

Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel

Eligibility for PCS Travel

A. PCS Travel in the Government's Interest.

Travel/transportation expenses are payable when it is in the interest of the Government to fill a position by moving a current employee from one permanent duty station (PDS) to another. This PCS movement authority extends from one Government department/agency to another. There must be no break in continuity of the employee's Government service when making the PCS unless the employee was separated from Government service because of RIF/transfer of function.

It is the responsibility of ORO to make decisions that balance the rights of employees and the prudent use of appropriated funds. For instance, ORO may determine that well qualified candidates exist within the geographical area and therefore in recruitment announcements restrict the area of recruitment and/or indicate that PCS allowances are not offered. The Comptroller General held in 61 Comp. Gen. 156 (1981) that payment of relocation expenses need not automatically be tied to the existence of a vacancy announcement issued pursuant to a Merit Promotion Program.

B. Eligibility for PCS Allowance

When PCS orders are authorized, PCS allowances shall be paid to employees transferred from one official station to another for permanent duty provided that a determination has been made that the transfer is in the interest of the Government and is not primarily for the convenience or benefit of the employee or at his/her request. Guidelines for making this determination are as follows:--

1. Management Directed.

If ORO recruits or requests an employee to transfer (i.e., RIF, transfer of function, agency career development program, or agency directed placement); ORO will regard such transfer as being in the interest of the Government.

2. PCS Moves Not in the Interest of the Government.

If an employee actively pursues, solicits or requests a position change resulting in the geographic move of such employee from one PDS to another, such a transfer is primarily for the convenience and benefit of the employee. ORO must formally advise the employee at the time an offer is extended that the transfer is in the interest of the employee and not in the interest of the Government, and that PCS expenses shall not be paid by the Government.

3. Notification of Payment or Nonpayment of PCS Allowances.

When ORO is preparing to recruit for a vacancy, the appropriate official should make

every effort to determine prior to advertising the vacancy whether it is in the interest of the Government to pay PCS allowances so that this information can be provided during the advertisement period. However, the determination regarding payment or nonpayment of PCS allowances may also be made after applicants have been referred to the selecting official. The determination will be based on factors such as cost effectiveness, labor market conditions, and difficulty in filling the vacancy. Budget constraints alone don't justify the denial of PCS allowances. If a decision is made not to pay PCS allowances, the reason for this decision will be documented in writing by the appropriate official and maintained with the official staffing files. All applicants selected for interview must be notified in writing of the organization's decision to pay or not pay PCS allowances. If interviews are not held, the selectee must be informed, in writing, whether PCS allowances will or won't be paid.