

Travel - Group Gatherings

FIACCT 10-04.00

Effective: 01-Jul-07

Revised: 25-Jan-2024

Reviewed: 25-Jan-2024

Purpose

This policy establishes the policy and procedures to follow to acquire accommodations for group gatherings. This policy applies to all state-sponsored group gatherings. This policy does not apply to retirement functions (see the [FIACCT 5-03.10 Employee Reimbursements – Retirement Refreshments](#) policy in the PAYMENT section for policies regarding retirement functions). All purchasing functions performed under this policy by the State Travel Office are done under delegation agreement LPD016 issued by the Director of the Division of Purchasing.

Definitions

Group Gatherings	Includes state-sponsored conferences, training sessions, board meetings, management retreats, and service award gatherings.
Accommodations	Includes meeting rooms and related equipment rentals, sleeping rooms, and food.
Management Retreat	A gathering of state agency personnel for the purpose of planning and discussing state agency goals, issues, programs, strategies, etc. A “Management Retreat” may also include non-management employees.

Policy

- A. If the estimated cost of the state sponsored group gathering is more than \$1,000, agencies must complete a Group Gathering Authorization, form [FI 58](#), to document the estimated costs and approvals. The executive director or designee, and the head budget officer of the department must approve the acquisition of the state-sponsored group gathering accommodations by signing the form [FI 58](#), regardless of the type of funds being used to fund the group gathering. Any delegation of this responsibility by the executive director must be in writing and maintained in the agency for audit purposes.
- B. For group gatherings estimated on the FI 58 to be \$50,000 or less, if the facility providing accommodations accepts **GSA** rates for food and lodging, no further bids are required and State Travel Office approval is not required. If needed, the State Travel Office will provide assistance selecting a facility. When the cost is estimated to exceed \$50,000, see subsection D.
- C. A list of Caterers that accept per diem rates is available from the State Travel web page, which is located [here](#).
- D. If the estimated cost of the state sponsored group gathering exceeds \$50,000, then public post requirements of the Utah Procurement Code and Administrative Rule Title R33 apply. Some

exceptions to Administrative Rule R33 may apply. Contact State Travel Office for assistance.

- E. If the facility selected by the agency does **NOT** accept **GSA** rates for food and/or lodging, then the following policy applies:
 - 1. If the total cost of the group gathering is estimated to be \$1,000 or less, the agency may select the best source without seeking competitive bids. Justification in writing must be provided to and approved by the executive director or designee.
 - 2. If the total cost of the group gathering is estimated to cost from \$1,000.01 to \$5,000 then the agency must get two, preferably three bids from other comparable facilities and select the facility with the lowest bid. If the agency cannot get more than one bid, then the agency must obtain approval from the State Travel Office.
 - 3. If the total cost is estimated to be greater than \$5,000, then the State Travel Office **must** conduct the procurement. The State Travel Office must approve these gatherings.
- F. If a Group Gathering Authorization, form [FI 58](#), is required by policy statement A above, no contract for accommodations should be signed by an agency representative until the form [FI 58](#) is properly approved.
- G. Agencies must follow **published GSA rates for the location of the group gathering** if lodging is included.
- H. Food rates are the **published GSA rates for the location of the group gathering**. **Morning and afternoon snack rates are \$5 each.**
- I. The following guidelines are recommended for group gatherings that do not require an overnight stay or that do not last an entire day (**any deviations from these guidelines must be justified in writing as to why they are necessary, reasonable, and in the best interest of the State**):

Meals provided for group gatherings starting by:

8:00 AM	Breakfast and/or AM Break
9:00 AM	AM Break
11:00 AM	Lunch
1:00 PM	PM Break

Meals provided for group gatherings ending after:

11:00 AM	Breakfast or AM Break
1:00 PM	Lunch
4:00 PM	PM Break
7:00 PM	Dinner

To be entitled to dinner, the function must have structured group interaction or activities such as speakers, presentations, or awards during the meal.

- J. Tax and up to 22% gratuity may be added to the amounts in paragraph H for purposes of applying this policy. This gratuity can be added to all applicable facility charges ex: food/beverage spend, meeting room rental, A/V rental, etc.

- K. Agencies are encouraged to hold the group gathering at a state-owned facility.
- L. If lodging is paid by the State, regardless of the source of funds:
- The gatherings should be held at a facility or location within the state.
 - Agencies should hold gatherings at a location that is within 50 miles of where the majority of the attendees work. However, a management retreat may be held at a location more than 50 miles from where the majority of the attendees work.
 - Lodging should not be reimbursed more than once every two (2) years for management retreats.
 - Reimbursement for lodging may not exceed two (2) nights for management retreats.
 - Attendees traveling to a gathering less than 50 miles from their home base are not entitled to lodging reimbursement. However, if it is necessary to have an attendee at a group gathering site before or after the conference hours to perform administrative or training duties, that attendee may be lodged even if they are traveling less than 50 miles from their home base, if documented and approved on the form FI 58.
 - For each 8 hours of meeting time, one night of lodging may be reimbursed. However, for attendees who work more than 150 miles from the gathering site, one additional night of lodging may be reimbursed to allow for travel to or from the gathering.
 - Occasionally, in the judgment of an executive director, the nature or circumstances of a group gathering may warrant an exception to this section (policy statement L.) that addresses lodging. In those instances, an executive director may approve an exception. Exceptions must be justified in writing, in the comments section of form [FI 58](#). Executive directors are responsible to ensure any exception is necessary and reasonable and in the best interest of the state. The funding source of a group gathering is not a valid reason for granting an exception.
- M. If it is necessary to make changes to the negotiated arrangements that increase the overall cost, the agency must complete an amended form [FI 58](#), Group Gathering Authorization, and have it approved by the executive director or designee, and if required by policy statement E, the State Travel Office .
- N. Supporting documentation for payments for group gathering accommodations must include the following:
- Original invoices
 - Agenda
 - List of attendees and affiliation
 - Copy of approved form FI 58 Group Gathering Authorization
 - Copy of signed contract
- O. Group Gathering Incentives – If a hotel offers points or free rooms for a group gathering, agencies are NOT allowed to accept these.

Procedures

Responsibility

Action

Agency

1. Determine if it is necessary to acquire group gathering accommodations and, if necessary, complete form [FI 58](#), Group Gathering Authorization.
2. Select a facility. If necessary, contact the State Travel Office for assistance selecting a facility.
3. Submit the completed form [FI 58](#) to the executive director or designee and to the budget officer for approval. Document any exception to policy in the comments section of form [FI 58](#).
4. Contact the facility and make tentative arrangements for the gathering unless procurement is required to be conducted by the State Travel Office as under policy statement E. The facility will prepare a draft contract detailing all arrangements.
5. For those group gatherings requiring State Travel Office approval or procurement under policy statement E, send the applicable information to the State Travel Office.

State Travel

1. Upon request, assist the agency in selecting and arranging for a facility or conduct the procurement as required under policy statement E. Review the form [FI 58](#) and the draft contract, identify any inappropriate charges, and work with the agency and facility until acceptable arrangements have been negotiated.
2. Assist the agency in ensuring the facility will make any required changes to the draft contract and submit a final contract to the agency.
3. For those gatherings requiring State Travel Office approval or procurement under policy statement E, approve the form [FI 58](#) and issue a Travel Authorization Number. Return the approved [FI 58](#) to the agency. Enter the purchasing delegation number LPD016 on the contract signature line for the Division of Purchasing.

Agency

1. Sign the final contract. Hold the group gathering, pay bills, and retain required supporting documentation. For payments on contracts requiring State Travel Office approval or procurement under policy statement E, send them the contract for signature and ensure the Travel Authorization Number and LPD016 is entered in the description field of the FINET payment transaction.
2. To make changes to an approved gathering, complete an amended form [FI 58](#), indicate changes, and obtain approval from the executive director or designee and the budget officer. In addition, approval must be obtained by the State Travel Office if required by policy statement E.

Division of Finance

1. Audit payments for compliance with this policy and ensure any exceptions are properly documented and meet the “necessary and reasonable” criteria.