

Important Info for APS Fellows Concerning Airline Ticket Purchase and Financial Responsibility

As you're preparing to travel as part of your APS fellowship, please be sure to read the following information concerning airline tickets and the financial responsibility for canceling or changing tickets. If you've done any traveling lately via air, you know that nearly 100% of the tickets that can be purchased at a reasonable fare are non-refundable tickets. Refundable tickets cost 3-4 times as much. Also, tickets are not transferable; therefore, you are the only person who can use that ticket. Because most of our fellowship programs are supported by federal grants, we must ask our travel agent, Globetrotter, to book the lowest fare ticket, where possible...this means non-refundable tickets. We know this is not very flexible but it's simply the way things are in air travel today.

What does this mean for you?

The bottom line is that, when you book a flight (whether it's with an airline directly or with a travel agent like Globetrotter), you are the sole owner of that ticket. You can't get it refunded and you can't give it to someone else. The same is true for us...when you book a ticket with our travel agent, **you own that ticket**, even though we pay for it. We have no way to get refunded if you don't use it and neither you nor we can transfer it to another person.

What happens if you change your mind about your travel dates or even change your mind about taking the trip?

Booking a non-refundable trip with the travel agent means you have made a firm commitment to make the trip at the time for which the reservations were made. As a fellow on a federally sponsored program, this means your ticket was purchased for you with federal funds. If you choose to not make the trip, you are still in possession of a ticket purchased with federal funds. Technically, you are responsible for reimbursing the grant for the value of the ticket.

What should I do if I want to cancel the trip?

1. NOTIFY the Education Office IMMEDIATELY! DO NOT just let it slide and simply not show up for the flight! This causes both you and us a great deal of clean-up and can cost you money.
2. Call Globetrotter and let them know. You may be able to apply the cost of the ticket (minus a substantial change fee of up to \$100) toward another ticket. Generally, you have to give NEW travel dates (that is, when you will do the travel to use the cost of the ticket) to Globetrotter PRIOR to your original scheduled departure! Usually you have to schedule travel within one year.

Please note: If you do not follow these steps, there will be NO remaining value on the ticket. In either case you will need to reimburse the APS for either the change fee (if you used the changed ticket for the Experimental Biology meeting) or the entire cost of the ticket (if you use the ticket for other purposes or fail to change the ticket at all).

What if I have to cancel due to an illness or emergency?

You should contact the APS Education Office as soon as possible. We may be able to get the ticket refunded but this is EXTREMELY rare. Airlines are running on tight budgets and are generally unwilling to give refunds. However, the APS **may** be able to absorb the cost of the ticket in an emergency.

What if I want to change the dates or times of travel?

Contact Globetrotter. Please be aware that **you are responsible for any change fees you incur.**

Hopefully, one day the airlines will offer reasonable tickets that are refundable and/or can be changed without significant fees. But until that time, we must encourage our fellows to **think before you book!** If you have any questions or want help in booking your flights, please feel free to contact the APS Office Manager, Brooke Bruthers (bbruthers@the-aps.org, 301-634-7132). Thanks for your assistance!