



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY - INDIAN AFFAIRS  
Washington, D.C. 20240



IN REPLY REFER TO:

## National Policy Memorandum

Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs  
Deputy Assistant Secretary – Management

Effective: APR 01 2013  
Expires: APR 01 2014

Number: NPM-BUDG-01

Title: Travel Restrictions and Mission-Critical Travel

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to establish Temporary Duty (TDY) travel policy for mission critical travel.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Indian Affairs (IA) headquarters, field, and program staff under the authority of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs (AS-IA), including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE).

### 3. Policy

It is the policy of Indian Affairs to comply with federal regulations, and policy and direction from the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to reduce spending across IA Operations. Although IA has a requirement to continue its critical missions on behalf of American Indians and Alaska Natives, budgetary uncertainties currently facing Indian Affairs, and a projected \$130 million reduction, require taking prudent steps to mitigate budget execution risks. Effective immediately, **travel is permitted only for essential travelers necessary to accomplish the mission-critical objective**. All TDY travel that is not mission critical will be cancelled, including attendance at or hosting of conferences/symposia, staff assistance visits, and training seminars. This travel restriction applies even when there is no cost to Indian Affairs (i.e., invitational travel).

### 4. Mission-Critical Travel

- A. TDY travel is considered **mission-critical** only if it meets one or more of these mission critical criteria:

Release #13-05  
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- With-in Region or Regional Duty location required to fulfill IA mission and obligation to tribes
- For Law Enforcement and Wildland Fire Suppression operational responsibilities
- For Audits to meet requirements established by OMB Circular A-123, *Management's Responsibility for Internal Control. A-133 audit travel for grantees whose appeals are before the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA)*
- For Litigation work (depositions, discovery, and/or testimony)
- Requests by the Federal Government to appear before committees
- To facilitate the need for school safety, facility, and residential programs, which is mission critical based on statutory and regulatory requirements, including the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and Office of Inspector General (OIG) and General Accountability Office (GAO) recommendations
- Student Services: Activities that contribute to student success through personal, intellectual and social development and the overall college experience for students of Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) and Haskell Indian Nations University (Haskell)
- Academic Services: Delivery of educational services through classroom, distance education and/or field experiences. State Educational Agency Activities as required by NCLB, IDEA and 25 CFR
- For Tribal Consultation pursuant to Executive Order 13175
- Travel required to conduct student certification of eligibility for funding for the Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP) and related programs.

Travel that doesn't **clearly meet** at least one of the mission critical criteria listed above **must be approved by the AS-IA Chief of Staff (COS)**.

**B.** TDY travel which **might qualify** as mission critical **must be approved by the AS-IA COS** and meet one (or more) of the following criteria:

- Travel to a function required by statute, contract or Executive directive
- Travel for equipment inspections as required by a contract
- Travel to meetings or trainings **required** by a grant or to maintain grant funding
- Training, **only if**:
  - Required to meet occupational certification and/or licensing requirements as a condition of continued employment
  - Required by federal or state law, regulation, Executive Order, Departmental or IA Directive
  - Or required to maintain critical functional or occupational competencies such as FBMS training based on roles
- Professional development activities for educational staff as required by NCLB, IDEA, OIG and GAO recommendations, and 25 CFR requirements, including state oversight, accountability, supervision, monitoring, reporting and technical assistance.
- BIE Post-secondary responsibilities

- Accreditation: Activities that ensure achieving and maintaining accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission and/or other specialized accreditation agencies; and, to ensure compliance with accreditation standards.
- Grant Commitments: Travel to maintain programmatic and fiscal compliance and integrity as approved by funding agencies.

Within the scope of mission-critical travel, the Senior Executive in charge will evaluate whether alternative means can be used to complete the mission (i.e., video teleconference, WebEx, email) and will conduct a heightened review to reduce the number of personnel traveling, vehicles, and/or lodging expenses

## 5. Travel that is NOT Mission-Critical

Mission critical **does not** include travel to attend:

- Conferences, meetings or seminars (regardless of whether IA has historically attended, or a request has been made that an office/division or individual make a presentation)
- Non-essential meetings that can be conducted by phone or video conference
- Professional development courses
- Continuing education classes and seminars
- Networking opportunities
- Events for the sole purpose of making a presentation unless approved by the Senior Executive in charge.

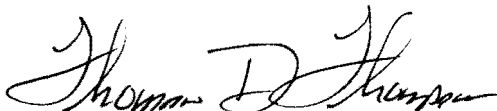
## 6. Authorities. Sequestration Transparency Act of 2012 (P. L. 112–155)

## 7. Limitations

Few government agencies are tasked with implementing the range of programs and services for which Indian Affairs is responsible. Therefore, mission critical exceptions can be approved **with discretion**, provided that adequate funding is available to cover anticipated travel expenses (based on authority for spending during FY 2013; October 1, 2012, through September 30, 2013).

The IA Office of Budget Management will keep IA apprised of any new information concerning the FY 2013 appropriations, as it becomes available. Further spending direction will be issued, as necessary.

## 8. Approval



Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (Management),

4/1/2013

Date