

MS 801 Travel Card Program Procedures

Centrally Billed Travel Card

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Responsible Office: M/AS/T (Transportation Division)

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1.0 Definitions

APC: The Agency Program Coordinator is the Peace Corps designated coordinator, including alternates, who administer the Travel Card Program. The APC is the Travel Card Program Coordinator located in the Transportation Division (M/AS/T) and can be contacted by calling 1-202-692-1779 or emailing Transportation@peacecorps.gov.

AO: The Approving Official ensures that the Travel Card is used properly. The AO also authorizes cardholder transactions (for official use only), ensures that the statements are reconciled and submitted for payment in a timely manner.

ATM: An Automated Teller Machine is an electronic device that allows cash withdrawals/advances from participating banks.

Billing/Statement Cycle: The period of time commencing on or about the 6th of the month and ending on or about the 5th of the following month. All transactions that post to an account during this time frame are summarized on the statement issued by the card contractor. Occasionally this period may begin and end one or two days earlier than the 6th depending on weekends or holidays recognized by the banking community.

Cardholder: For the purposes of this manual section, Cardholder, Employee, Personnel, and Staff are interchangeable and mean the Peace Corps employee or contractor for which a Government Travel Charge Card is being issued or has been issued to.

Card Contractor: Citibank® is the financial institution that has been awarded a contract by the General Services Administration and selected by the Department of State to provide credit card services for travel related charges incurred by federal employees.

Toll Free Phone: 1-800-790-7206

Collect Phone: 1-904-954-7850

Website: <https://home.cards.citidirect.com/CommercialCard/Cards.html>

Disputed Transaction: A written challenge made to the Card Contractor regarding a transaction that is either not recognized or otherwise believed to be invalid. Per Visa regulations disputes must be made to the Card Contractor within 60 days of the transaction posting date.

Government Travel Charge Card/Travel Card: The credit card issued by the Card Contractor to a Peace Corps authorized Cardholder that is utilized for official expenses relating to official Peace Corps travel. For the purposes of these procedures, Travel Card refers only to the Centrally Billed Travel Cards not located under one of the following hierarchies; 11145.25001 (Declining Card) or 11145.25002 (MedEvac).

Hierarchy Director: The lowest level director that has been assigned funding (e.g. The Country Director of a post or the Associate Director for an office)

Merchant Category Code: A four-digit number used by the banking industry to classify suppliers into market segments. There are approximately 600 MCCs that denote various types of businesses (e.g., 5812 is Eating Places and Restaurants, and 5542 is Automated Fuel Dispenser). These codes limit the types of transactions that can be charged to the Travel Card.

Official Travel: Travel performed on behalf of Peace Corps that will result in reimbursement from Peace Corps. Travel must be authorized on an official Peace Corps Travel Authorization prior to commencement of travel.

Suspension: The temporary closure of an account due to misuse.

Termination: Permanent closure of an account. Cannot be reopened, cardholder will need to reapply in order to obtain a new travel card.

2.0 Establishing Accounts

2.1 Agency Program Coordinator

To establish an Agency Program Coordinator account submit a completed Citibank® Government Agency/Organization Program Coordinator Setup/Maintenance Form (CB006) signed by the Chief of Transportation to Citibank® via the fax number on the form.

2.2 Approving Official

Application instructions can be found on the Peace Corps Intranet under Corps Tools > Travel and Transportation > Travel Card Program. An appointed Approving Official must submit an Acknowledgement Form signed by the applicant and director of the hierarchy for which the funds are being authorized.

2.3 Cardholder

2.3.1 Standard Application

Application instructions can be found on the Peace Corps Intranet under Corps Tools > Travel and Transportation > Travel Card Program. An applicant must complete the online application, acknowledgement form, and training prior to issuance of a Centrally Billed Travel Card.

2.3.2 Rush Application

Applicants are encouraged to complete their application well in advance of any anticipated travel. However, if an applicant needs to obtain a Travel Card sooner than three business days they will need to complete a manual application and submit it to the APC, applications must be received by noon for same day processing and second day delivery. Applicants stationed overseas are not authorized to submit a rush application.

Application instructions can be found on the Peace Corps Intranet under Corps Tools > Travel and Transportation > Travel Card Program.

2.3.3 Receiving Card

Once the applicant completes all of the requirements noted above, the application can be processed by the APC. The card will be mailed to the APC by Citibank®. The APC will then forward the card to the

Cardholder within two business days. Once the card is received by the Cardholder they will need to activate the card by calling 1-877-905-1861 (US) or 904-954-7850 (Overseas/Collect).

When the APC deems it necessary for the card to be received by the Cardholder sooner the APC may request that Citibank® send the card directly to the Cardholder instead using an address provided by the Cardholder. The request must be noted at the time the application is processed. Please note that this method requires that someone be physically present to sign for the delivery.

3.0 Exemption from Issuance

The following offices are exempted from mandatory issuance of an Centrally Billed Travel Card. Although exempt they may request and may be issued an Centrally Billed Travel Card if they wish.

- Regional Recruiting Offices
- Headquarters Offices that are second level or below (e.g. CFO/GAP would be an example of the second level office, CFO would be the first level and required to maintain a Centrally Billed Travel Card.)

4.0 Name Changes

Cardholders wishing to change the name on their account must send a written request to the APC (Transportation@peacecorps.gov) and provide a copy of backup documentation.

Backup documentation includes;

- Court Order
- Divorce Decree
- Identification Card
- Marriage Certificate
- Any other documentation that the APC deems acceptable

The APC will verify the documentation is valid and acceptable and then change the name in the Citibank® electronic system. Once the change has been completed the APC will destroy or return the documentation and put a note on the file stating why the change was made. At no time should the APC retain copies of the backup documentation other than the email requesting the change.

If the change is due to an initial misspelling of the name then no backup documentation is required, only a written request.

5.0 Spending Limits

Spending limits are set at standard rates as shown in the table below but may be modified by the APC at their discretion.

Office	Credit Limit	Single Purchase Limit
Standard Account	\$30,000.00	\$24,999.00
M/AS/T	Unlimited	Unlimited
OPATS/OPD	\$100,000.00	\$24,999.00

OGO/SPD	\$100,000.00	\$24,999.00
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5.1 Increases

Any Cardholder who requires an increase to their credit or single purchase limit will need to have their Approving Official or hierarchy Director make a written request to the APC (Transportation@peacecorps.gov). If the APC believes there is a valid requirement warranting an increase in the limits they may do so. The APC can increase the credit and/or single purchase limits on a Travel Card to any amount as the mission requires. The APC should utilize the Expiration Date in the electronic system to ensure that increases are not set permanently.

All changes to the limits must be documented per section 15.1 of these procedures.

5.2 Emergency Situations

In the event of an emergency that has been officially declared by the Peace Corps director or someone authorized to make such a declaration, the APC is authorized to put all cards under the affected hierarchy into a Mission-Critical state. Mission-Critical accounts will be closely monitored; all transactions will be pushed through as necessary and the limit on such cards may be raised to any amount required to complete the mission as required. Initial status upgrades may be put into place for 30 days and may be adjusted in 30 day increments as needed.

In order to avoid last minute issues; the APC may put accounts into Mission-Critical status for up-to 30 days at a time if they have reasonable belief that an emergency declaration may be issued within that 30 day period.

6.0 Training

Training must be completed by all participants of the Travel Card Program including APCs, Approving Officials, and Cardholders.

Training must be completed by the APCs and Approving Officials prior to granting access to the Citibank® website.

Training must be completed by the Cardholder prior to issuance of the Travel Card.

Training is provided by Peace Corps University.

Refresher training must be completed at least once every three years or when directed by the APC or GSA (General Services Administration).

7.0 ATM Advances

Generally Centrally Billed Travel Cards are not authorized for use at ATMs.

In rare circumstances where there is a legitimate reason to allow use of an ATM; the APC may authorize a one-time exception to the rule stated above. All money withdrawn must be accounted for and all funds not used for a specific purchase must be collected back into the obligation from which the money was withdrawn regardless of the amount. The Cardholder must send all invoices and collection

documentation relating to the advances to the APC at the end of the billing cycle for which the advance posts to the account.

8.0 Tax Exemptions

Offices are required to utilize their Travel Cards for all expenses including lodging costs. When lodging is procured in the United States of America Cardholders are required to request that their lodging taxes be waived in states that allow it.

For the most current listing of tax exempt states and requirements for Centrally Billed Travel Cardholders please visit the [GSA SmartTax](#) page.

Peace Corps Tax Exempt Identification Number is 52-1240194 and controlled by the Office of Acquisitions and Contract Management. You can find the [tax exempt letter](#) on the Purchase Card Intranet Site.

9.0 Lost or Stolen Cards

Cardholders must immediately notify Citibank® upon realizing their card and/or account number has been lost or stolen. Additionally, Cardholders must inform the APC and their immediate supervisor.

To report the card as lost or stolen please call Citibank® at 1-800-790-7206 (US) or 904-954-7850 (Overseas/Collect) and inform the representative that your card has been lost or stolen; Citibank® will immediately suspend your card and issue a new one with a new account number.

After you have called Citibank® send an email to the APC (Transportation@peacecorps.gov) and your immediate supervisor informing them that your card was lost or stolen and that Citibank® will be issuing a replacement card.

After five calendar days have passed check your account online and dispute any unauthorized charges with Citibank® using the procedures in section 11.3 of these procedures.

10.0 Account Renewal

Travel Cards are automatically renewed unless the APC is notified to terminate the account at least two weeks prior to the expiration of the current card.

30 days prior to the renewal of the account the APC will notify the Cardholder in writing that their current card is about to expire and a new one will be mailed to them at least two weeks prior to expiration.

Personnel that are stationed overseas will have their cards mailed to them via pouch unless a need arises that requires the card to be mailed expeditiously. Each Country Desk Officer or other representative from the regional office will determine the appropriate method for mailing based on the requirements of each individual and their country.

11.0 Payments

OCFO pays the bill for the travel card each month in order to comply with the terms of the Citibank Travel Card Agreement. Therefore, it is essential that OCFO receives verification of the costs and proper

fiscal coding of obligations and line numbers in order to accurately record the payment in the accounting system. Posts will see these liquidations synced with FORPost once all issues against a statement have been resolved.

11.1 Obligating Transactions

Prior to using the Travel Card to make a purchase the Cardholder must have an approved obligation in FORPost/Odyssey. If an obligation has not been made prior to utilizing the Travel Card to make a purchase the Cardholder may be committing a violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act.

All obligations must be made in U.S. Currency and a note must be made in the remarks section of the obligation noting the actual currency that was used to make the purchase if other than U.S. Dollars.

11.2 Allocating Transactions

Cardholders are required to allocate each transaction on their statement as the transactions post.

Cardholders must have all transactions allocated before submitting the statement for approval.

Allocation instructions can be found on the Peace Corps Intranet under Corps Tools > Travel and Transportation > [Travel Card Program](#).

11.3 Disputing Transactions

The Cardholder is responsible for disputing any unauthorized charges on their accounts with the merchant and Citibank®. First the Cardholder should make an attempt to contact the merchant and resolve billing issues directly with them. If the Cardholder is not able to resolve the issue with the merchant directly or they are not able to get in touch with the merchant for any reason (e.g. Merchant name not discernable), then the Cardholder may contact Citibank® and dispute the charge.

The Cardholder must dispute the unauthorized charges with Citibank® within 60 days of the transaction post date on their statement. After 60 days the Cardholder may not be eligible to dispute the charge anymore which may result in being responsible for making payment.

Cardholders have two preferred options for disputing charges with Citibank® in a timely manner.

- **Online Disputes;** Cardholders will need to login to the CitiDirect website and view their statement where they will have the option to dispute any charges they feel are invalid.

<https://home.cards.citidirect.com/CommercialCard/Cards.html?classic=2>

- **Phone Disputes:** In order for a Cardholder to dispute a charge via phone they will need to call Citibank® at 1-800-790-7206 (US) or 904-954-7850 (Overseas/Collect) and inform the representative that they wish to dispute a charge on their account. Citibank® will walk the Cardholder through the proper procedures to expeditiously get their issue resolved.

11.3.1 Allocating Disputed Transactions

Peace Corps pays all statements in full each month regardless of whether all of the transactions are valid or not. Because of this, disputed transactions will need to be obligated. Cardholders should ensure that

there is an obligation in FORPost/Odyssey for the transaction to post to while it is being disputed. The disputed transaction should be allocated just like any valid transaction on the statement.

Once the dispute is resolved, depending on the outcome the Cardholder may be able to liquidate the obligation.

- If a dispute is resolved in the Cardholder's favor then allocate the credit back to the same obligation that the original transaction was posted. Once the credit posts to the obligation you may liquidate the remaining funds if you wish.
- If a dispute is resolved in the Merchant's favor there will be no credit to allocate and the obligation will be considered valid and payable.

11.4 Monthly Statement Submission

Cardholders must electronically submit their statement for approval no later than 11:59PM EDT/EST on the 10th day of the month in which the cycle closed (e.g. If the statement closes on 06 July 2014 then the Cardholder must submit the statement for approval by 10 July 2014)

Approving Officials must review the statement and approve the statement no later than 11:59PM EDT/EST on the 18th day of the month in which the cycle closed.

If an Approving Official declines to approve a statement they must notify the APC and Cardholder in writing of their reason to decline to approve the statement. Approving Officials are encouraged to monitor Cardholder activity throughout the month to ensure that statements can be approved by the 18th. However if something comes up that cannot be resolved by the statement auto-close date the APC must be notified in writing beforehand.

If at the end of the month that statement remains unapproved it will auto-close and will then need to be approved manually. If a Cardholder or Approving Official causes three auto-closes within a 12 month period the APC is authorized to terminate either account at their discretion.

11.4.1 Manual Approval

If a statement auto-closes for any reason then the Cardholder and Approving Official will be required to physically certify the transactions are valid.

The APC will send a written notice to the Cardholder and Approving Official with instructions to manually certify the transactions. The APC may request any documentation to reasonably satisfy the requirements of an audit however at a minimum they are required to receive a copy of the printed statement signed by the Cardholder and Approving Official, and a copy of the Travel Card log.

12.0 Allowable Charges

The following list contains common authorized expenses, this list is not exhaustive. The APC is authorized to allow any charge they feel is appropriate and necessary to accomplishing the mission of Peace Corps. Expenses are only authorized when incurred in connection with official Peace Corps travel.

Airfare

Bus Tickets
Conference Facilities
Lodging
Passport/Visa Fees

To deter Cardholders from utilizing their Travel Cards improperly Peace Corps maintains a list of authorized Merchant Category Codes (MCC). The APC reviews these codes semi-annually to determine if new MCCs need to be added or old MCCs are no longer needed.

Occasionally an authorized merchant may have been assigned an incorrect MCC, one common example of this is the Government of Senegal’s Visa Application website which comes through as MCC 5045 (Computers, Computer Peripheral Equipment, Software). In cases such as these the APC will determine if the charge is valid and authorized. If the APC determines that the charge is valid and authorized they may authorize use of the MCC for a single account, multiple accounts, or all accounts. The APC will maintain a listing of all authorized MCCs granted and the reason use of the MCC was granted.

13.0 Improper Use

The APC is responsible for reviewing transactions posted to all Travel Card accounts and ensuring that the transactions are appropriate and fall within authorized official travel.

The APC may utilize any tools available to audit and verify transactions are appropriate. Tools include but are not limited to; CitiDirect Card Reporting System, Odyssey, completed Travel Authorizations, and completed Travel Vouchers/Advices of Payment.

If after completing proper research the APC feels that a charge may not have been authorized they will first contact the Cardholder to request information. If the Cardholder informs the APC that the charge was not related to official Peace Corps travel, or if the Cardholder does not respond, the APC will inform the Chief of Transportation.

The APC will keep detailed records of all audits and their results to include copies of all electronic correspondence. The Chief of Transportation may follow the table of actions shown below at their discretion;

Offence Rank	Notifications Sent To	Account Status
First Offence	Notification sent to Cardholder and Supervisor	Open
Second Offence	Notification sent to Cardholder, Supervisor, D/GC, M/HRM, and OIG	Terminated

Additionally, any person who uses the Travel Card for charges other than those noted under section 12.0 of these procedures may be subject to the following:

- (a) Revocation of access to the account by the APC;
- (b) Disciplinary action in accordance with Peace Corps Manual Section 652;
- (c) Garnishment of pay and allowances up to 15% of disposable pay; and
- (d) Inquiry by the Office of the Inspector General and the Peace Corps Ethics Office.

14.0 Terminating Accounts

14.1 Agency Program Coordinator

When the Chief of Transportation determines that an APC will no longer work with the Travel Card Program then the Chief of Transportation is responsible for requesting termination of an APC's account through Citibank. The Chief of Transportation submit a completed Citibank® Government Agency/Organization Program Coordinator Setup/Maintenance Form (CB006) to Citibank® via the fax number on the form.

14.2 Approving Official

AOs who anticipate retirement, resignation, transfer, or other separation from the organization will notify the APC and direct line supervisor to identify a replacement. The exiting AO will process any outstanding approvals in the bank system prior to departure. After the new AO has completed all required training, the APC will create a profile in the bank system and reassign the cardholder accounts to the new profile. Re-Assignment to another hierarchy does not automatically ensure that an Approving Official will be authorized to approve the spending of funds using a Travel Card and they must reapply using the current instructions.

Application instructions can be found on the Peace Corps Intranet under Corps Tools > Travel and Transportation > Travel Card Program.

14.3 Cardholder

Cardholders have two ways to terminate their account, either via written request sent to the APC (Transportation@peacecorps.gov) or by providing their Peace Corps Exit Package to the APC.

When the APC is notified to terminate an account they will do so.

15.0 Documentation Maintenance

All documentation listed in this section must be made available upon request of the APC or Peace Corps Office of the Inspector General. Should a Cardholder be reassigned away from the hierarchy it will become the Approving Official's responsibility to maintain the documentation. Should a hierarchy be closed completely for any reason documentation must be forwarded to the APC for maintenance.

15.1 Agency Program Coordinator

The APC must keep the following documentation for a minimum of three (3) calendar years from the date the account was closed or access revoked;

- Acknowledgement Form
- Current Training Certificate
 - Must not be more than three (3) years old
 - Only current certificate is required, superseded certificates may be destroyed
- Correspondence regarding any changes in limits (Both Temporary and Permanent)
- Correspondence regarding authorization of any MCCs

- Correspondence regarding auto-closed statements
- Correspondence regarding improper use
- Other documentation as needed

15.2 Cardholder/Approving Official

The Cardholder or Approving Official must keep the following documentation for a minimum of three (3) fiscal years (e.g. Statements closed between 10/01/2014 and 09/30/2015 must be kept until 10/01/2018);

- Statement of Account
- Travel Card Log
- Invoices/Receipts
- Dispute Forms
- Other supporting documentation as needed