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DECISION



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548**

FILE: B-191517

DATE: September 29, 1978

MATTER OF: Linda Pickthorne Fletcher -
Transportation of household goods

- DIGEST:**
1. In an Assignment Agreement under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, 5 U.S.C. 3371-3376 (1976), the use of the term "travel and transportation expenses" standing alone without further limitation includes the expense of movement of household goods.
 2. Where household goods are shipped by an individual who has received an assignment under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act from the place of permanent employment at time of assignment to a destination other than the assignment location after the assignment has been completed, the individual may not be reimbursed for the expenses of transportation of the household goods.

By letter dated March 22, 1978, an advance decision was requested as to whether a voucher in the amount of \$1,964.17 representing transportation of household goods incurred by Dr. Linda Pickthorne Fletcher may be certified for payment under the circumstances described.

The record shows that Dr. Fletcher, Associate Professor of Finance, College of Business Administration, Louisiana State University, was assigned to the Department of Labor under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA). In the Assignment Agreement executed June 29, 1976, the entitlements and allowances for the duration of the assignment from July 12, 1976, to July 11, 1977, had been prescribed for Dr. Fletcher. The movement of household goods was not specifically authorized. However, the Assignment Agreement did provide that the agency would pay travel and transportation expenses incurred in reporting to the assignment and in returning to permanent employment upon completion of assignment. The bill of lading submitted with the claim shows that Dr. Fletcher's household goods were loaded for shipment on August 29, 1977, a month and a half after her appointment under IPA expired. The movement of the

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household goods involved transportation from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, her station of permanent employment to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, whereas her appointment under IPA was with the Department of Labor in Washington, D.C.

The authority for the assignment of personnel to or from local and State governments under the IPA is contained in 5 U.S.C. 3371-3376 (1976). Travel and transportation expenses are authorized for this program under 5 U.S.C. 3375. Subsection (a)(2) of section 3375 provides as follows:

"(a) Appropriations of an executive agency are available to pay, or reimburse, a Federal or State or local government employee in accordance with—

* * * * *

"(2) section 5724 of this title, for the expenses of transportation of his immediate family and of his household goods and personal effects to and from the assignment location;"

Implementing regulations appear in part 334 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and in Federal Personnel Manual (FPM) chapter 334 (Inst. 175, June 19, 1973).

While the term "travel and transportation expense" is not defined in either the statute or implementing regulations, the general meaning of the term by its usage in the statutes and regulations is that "travel expense" generally refers to the personal travel of the employee whereas "transportation expense" generally refers to expenses of transporting dependents, household and personal effects (including packing, crating, draying, temporary storage and unpacking). Therefore, it is our view that in an Assignment Agreement under IPA, the use of the term "travel and transportation expenses" standing alone without further limitation includes the expense of movement of household goods.

In the present case, while the Assignment Agreement authorized the payment of transportation expenses to and from the assignment location in accordance with the statutory language contained in 5 U.S.C. 3375(a)(2) and paragraph 1-7b. of chapter 334, FPM, the

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household goods were not shipped to or from the location assignment, Washington, D.C., but instead were shipped to Philadelphia after the assignment had been completed. Thus, it seems clear that such shipment was not for the purpose of transporting the household goods of the claimant incident to the IPA assignment. In those circumstances we find no basis in the law for authorizing allowance of such expenses.

Accordingly, the voucher may not be certified for payment.

PHK:11a
Acting Comptroller General
of the United States