
  - (2) Ensure accounts are being used for authorized travel expenditures only;

- (3) Ensure unused non-refundable airline tickets are utilized before expiration;
- (4) Monitor refundable and non-refundable airline tickets;
- (5) Ensure ATM withdrawals and travel advances are appropriate and do not result in delinquencies; and
- (6) Monitor and reduce account delinquencies:
  - (a) Work with the contractor bank to provide A/OPC training;
  - (b) Ensure agency A/OPCs and cardholders complete required training;
  - (c) Report travel charge card fraud, waste and abuse to the OIG; and
  - (d) Report travel program status to GSA and OMB.

## **2. Level 3 Travel Charge Card Program A/OPC.**

The Level 3 A/OPC is responsible for providing high-level guidance, policy augmentation, and oversight to their respective lower level A/OPCs.

Level 3 Program A/OPC will:

- a. Communication and Customer Service
  - (1) Serve as the primary Program coordinator for their respective lower level A/OPCs;
  - (2) Represent their respective lower level A/OPCs in Program related requests and issues;
  - (3) Communicate routinely to lower level A/OPCs, and internal and external customers on Program-related topics and concerns;
  - (4) Provide quality and timely customer service to lower level A/OPCs within their oversight to ensure Program success; and
  - (5) Actively use the bank's online system to monitor the Program.
- b. New Accounts, Maintenance, and Training
  - (1) Assist respective lower level A/OPCs by answering program-related inquiries;
  - (2) Establish new accounts or hierarchies, and close accounts when employees terminate, retire, or transfer;

- (3) Establish and review reports;
- (4) Monitor training;
- (5) Serve as the Program point of contact for all internal and external customers;
- (6) Ensure respective lower level A/OPCs and cardholders complete initial training prior to appointment or issuance of the card, and that refresher training is completed every year;
- (7) Maintain a complete, accurate listing of Mission Area, agency, or staff office lower level A/OPCs;
- (8) Serve as the central point of contact between the Level 2 A/OPCs in OCFO and the respective lower level A/OPCs in the field; handle card-related issues at their respective level prior to forwarding onto the Level 2 A/OPC for guidance or assistance; and
- (9) Approve establishment of new Centrally Billed Accounts (CBA) travel charge cards within their Mission Area, agency, or staff office.

c. Authorized Charge Card Usage

Ensure cardholders are not using accounts to purchase personal items or withdraw funds unrelated to official travel by monitoring the following charge card vendor reports on a monthly, or as-needed, basis:

- (1) Transaction Detail;
- (2) Declined Transaction Authorizations;
- (3) Account List; and
- (4) Cash Advance.

d. Unused Airline Tickets

Ensure lower level A/OPCs monitor the following ETS reports:

- (1) Unused Tickets;
- (2) Refunded Tickets; and
- (3) Voided Tickets.

e. ATM Withdrawals

- (1) Ensure ATM withdrawals are appropriate and only occur within 3 calendar days of official travel;
- (2) Ensure ATM limits are set appropriately so employees are within account limits and not misusing this privilege, resulting in account delinquencies;
- (3) Educate account holders on proper use and restrictions of ATM withdrawals;
- (4) Suspend the ATM privileges of any account holder who is delinquent 60 days or more by monitoring the following charge card vendor reports:
  - (a) Transaction Detail;
  - (b) Past Due; and
  - (c) Cash Advance.

f. Travel Voucher Claims

- (1) Educate account holders and approving officials on travel voucher timeline submissions to reduce delinquencies (within 5 business days of trip end);
- (2) Monitor the following ETS reports:
  - (a) Authorizations with Advances and Outstanding Vouchers;
  - (b) Documents Awaiting Approval; and
  - (c) Unsubmitted Vouchers.
- (3) Ensure management controls and practices are in place to maintain compliance with USDA's split disbursement requirements; and
- (4) Ensure Mission Area, agency, or staff office policy is being followed and corrective action taken against cardholder delinquencies. This includes HR policies concerning disciplinary actions for travel charge card offenses.

g. Unauthorized Use and Misuse of Charge Card Accounts

- (1) Monitor account activity to ensure cardholders are not misusing their card;
- (2) Take appropriate action to prevent unauthorized use and misuse including:

- (a) Ensure accounts are being used only for authorized travel expenditures while employees are on official Government travel; and
    - (b) Reduce account limits when employees have not been on official travel within the last 6 months.
  - (3) In addition to the reports listed in Sections 2c – 2e above, also monitor the following card contractor bank reports:
    - (a) Account Suspension; and
    - (b) Charge Off Report.
  - (4) Provide accurate and timely responses to online Oversight Insights on Demand exceptions forwarded from the Level 2 A/OPC; and
  - (5) Report travel charge card fraud, waste, and abuse to the respective Manager or Supervisor, HRO, and OIG.
- h. Delinquent Charge Card Accounts and Salary Offsets
- (1) Ensure efforts are made to reduce delinquencies with individually billed accounts;
  - (2) Ensure salary offset procedures are initiated for any accounts more than 90 days delinquent. This includes notification to lower level A/OPCs to begin salary offset proceedings for all accounts more than 90 days delinquent;
  - (3) Monitor the following charge card vendor reports:
    - (a) Past Due Report;
    - (b) Charge Off Report; and
    - (c) Account Suspension.
  - (4) Ensure Mission Area, agency, and staff office personnel follow established policy for acting against cardholder delinquencies. This includes HRO policies for disciplinary actions regarding travel charge card accounts.

### **3. Level 4 Travel Charge Card Program A/OPC.**

The Level 4 A/OPC is responsible for providing high-level guidance, policy augmentation, and oversight to travel charge card accounts within their respective area of responsibility. Each Level 4 A/OPC will determine requirements for their lower level A/OPCs.

Level 4 Program A/OPCs, if applicable, will:

a. Communication and Customer Service

- (1) Serve as the primary Program coordinator for their respective lower level A/OPCs;
- (2) Manage the Program for respective area of responsibility, as determined by the Level 3 A/OPC;
- (3) Represent the lower level A/OPCs in Program related requests and issues;
- (4) Communicate routinely to lower level A/OPC, and internal and external customers on Program related topics and concerns;
- (5) Provide quality and timely customer service to lower level A/OPCs within to ensure Program success; and
- (6) Actively use the bank's online system to monitor the Program.

b. New Accounts, Maintenance, and Training

- (1) Assist respective lower level A/OPCs by answering program-related inquiries;
- (2) Establish new accounts and hierarchies, and close accounts when employees terminate, retire, or transfer;
- (3) Establish and review reports;
- (4) Monitor training;
- (5) Serve as a primary point of contact for internal and external customers;
- (6) Ensure respective lower level A/OPCs and cardholders complete initial training prior to appointment or issuance of the card, and that refresher training is completed every year;
- (7) Maintain a complete, accurate listing of lower level A/OPCs within their area of responsibility;
- (8) Serve as the central point of contact between the Level 3 A/OPCs and the respective lower level A/OPCs in the field; and
- (9) Handle all card-related issues at their respective level prior to forwarding onto the Level 3 A/OPC for guidance or assistance.

c. Authorized Charge Card Usage

Ensure cardholders are not using travel charge card to purchase personal items or withdraw funds unrelated to employee's official travel by monitoring the following reports on a monthly, or as-needed, basis:

- (1) Transaction Detail;
- (2) Declined Transaction Authorizations;
- (3) Account List; and
- (4) Cash Advance.

d. Unused Airline Tickets

Ensure lower level A/OPCs are monitoring the reports currently provided by Level A/OPCs (or obtained from the ETS):

- (1) Unused Tickets;
- (2) Refunded Tickets; and
- (3) Voided Tickets.

e. ATM Withdrawals

- (1) Ensure ATM withdrawals are appropriate and only occur within 3 calendar days of official travel;
- (2) Ensure ATM limits are set appropriately so employees are within account limits and not misusing this privilege, resulting in account delinquencies;
- (3) Educate account holders on proper use and restrictions of ATM withdrawals;
- (4) Suspend the ATM privileges of any account holder who is delinquent 60 days or more by monitoring the following charge card vendor reports:
  - (a) Transaction Detail;
  - (b) Past Due; and
  - (c) Cash Advance.

f. Travel Voucher Claims

- (1) Educate account holders and approving officials on travel voucher timeline submissions to reduce delinquencies (within 5 business days of trip end).
- (2) Monitor the following ETS reports:
  - (a) Authorizations with Advances and Outstanding Vouchers;
  - (b) Documents Awaiting Approval; and
  - (c) Unsubmitted Vouchers.
- (3) Ensure management controls and practices are in place to maintain compliance with USDA's split disbursement requirements; and
- (4) Ensure Mission Area, agency, or staff office policy is being followed and corrective action taken against cardholder delinquencies. This includes HR policies concerning disciplinary actions for travel charge card offenses.

g. Unauthorized Use and Misuse of Charge Card Accounts

- (1) Monitor account activity to ensure cardholders are not misusing their card;
- (2) Take appropriate action to prevent unauthorized use and misuse including:
  - (a) Ensure accounts are being used only for authorized travel expenditures while employees are on official Government travel; and
  - (b) Reduce account limits when employees have not been on official travel within the last 6 months.
- (3) In addition to the reports listed in Sections 3c – 3e above, also monitor the following card contractor bank reports:
  - (a) Account Suspension; and
  - (b) Charge Off Report.
- (4) Provide accurate and timely responses to online Oversight Insights on Demand exceptions forwarded from the Level 3 A/OPC; and
- (5) Report travel charge card fraud, waste and abuse to the respective Manager, Supervisor, HRO, and OIG.



h. Delinquent Charge Card Accounts and Salary Offsets

- (1) Ensure efforts are made to reduce delinquencies with individually billed accounts;
- (2) Ensure salary offset procedures are initiated for any accounts more than 90 days delinquent. This includes notification to lower level A/OPCs to begin salary offset proceedings for all accounts more than 90 days delinquent;
- (3) Monitor the following charge card vendor reports:
  - (a) Past Due Report;
  - (b) Charge Off Report; and
  - (c) Account Suspension.
- (4) Ensure Mission Area, agency, and staff office personnel follow established policy for acting against cardholder delinquencies. This includes HRO policies for disciplinary actions regarding travel charge card accounts.

**4. Other lower level Travel Charge Card Program A/OPCs.**

Follow instructions as provided by higher level A/OPCs.

## APPENDIX E

### THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CHARGE CARD PROGRAM ACKNOWLEDGMENT & ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT

The Government Travel Charge Card Program provides travelers with a means of financing their official travel expenses without obtaining travel advances or using their own funds. Only official Government expenses, incurred as a result of temporary duty travel, may be charged to the travel charge card. Expenses include meals, lodging, rental car, transportation, and any other authorized official travel related expenses. Travelers are expected to use the travel charge card whenever and wherever practical for these expenses, prior to using an automatic teller machine (ATM) for a cash advance. ATM cash advances are allowed for minor expenses and where use of the travel charge card is impractical or not possible.

Use of the travel charge card for any purpose other than official Government travel related expenses is not authorized and is considered misuse of the card. Allowing your travel charge card to become delinquent, by not paying the bill in a timely manner, or using “non-sufficient fund” checks for payment, are considered card misuse or abuse. Card misuse or abuse may subject the employee to disciplinary actions under the appropriate Mission Area, agency, staff office, and civilian personnel regulations.

The “*USDA Zero Tolerance Policy*” strictly prohibits the following use of the card:

- a. Making unauthorized charges, charges not associated with official travel, or using the card while not in an official travel status;
- b. Allowing family members and friends to use the card; or using the card to pay for another employee’s official travel expenses;
- c. Using the card in the vicinity of the official duty station or residence, unless authorized for use in connection with official travel;
- d. Allowing your account to become delinquent, failure to pay accounts with enough funds, or failure to use split disbursement to repay expenses;
- e. Making cash withdrawals from an ATM more than 3 business days before the start of official travel or after the final day of official travel;
- f. Obtaining cash advances from ATMs located in a casino or other gaming establishment;
- g. Using the card to pay for alcoholic beverages not incidental to a meal; and
- h. Using the card to pay for meals for everyone at the table or in the party and being reimbursed in cash.

Cardholders should read and familiarize themselves with the contents of the contractor banks *Cardholder Guide for Travel*, the *Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)*, the USDA Departmental Regulation (DR) 2300-001, *Government Travel Charge Card Regulation*, and Mission Area, agency, or staff office specific policies regarding the use of the travel charge card.

Additionally, cardholders should be familiar with FTR 301-51, *Paying Travel Expenses*; FTR 301-54, *Collection of Undisputed Delinquent Amounts Owed to the Contractor Issuing the Individually Billed Travel Charge Card*; and FTR 301-76, *Collection of Undisputed Delinquent Amounts Owed to the Contractor Issuing the Individually Billed Travel Charge Card*.

Questions concerning the travel charge card should be addressed to the local or primary A/OPC.

1. I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the above policy. I agree to the terms of the contractor bank agreement and to abide by the *USDA Zero Tolerance Policy*.

SIGN \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE

2. Recommend approval for the employee listed above to participate in the Travel Charge Card Program.

SIGN \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR/AGENCY DESIGNEE

3. Electronic application processed and submitted online via the contractor bank electronic access system.

SIGN \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

A/OPC SIGNATURE

NOTE: This statement must accompany the travel charge card request, and training certificate sent to the A/OPC.

APPENDIX F

US BANK ACCESS ONLINE REPORTS

<b>Reporting Section</b> Report Name	<b>Description</b>
<b>SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT</b> <b>Travel Expense</b>	
Airline Itinerary Detail	Statement transaction detail and itinerary information for airline MCCs (specific to airline MCCs only).
Airline or Rail City Pairs	Travel report that provides the number of trips between city pairs for airline or rail.
Airline Refund	Airline credit transactions with merchant and location information (specific to airline MCCs only).
Airline Spending	Provides summary information for all airline spending by MCCs.
Hotel Spending	Provides summary information for all hotel spending by MCCs.
Rental Car Spending	Provides summary information for all rental car spending by MCCs.
<b>PROGRAM MANAGEMENT</b> <b>Spend</b>	
Account Spend Analysis	Summary of account spending (excluding merchant detail).
Cash Advance	Detail of account cash advances including transaction amount, date, and reference number.
Declining Balance or Managed Spend	Summary and detail information on declining balance accounts by name and account number.
<b>Administration</b>	
Account List	Frequently used account level information such as open date, last transaction date, single purchase limit, credit limit, etc.
Account Maintenance Effective Dating Activity	Detailed history of effective dated account maintenance activity.
Account Status Change	An exception report that lists accounts with a change status of lost or stolen, closed, or re-opened.
Declined Transaction Authorizations	Declined Transaction Authorizations report provides details of declined transaction authorizations information along with related account and merchant information.
Order File History	History of order file loading and matching.
Point of Contact Details	Summary of Point of Contact details including account information.
Account History - Request Status Queue	History of changes made to Accounts.

<b>Reporting Section Report Name</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Delinquency Management</b>	
Account Suspension	Provides information on open accounts that are past due and suspended or pending suspension.
Charge-Off	Information on accounts that have been charged off, including charge-off date, balance charged-off, and recovery amount.
Past Due	Accounts with past due balances and the number of times past due situations have occurred.
<b>FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT Transaction Management</b>	
Payment Detail	Detailed payment information pertaining to transactions and payments.
Transaction Aging	Detailed client transaction information and payment aging history.
Transaction Detail	Detailed transaction data including merchant detail, allocation (account code) information, and transaction log data.
Transaction Summary	Transaction summary information.
<b>ADMINISTRATION User Management</b>	
System User List	Information about user Identification (ID) and associated user profile information including a list of user hierarchy access and user functional entitlements.
System User List with Account Details	An overview of users and accounts within an organization.
<b>USER ACTIVITY AUDIT REPORTING</b>	
User Profiles	Detailed history of activity and changes for user profile actions such as login, account assignments, contact information, hierarchy changes, and approval manager information.

APPENDIX G

INTRA-DEPARTMENTAL HIERARCHY TRANSFER REQUEST WORKSHEET

**A. REQUESTING MISSION AREA, AGENCY, OR STAFF OFFICE**

Point of Contact:

Email Address:

Name of Cardholder:

Pseudo Code:

Last Four Digits of Card number:

<b>OLD HIERARCHY</b>						
<b>TBR1</b>	<b>TBR2</b>	<b>TBR3</b>	<b>TBR4</b>	<b>TBR5</b>	<b>TBR6</b>	<b>TBR7</b>

**B. RECEIVING MISSION AREA, AGENCY, OR STAFF OFFICE**

Point of Contact:

Email Address:

Name of Cardholder:

Pseudo Code:

Last Four Digits of Card number:

<b>NEW HIERARCHY</b>						
<b>TBR1</b>	<b>TBR2</b>	<b>TBR3</b>	<b>TBR4</b>	<b>TBR5</b>	<b>TBR6</b>	<b>TBR7</b>

Instructions:

1. The receiving A/OPC must indicate they agree to the transfer by either requesting the transfer or showing agreement in an email. Please ensure both losing and receiving AOPCs are copied for situational awareness.
2. The receiving A/OPC must have TBR3 (in rare cases Level 4 will be accepted) access.
3. Requests should be emailed with “Hierarchy Transfer Request” in the subject line to the OCFO Travel Policy Management (TPM) mailbox ([TPM@usda.gov](mailto:TPM@usda.gov)).
4. A/OPCs of the old hierarchy will continue to be responsible for the card until it is transferred out. An alternative procedure is to cancel or close the card when the

employee leaves the Mission Area, agency, or staff office and have them complete an application at the new Mission Area, agency, or staff office.

## APPENDIX H

### EXAMPLES OF MEMORANDA TO EMPLOYEES FROM A/OPCs

#### QUESTIONABLE USE NOTICE

TO:

FROM: Agency [or Mission Area or staff office] Travel Charge Card Coordinator

SUBJECT: Questionable Travel Charge Card Use

Our review of the Oversight Insights on Demand data mining information, made available by US Bank, indicates your official travel charge card was flagged for a *«specify questionable transaction»* transaction(s) during the past month. Please submit a written explanation for the transaction (s) by (date).

As part of our commitment to provide service to employees participating in the travel charge card program, we would like to remind you of the responsibility's employees have in using the US Bank travel charge card.

Employees who participate in the travel charge card program shall, to the maximum extent possible, utilize the charge card to pay for only authorized travel expenses connected with official Government travel (e.g., lodging, air fare, and automobile rentals). You should not use the travel charge card to pay for personal expenses or for any other purpose not related to official Government business.

If you have any other questions, then please contact *«add A/OPC name»* at *«include correct phone number»*.



## APPENDIX H

### EXAMPLES OF MEMORANDA TO EMPLOYEES FROM A/OPCs

#### UNAUTHORIZED USE NOTICE

TO:

FROM: Agency [or Mission Area or staff office] Travel Charge Card Coordinator

SUBJECT: Unauthorized Charge Card Use

A review of the Oversight Insights on Demand data mining information, made available by US Bank, has brought to my attention several instances of apparent unauthorized use of your official travel charge card. These charges have included the use of the card for unauthorized personal retail purchases or excessive unauthorized Automated Teller Machine (ATM) withdrawals. Please provide me with a written explanation of the charges incurred in conjunction with official travel by (date).

Unauthorized use of the travel charge card may result in the suspension or cancellation of the travel charge card privileges, the forward of a delinquent account notice to a collection agency, or in case of court judgments, a garnishment of salaries, as well as agency [or Mission Area or staff office] disciplinary action. Your Mission Areas, agency, or staff office head and supervisor have been notified of your account status for immediate review and resolution.

If you have any questions, then please contact «add A/OPC name» at «include correct phone number».

Cc: Supervisor

## APPENDIX H

### EXAMPLES OF MEMORANDA TO EMPLOYEES FROM A/OPCs

#### DELINQUENT NOTICE

TO:

FROM: Agency [or Mission Area or staff office] Travel Charge Card Coordinator

SUBJECT: Delinquent Notice for the Government Travel Charge Card

Our review of the monthly activity reports provided by US Bank via Access Online ®, indicates your account may be 30 days past due. It is our position that delinquencies beyond the 30-day timeframe violate the Department's "Zero Tolerance Policy."

The agreement that you made with US Bank requires all outstanding charges be paid upon receipt of your monthly statement. Your charging privileges may be subject to interruption if you do not bring your account to a current status.

Any questions concerning your statement should be reported directly to the US Bank point of contact. Please submit your payment for the total balance, both current and past due, to US Bank. Failure to do so may constitute a violation of the *Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch* (5 CFR 2635) and may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal.

If you have any other questions, then please contact «add A/OPC name» at «Include correct phone number».

Cc: Supervisor

## APPENDIX I

### NFC SALARY OFFSET

The USDA and US Bank are still working to establish Department level salary offset procedures. However, these are the current procedures for when the USDA is asked to assist US Bank with collecting delinquent amounts via salary offset.

- a. US Bank reviews delinquent accounts and creates a file of delinquent employees and places the file in the secure Data Exchange of US Bank Access Online. The US Bank Access Online system is accessible via the web to Mission Area, agency, or staff office personnel using a login ID and password. The file contains data elements name, Social Security Number (SSN), Account number, Hierarchy Level, beginning Pay Period for deduction, the Salary Offset amount requested by the bank for processing of Salary Offset. US Bank will ensure the files of delinquent employees excludes employees who have any of the following issues:
  - (1) Unresolved charges that are the subject of a timely dispute;
  - (2) Charges that have been released in bankruptcy; or
  - (3) A signed written payment agreement with US Bank and are complying timely with the terms.
- b. The Mission Area, agency, or staff office representative reviews and validates the employee's debt to US Bank and then verifies each employee's eligibility for Salary Offset, i.e., currently on payroll, retired, separated, garnishments, etc.
- c. The Mission Area, agency, or staff office compiles a list of eligible employees to whom they will mail "due process" letters. The Mission Area, agency, or staff office sends "due process" letters to the employees. The letters will include the pay period when salary offset will begin if no action is taken by the employee, and the last date that the employee can:
  - (1) Contact US Bank to arrange payment or to dispute the Salary Offset amount; or
  - (2) Request that the Mission Area, agency, or staff office perform a review of the facts relevant to the delinquency, (e.g., employee's voucher was not processed).
- d. The Mission Area, agency, or staff office provides the list of employees who were sent "due process" letters to the Mission Area, agency, or staff office program manager and US Bank. The A/OPC will provide the Mission Area, agency, or staff office divisions with the names of their employees who were mailed "due process" letters.
- e. US Bank will update their initial file (created in item 'a' above) based upon the list of "due process" letters mailed to the employees.

- f. The Mission Area, agency, or staff office will be the contact point for those employees who respond (either by telephone or in writing) to the “due process” letter within the 30-day period. Upon employee contact and request for a review of his or her facts, the agency or staff office will temporarily suspend the Salary Offset procedure for the employee. The agency will promptly distribute copies of the employee correspondence to the A/OPC and to the US Bank Relationship Manager.
- g. The APC and division point of contact (i.e., employee’s supervisor, employee’s accounting office, etc.) and US Bank will work together to quickly resolve the employee’s concerns contained in correspondence.
- h. At the end of the “due process” period, US Bank will review its employee file (created in item ‘a’ above) again and update it for any payments received or adjustments posted, as well as for other correspondence that could affect the employee’s presence on the file.
- i. US Bank will transmit the final updated file back to the Mission Area, agency, or staff office approximately 4 days before payroll is run for the pay period.
- j. US Bank will provide cancellation or adjustment notices (if any) to the Mission Area, agency, or staff office every 2 weeks on Wednesday prior to payroll for employees on Salary Offset.

## APPENDIX J

### USDA SENIOR FEDERAL TRAVELERS

*The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) defines a Senior Federal Official as: An individual who is paid according to the Executive Schedule established by 5 U.S.C. 53, Subchapter II, including Presidential appointees who are confirmed by the Senate; employed in the U.S. Government's Senior Executive Service or an equivalent "senior" service; who is a civilian employee of the Executive Office of the President; who is appointed by the President to a position under section 105(a)(2)(A), (B), or (C) of title 3 U.S.C. or by the Vice President to a position under section 106(a)(1)(A), (B), or (C) of title 3 U.S.C; or who is a contractor working under a contract with an executive agency, is paid at a rate equal to or more than the minimum rate for the Senior Executive Service, and has senior executive responsibilities. The term senior Federal official, as used in the Federal Travel Regulation does not mean an active duty military officer.*

As listed in Title 7 - Agriculture. Subtitle A - Office of the Secretary of Agriculture.

#### PART 2 - DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY BY THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE AND GENERAL OFFICERS OF THE DEPARTMENT.

Subpart A - General.

§ 2.4 General officers. The work of the Department is under the supervision and control of the Secretary who is assisted by the following general officers, the:

Deputy Secretary

Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation

Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services

Under Secretary for Food Safety

Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs

Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment

Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics

Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs

Assistant Secretary for Administration

Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations

Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development

Chief Economist

Chief Financial Officer

Chief Information Officer

General Counsel

Inspector General

Judicial Officer

Director, National Appeals Division

Director, Office of Budget and Program Analysis

Director, Office of Communications

Director, Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

Director, Office of Tribal Relations

Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

## APPENDIX K

### GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The following excerpts pertinent to the use of the Travel Charge Card are from  
Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2635,  
“Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch:”

2635.101, “Basic Obligations of Public Service,” state the following:

1. Public service is a public trust, requiring employees to place loyalty to laws and ethical principles above private gain.

(For example, do not take advantage of the charge card privileges for your personal use.)

2. Employees shall put forth honest effort in the performance of their duties.

(For example, abide by the agency policy in carrying out your responsibilities as a cardholder.)

3. Employees shall not knowingly make unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the Government.

(For example, do not make purchases with the travel charge card if purchases have not been authorized.)

4. Employees shall not use public office for private gain.

(For example, do not use the charge card to make a personal unauthorized purchase.)

5. Employees shall satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizen, including all just financial obligations.

(For example, pay your charge card bill on time. A check returned for insufficient funds does not demonstrate good faith in paying your bills.)

6. Employees shall endeavor to avoid any actions creating the appearance that they are violating the law, or the ethical standards set forth in this part.

(For example, do not avoid agency policies and procedures for administrative convenience.)