

Tips On Controlling Travel Costs

A meeting here, a meeting there, and pretty soon the travel budget is out of control. We may not have to miss the meeting, but by saving a little here and a little there, we may be able to restrain our travel costs. The following ideas are listed as possibilities in controlling travel costs.

More extensive use of “City Pair” (YCAL) fares. “City Pairs” are reduced airfares between selected cities that the State of California negotiated with selected airlines. These are non-restricted airfares (7-day, 14-day, or 21-day advance purchases are not necessary), where the travel can be canceled at the last minute without penalties. The Corporate American Express card must be used to get these fares. Travelers that are not familiar with this program or the city locations should contact Tamara Cochran at 278-4019, for additional information or to obtain a list of the paired cities. When booking flights make sure the travel agency is aware of these fares.

Use Video Conferencing instead of travel. Whenever the possibilities exist, utilize the University's Video Conference facilities and save travel costs.

Combine meetings. Consider scheduling meetings back-to-back (i.e., one meeting in the morning, one in the afternoon, or one on Day 1 and one on Day 2). One trip, two meetings!

Use only State approved travel agencies. California State University, Fresno has contracts with four travel agencies (Grannis Travel, Mark Lewis Travel, The Travel Shoppe, and Council Travel). These travel agencies charge a small “service fee charge” to State employees traveling on official State business when the Corporate American Express card is used to purchase the airfare.

Use more lower-priced, advance purchase fares. Order non-refundable airline tickets sufficiently in advance (7-day, 14-day, or 21-day advance) to receive the maximum discounted airfares. Taking advantages of these advance airfares could result in receiving lower priced discounted fares and/or refundable tickets.

Compare the cost of trip option. Flying to an “alternative” airport, then renting a car to drive to the final destination may be a less costly option. Also, compare quoted travel agency airfare rates with more than one State approved travel agency.

Request Tax Exemption from the Hotel. State employees receive a tax exemption from most hotels within the State of California. To obtain this exemption, provide the hotel with a completed tax exemption form at the time of check-in.

The above potential cost saving ideas are presented for your consideration. Think about using them when making your travel plans.