

Relocation Allowances

§ 302-17.4

Internal Revenue Code (IRC) means Title 26 of the United States Code, which governs Federal income taxes.

Local income tax means a tax imposed by a recognized city or county tax authority that is deductible for Federal income tax purposes as a *local income tax* under the IRC, at 26 U.S.C. 164(a)(3). (See the definitions for the terms *city* and *county* in this section.)

Marginal tax rate (MTR) means the tax rate that applies to the last increment of taxable income after taxable relocation benefits have been added to the employee's income. Examples of how to determine the marginal tax rate using the IRS Tax Rate Schedules are published in an FTR bulletin at <https://gsa.gov/ftrbulletins>.

Reimbursement means money paid to you to cover expenses that you have already paid for out of your own funds.

Relocation benefits means all reimbursements and allowances that you receive, plus all direct payments that your agency makes on your behalf, in connection with your relocation.

Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) means the payment to individuals to cover the difference between the withholding tax allowance (WTA), if any, and the actual income tax liability incurred by the individual, and such individual's spouse (if filing jointly), as a result of their taxable relocation benefits authorized pursuant to this chapter. RITA is paid whenever the actual income tax liability exceeds the WTA and applies to any travel, transportation, and relocation expenses reimbursed or furnished in kind pursuant to chapter 57, subchapter II of title 5 U.S.C. and 5 U.S.C. chapter 41.

State means any one of the several states of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or any other territory or possession of the United States.

State income tax means a tax imposed by a state tax authority that is deductible for Federal income tax purposes under the IRC, specifically 26 U.S.C. 164(a)(3).

Withholding tax allowance (WTA) means the amount paid to the Federal IRS by the agency as withholding of income taxes for any taxable relocation

allowance, reimbursement, or direct payment to a vendor.

[FTR Amdt. 2014-01, 79 FR 49645, Aug. 21, 2014, as amended by FTR Amdt. 2020-02, 84 FR 64781, Nov. 25, 2019; 86 FR 73684, Dec. 28, 2021]

§ 302-17.2 Why does relocation affect personal income taxes?

When you are relocated from one permanent duty station to another, you are reimbursed by your employing agency for certain expenses. The IRC requires that you report many of these relocation benefits, including some that your agency pays on your behalf, as taxable income. When you receive taxable benefits, you must pay income tax on the amount or value of those benefits. However, 5 U.S.C. 5724b also requires that your agency reimburse you for substantially all of the additional Federal, state, and local income taxes you incur as a result of any taxable relocation benefits. A reimbursement for taxes is also a taxable benefit on which you must pay additional taxes.

§ 302-17.3 What is the Government's objective in reimbursing the additional income taxes incurred as a result of a relocation?

The Government's objective is to reimburse employees or individuals eligible for relocation expense allowances under § 302-1.1 of this chapter for substantially all (not exactly all—see § 302-17.4) of the additional Federal, state, and local income taxes incurred as a result of a relocation, including the taxes on the taxable relocation benefits and the taxes on the reimbursement for taxes.

[FTR Amdt. 2014-01, 79 FR 49645, Aug. 21, 2014, as amended at 86 FR 73684, Dec. 28, 2021]

§ 302-17.4 Why is the reimbursement for substantially all, and not exactly all, of the additional income taxes incurred as a result of a relocation?

Because of the complexity of the calculations, which involve not only Federal income tax but also the income tax rates of many states and localities, it is not reasonable for the Government to compute the exact impact of relocation on an affected employee's taxes.