



REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AIRFARES AND BOOKING FEES OCTOBER 2012 THROUGH JUNE 2013

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Inspector General

Report 13-39
September 2013

REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AIRFARES AND BOOKING FEES OCTOBER 2012 THROUGH JUNE 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since fiscal year (FY) 2011, Department of Justice (DOJ) employees have booked an average of over 167,000 airline tickets each fiscal year at an estimated annual cost of over \$112 million. DOJ employees are allowed to book travel in two ways: (1) online by using GetThere, a booking engine that provides real-time information on flight availability and airfares; or (2) by contacting a contractor travel agent. In addition to the cost of the airfare, booking with an agent costs DOJ \$31.49, while booking online using GetThere costs \$6.49, a difference of \$25.

Concerned about excessive travel contractor costs, the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations issued a report in April 2012 directing Inspectors General of agencies funded by the Departments of Commerce and Justice, science, and related agencies appropriations bill for FY 2013, which included the DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG), to examine these costs.¹ The Committee report specifically commended the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) for “aggressively pursu[ing] savings in this area.”

In connection with our review, we discussed the evolution of DOJ travel policies with the Justice Management Division (JMD), which establishes DOJ-wide travel policies and contractor travel agency requirements, and we discussed and reviewed travel policies and procedures with officials at the following seven components: (1) DEA; (2) Federal Bureau of Investigation; (3) Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; (4) U.S. Marshals Service; (5) Federal Bureau of Prisons; (6) Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys; and (7) Criminal Division. These components represented more than 80 percent of the total number of tickets purchased by the DOJ for the first 9 months of FY 2013. Unless otherwise noted, the scope of our review was from October 2012 through June 2013.

We found that JMD previously issued guidance aimed at reducing the amount spent both on airline tickets and booking fees. In December 2010 and May 2011, JMD issued memoranda encouraging travelers to reserve or

¹ Senate Rep. No. 112-158 (April 19, 2012). The report required the review to be completed within 180 days of what became the applicable legislation's enactment, which occurred on March 27, 2013.

purchase the lowest-priced ticket available required to meet mission needs, even if the tickets were not fully refundable. In August 2010, JMD requested that all components develop an “aggressive outreach strategy” to maximize the number of travel bookings employees placed online instead of booking through a travel agent.

At the time of our review, only one of the DOJ components we reviewed, the DEA, had fully implemented an initiative that we believe has significantly reduced employee airfares. In September 2011, the DEA began aggressively enforcing a policy requiring that its employees purchase the lowest-priced tickets available. The DEA reported to us that there was a \$6.5 million difference between the costs of fully refundable airfares and lowest airfares available for all of its FY 2012 flights.² In addition, we found that two of the components we reviewed, the DEA and ATF, had taken aggressive actions requiring that employees book travel online by only reimbursing employees for the lower online booking fee of \$6.49 unless the employee could specifically justify why he or she needed travel agent assistance to book travel.

We found that JMD recently has taken additional steps in an attempt to reduce the amount DOJ spends on airline tickets. In May 2013, before the OIG initiated this review, JMD revised DOJ travel policies to require that employees purchase or reserve the lowest airfare available that meets mission requirements at the time they make travel arrangements. JMD reports it is also drafting a bulletin for DOJ employees to help them understand how to use GetThere to purchase lowest-priced tickets. We found that, depending on how a component configures the online booking engine, it can encourage or discourage travelers from selecting the lowest airfare available. We believe JMD’s actions are important steps towards realizing savings in employee travel costs. We further found that JMD has taken steps to encourage DOJ employees to book travel online, resulting in an increase in online booking from 44 percent for FY 2010 to 60 percent for the first nine months of FY 2013. However, those figures still fall short of JMD’s goal that 75 percent of airline tickets be booked online. We made three recommendations to JMD to help DOJ reduce travel costs.

² The DEA considers the difference in price between fully refundable airfares and lowest airfares available as cost savings because it believes this figure captures the full effect of the DEA-wide “change of behavior” as a result of enforcing this policy. DEA officials told us that prior to the policy employees largely purchased only fully refundable airfares. The DEA stated it reduces the amount of savings calculated to account for cancellation or change fees that were actually incurred. Our review did not include an assessment of the \$6.5 million in reported savings.

**REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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REVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AIRFARES AND BOOKING FEES OCTOBER 2012 THROUGH JUNE 2013

Introduction

The Federal Travel Regulation requires federal employees to use their respective agency's approved E-Gov Travel Service (ETS) to make travel arrangements.³ The Department of Justice's (DOJ or Department) ETS vendor, CWTSatoTravel (CWT), provides employees with access to GetThere, which is an online booking engine that shows real-time information on flight availability and airfares. Employees may also make travel arrangements by directly contacting a CWT travel agent. Under the government-wide ETS contract, online bookings using GetThere costs the DOJ \$6.49 each while agent-assisted bookings (either by phone or in person) costs \$31.49 each, a difference of \$25.

Before FY 2010, some individual DOJ components began moving away from requiring that employees purchase fully refundable airline tickets to permitting the purchase of airfares subject to cancellation or change fees so long as the airfare purchased met mission needs. In July 2010, the Attorney General's Advisory Council for Savings and Efficiencies (SAVE Council) was established to help implement cost-saving initiatives across DOJ. With regard to travel costs, the SAVE Council proposed that DOJ employees purchase the lowest, commercially available, non-refundable ticket on flights that meet mission needs, as opposed to purchasing only a fully refundable ticket that is available for federal employees on official travel. The SAVE Council also proposed that DOJ attempt to maximize the number of bookings employees placed online instead of those made directly with a travel agent. In December 2010 and May 2011, the Justice Management Division (JMD) issued memoranda that encouraged travelers to consider reserving or purchasing the lowest-priced ticket available.

³ 41 C.F.R. §301-50.3 (2013). The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) established a government-wide ETS contract in 2003 in an effort to reduce travel costs and improve travel planning efficiency. GSA selected three vendors to provide ETS solutions under this contract: CWTSatoTravel, Hewlett Packard Enterprise Services, and Northrop Grumman Mission Systems. In August 2013, DOJ announced that it plans to extend its ETS contract with CWTSatoTravel until at least November 2014.

In May 2012, the Office of Management and Budget directed all federal agencies to reduce travel costs.⁴ JMD revised DOJ travel policies in May 2013 to require that traveling employees select the lowest-priced ticket available that meets the requirements to accomplish their mission.⁵ To help implement this policy, JMD reports that it is preparing a DOJ-wide bulletin to illustrate how employees should use the online booking engine to compare the cost of different types of airfares using the online booking engine. Before the May 2013 policy revision, DOJ employees were encouraged, but not required, to select the lowest airfare available.

Since October 2010, DOJ employees booked an average of over 167,000 airline tickets per year at an estimated annual cost of over \$112 million.

OIG Review Approach

Concerned about excessive travel contractor costs, the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations issued a report in April 2012 directing Inspectors General of agencies funded by the Departments of Commerce and Justice, science, and related agencies appropriations bill for FY 2013, which included the DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG), to examine these costs.⁶ The Committee report specifically commended the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) for “aggressively pursu[ing] savings in this area.” To conduct this review, we discussed the evolution of DOJ travel policies with officials at JMD Finance Staff, which establishes DOJ-wide travel policies and ETS vendor requirements. In addition to JMD, we discussed and reviewed travel policies and procedures with officials at the following seven Department components: (1) DEA (2) Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); (3) Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF);

⁴ Office of Management and Budget Memorandum 12-12 (May 11, 2012).

⁵ With regard to selecting flights that meet mission requirements, the policy permits an employee to purchase a higher-priced City Pair fare when there is a “high degree of certainty” that the requested trip will change or be cancelled or when the City Pair price is less than the lowest non-contract airfare plus anticipated change or cancellation fees. DOJ Financial Management Policy Memorandum 13-08 (May 15, 2013).

⁶ Senate Rep. No. 112-158 (April 19, 2012). The report required the review to be completed within 180 days of what became the applicable legislation’s enactment, which occurred on March 26, 2013.

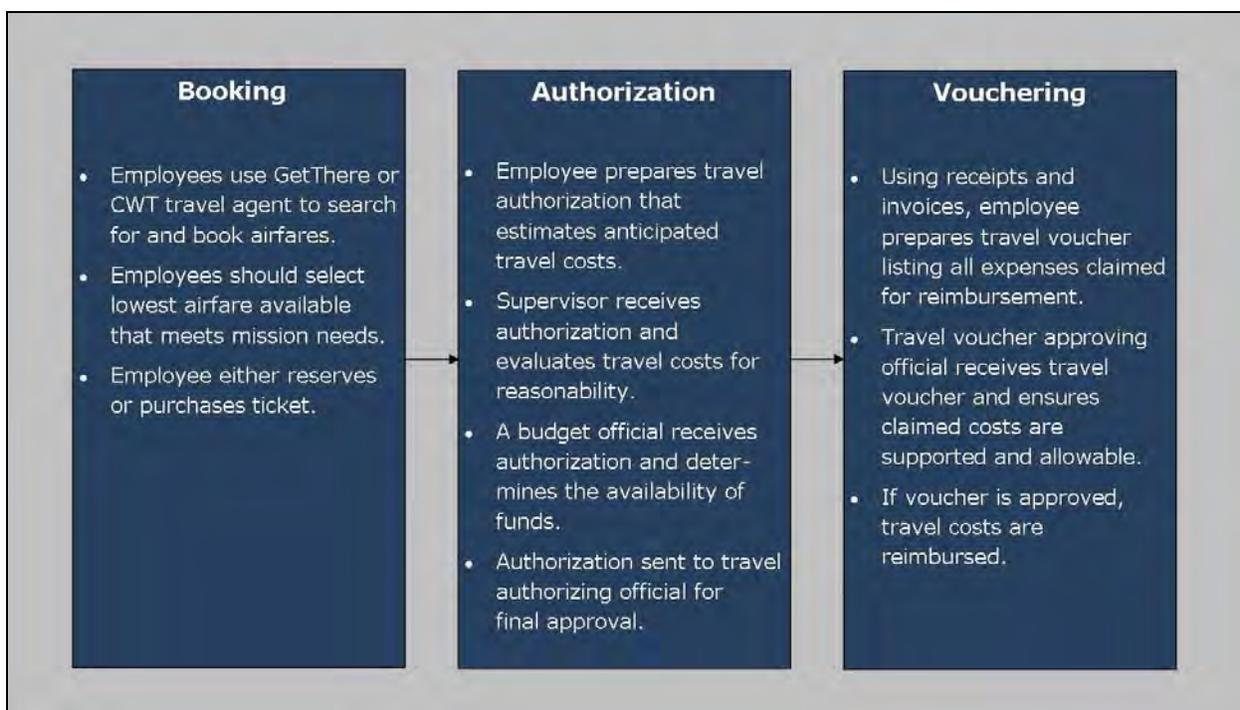
(4) U.S. Marshals Service (USMS); (5) Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP); (6) Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys (EOUSA); and (7) Criminal Division.⁷

Unless otherwise specified, the scope of this review covers the period from October 2012 through June 2013.

Overview of the DOJ Official Travel Process

Exhibit 1 presents an overview of the process DOJ employees generally follow to request and approve official travel.

EXHIBIT 1: DOJ TRAVEL PROCESS OVERVIEW



Source: OIG

In most cases, an employee books his or her travel arrangements and prepares a travel authorization that details the dates of travel and the purpose of the trip, while providing an estimate of the different types of official travel costs that will be incurred (such as transportation, hotel, and per diem). The authorization is then sent to a supervisor and a budget official who respectively determine the reasonableness of estimated costs and the availability of funds. A designated travel authorizing official then

⁷ Travel from these components constituted over 80 percent of the number of trips booked by DOJ employees during the first 9 months of FY 2013.

receives the authorization for final approval.⁸ Employees must have an approved travel authorization prior to their travel.

After returning from travel, the employee prepares a travel voucher to be reimbursed for authorized expenses. Attached to the travel voucher should be all receipts required by policy to support claimed costs. A travel voucher approving official must approve the travel voucher before travel costs can be paid.

Requirement to Select Lowest Airfare Available

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) established the City Pair Program to negotiate fully-refundable tickets for flights between specific airports with designated carriers. These tickets are referred to as “City Pair” or contract fares and are only available for official federal travel. As of this review, there are over 5,000 specific City Pairs. Some City Pair routes also offer a limited number of capacity-controlled fares at a price less than the regular contract fare. Under the Federal Travel Regulation, federal travelers must purchase City Pair fares when available, unless a publicly available, non-contract airfare is less expensive than the City Pair fare for the same flight.⁹

In requiring that employees select the lowest-priced ticket that meets mission requirements, the May 2013 DOJ travel policy also calls on travelers to compare City Pair fares to available commercial fares. In making this comparison, the policy encourages employees to consider the fees carriers may charge to cancel or change non-City Pair fares, especially if there is a risk that the trip may be cancelled or changed. The required online booking engine, GetThere, allows each DOJ traveler to search and select flights by date, time, and flight origin and destination. GetThere also provides travelers with a list of all available flights that meet requested search criteria and shows the various fares associated with each flight, including applicable City Pair fares. Unlike City Pair fares, which are fixed for an entire fiscal year, commercial fares can change frequently.

Depending on the variables of a specific trip, City Pair fares may or may not offer the lowest-priced ticket available on a specific flight. For

⁸ Some types of official travel, such as travel performed by new employees, invitational travel, and relocation travel are centrally booked by DOJ travel arrangers and not by individual employees.

⁹ 41 C.F.R. §301-10.105(a) and 41 C.F.R. §301-10.107(c) (2013).

example, on August 2, 2013, we searched for a round-trip airfare departing from Washington, D.C. (DCA) to Atlanta, Georgia (ATL) on a Monday 2 weeks in the future at 6:00 a.m. and returning at 5:20 p.m. the following Wednesday. Under this scenario, the lowest non-stop, round-trip publicly available airfare at the time of our search was \$472. However, the City Pair fare available for this same round-trip flight cost \$306, or \$166 less. Applying the same criteria as the prior example, except that we changed the destination to Miami, Florida (MIA), the lowest non-stop, round-trip publicly available airfare was \$292. However, the City Pair fare available for this same round-trip flight cost \$572, or \$280 more. In these examples, under the May 2013 policy, the employee traveling to Atlanta should have selected the City Pair ticket, while the employee traveling to Miami should have selected the publicly available fare instead of the City Pair fare (unless there was a “high degree of certainty” that the trip would be changed or cancelled or the non-contract airfare plus anticipated change or cancellation fees would cause the ticket to cost more than the City Pair ticket).

Improving Online Booking Engine Configurations

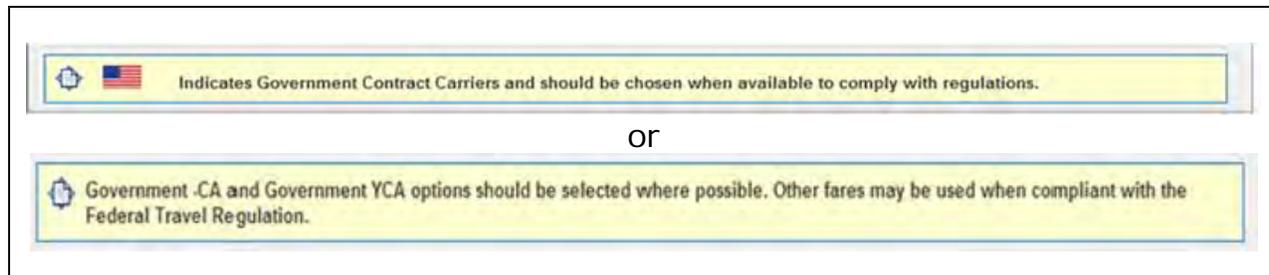
The GetThere online booking engine includes various attributes that the Department and its components can modify, such as default search settings, informational banners, and specific policy instructions. Depending on how these attributes are configured, we found that some can encourage or discourage DOJ travelers from selecting the lowest airfare available as required by DOJ travel policies. We reviewed the user experience of booking travel with GetThere and determined that certain component-controlled configurations may also discourage DOJ travelers from selecting the lowest airfare available or even from using the online booking engine instead of a travel agent to make travel plans.

For example, components can limit the types of airfares (such as commercially available with change or cancellation fees, commercially available without fees, and City Pair fares) GetThere provides as search results by default. As of August 2013, the FBI, DEA, Criminal Division, EOUSA, and JMD had configured GetThere so that employees booking travel could see all available fares by default. In comparison, the USMS, ATF, and BOP have set their respective default search options to show employees only City Pair airfares or airfares that did not include change or cancellation fees, even though, as discussed previously, some commercial airfares with cancellation and change fees may be the lowest airfare available.

Individual components can also configure informational banners and the text that appear on both GetThere search results and ticket purchasing screens. For example, as of August 2013, all DOJ components except for

the DEA provided travelers one of the following two banners on GetThere's search results webpage.

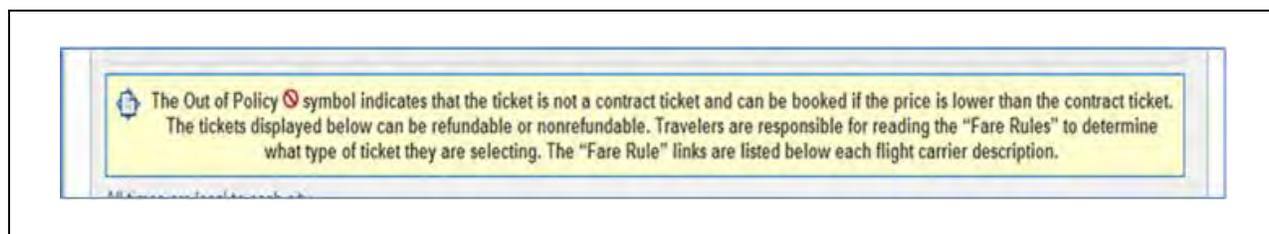
EXHIBIT 2: BOOKING ENGINE SEARCH RESULT BANNERS



Source: JMD

Stating that City Pair flights "should be chosen when available to comply with regulations" or "should be selected where possible" discourages travelers from following, and is arguably inconsistent with, DOJ travel policy that requires travelers to procure non-contract airfares when such fares would be the lowest-priced ticket available. In comparison, as of August 2013, the banner in Exhibit 3 appeared on all GetThere search results made by DEA employees.

EXHIBIT 3: DEA BOOKING ENGINE SEARCH RESULT BANNER

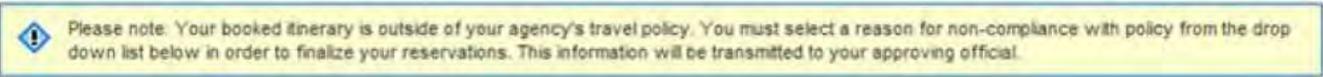
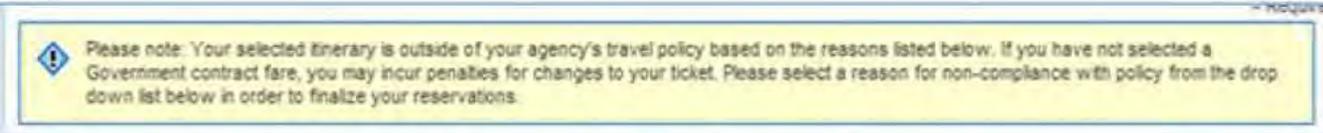
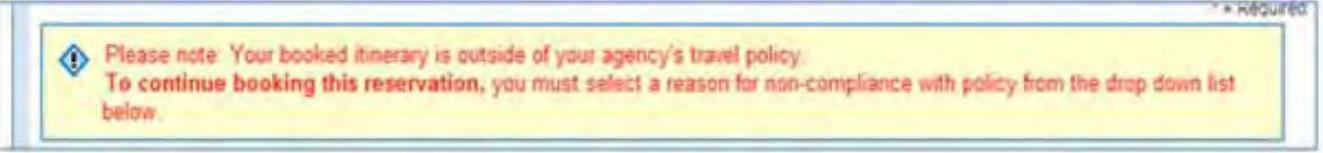
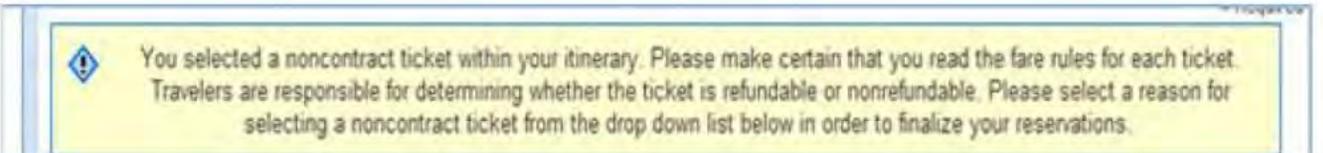


Source: JMD

While the DEA search result banner in Exhibit 3 reinforces the DOJ requirement to purchase the lowest airfare available, the banner still refers to non-City Pair airfares as "Out of Policy." We believe this is confusing given that DOJ travel policy permits travelers to purchase these types of fares when they are less costly.

Whenever an employee selects from the search results a ticket that is not a City Pair ticket, all DOJ components have also configured GetThere to require that the employee justify why they selected a non-City Pair flight before they can continue booking travel. As shown in Exhibit 4, while the specific text cited by components varies, all components except for the DEA refer to non-City Pair tickets as "out of policy" or "not in compliance."

EXHIBIT 4: SCREENSHOTS OF NON-CITY PAIR JUSTIFICATIONS

Component	Banner
JMD, ATF, BOP, EOUSA, and USMS	 <p>Please note: Your booked itinerary is outside of your agency's travel policy. You must select a reason for non-compliance with policy from the drop down list below in order to finalize your reservations. This information will be transmitted to your approving official.</p>
Criminal Division	 <p>Please note: Your selected itinerary is outside of your agency's travel policy based on the reasons listed below. If you have not selected a Government contract fare, you may incur penalties for changes to your ticket. Please select a reason for non-compliance with policy from the drop down list below in order to finalize your reservations.</p>
FBI	 <p>Please note: Your booked itinerary is outside of your agency's travel policy. To continue booking this reservation, you must select a reason for non-compliance with policy from the drop down list below.</p>
DEA	 <p>You selected a noncontract ticket within your itinerary. Please make certain that you read the fare rules for each ticket. Travelers are responsible for determining whether the ticket is refundable or nonrefundable. Please select a reason for selecting a noncontract ticket from the drop down list below in order to finalize your reservations.</p>

Source: JMD

To assist DOJ travelers in selecting the lowest airfare available as required by DOJ policy, GetThere should be configured to provide DOJ users with all available airfare prices. Additionally, component-specified instructions appearing on GetThere webpages should accurately reflect DOJ travel policies that direct employees to select the lowest airfare available that meets mission needs – even if that airfare is not a City Pair fare. When those instructions state that non-City Pair fares are “out of policy” or “not in compliance,” they discourage employees from complying with, and arguably conflict with, DOJ travel policy. We therefore recommend that JMD work with DOJ components to configure the online booking engine so that (1) the search results will show all available airfares by default and (2) all instructions, informational banners, and justification requirements comport with updated DOJ travel policies.

Ensuring Employees Select Lowest Airfare Available

Components use different methods by which employees generate travel authorizations and reviewing officials document their approval. The Department maintains a contract with CWT that allows components to use an online application called E2 Solutions (E2) that uses GetThere bookings to generate travel authorizations and vouchers and send these documents to reviewing officials for approval.¹⁰ E2 further provides reviewing officials with the lowest airfare available on the same flight or comparable flights requested by the traveler. With this information, the authorizing official can compare the fare requested in the authorization to the lowest airfare available, and request that the employee select either the lower fare or justify the more costly fare if the requested fare is higher. Of the eight components we reviewed, the USMS, EOUSA, and JMD use E2 to process travel authorizations and vouchers. Because of this, we believe that reviewing officials in these components are adequately positioned to ensure that employees comply with the DOJ travel policy lowest airfare available requirement.

However, the FBI, ATF, DEA, BOP, and Criminal Division each use its own component-level travel authorization systems. Officials cited various reasons for using their own travel authorization and vouchering systems instead of E2. First, some component officials cited concerns over security and the integrity of ongoing investigations as reasons necessitating the handling of travel itineraries internally. Second, component officials stated that employees are familiar with the authorization and vouchering systems

¹⁰ Components pay a \$14 fee for each travel voucher processed through E2.

in place and therefore prefer not to change them. Third, component officials indicated that they want to avoid paying the \$14 fee charged when E2 processes a travel voucher.

We found that these component-level systems do not automatically provide authorizing officials with the airfare information from GetThere needed to confirm that employees selected the lowest airfare available, and as a result, components not using E2 that wish to ensure employees select the lowest-priced tickets must develop their own work-around procedures.

Among the components we reviewed, the DEA has developed such a procedure. In September 2011, the DEA began aggressively enforcing a policy requiring that its employees purchase the lowest-priced tickets available by making individual employees liable for unnecessary costs. To enforce this policy, the DEA Office of Finance uses GetThere to validate each airline booking made by DEA employees. The DEA stated that for each flight booked by an employee it calculates the difference between the price of the City Pair (or comparable fully refundable) fare to the lowest airfare available chosen for that flight. The DEA stated it then adjusts each calculation to account for cancellation or change fees that were actually incurred. The DEA reported to us that there was a \$6.5 million difference between the costs of fully refundable City Pair (or equivalent) airfares and lowest airfares available for all of its FY 2012 flights.¹¹

The revised DOJ travel policy still leaves it to the discretion of individual reviewing officials as to whether to request evidence from employees to show that they selected the lowest-priced ticket available at the time of booking travel (such as a GetThere screenshot). In light of the potential cost savings to the Department from the expanded use of lowest airfare available, we believe that closer supervision of employee airfare selections is warranted. We therefore recommend that JMD work with DOJ components to ensure that officials approving travel have the information necessary to ensure that employees comply with the DOJ travel policy and select the lowest-priced ticket available that meets mission requirements. Such information may include an employee certification or print screen that demonstrates the employee selected the lowest airfare available at the time of booking.

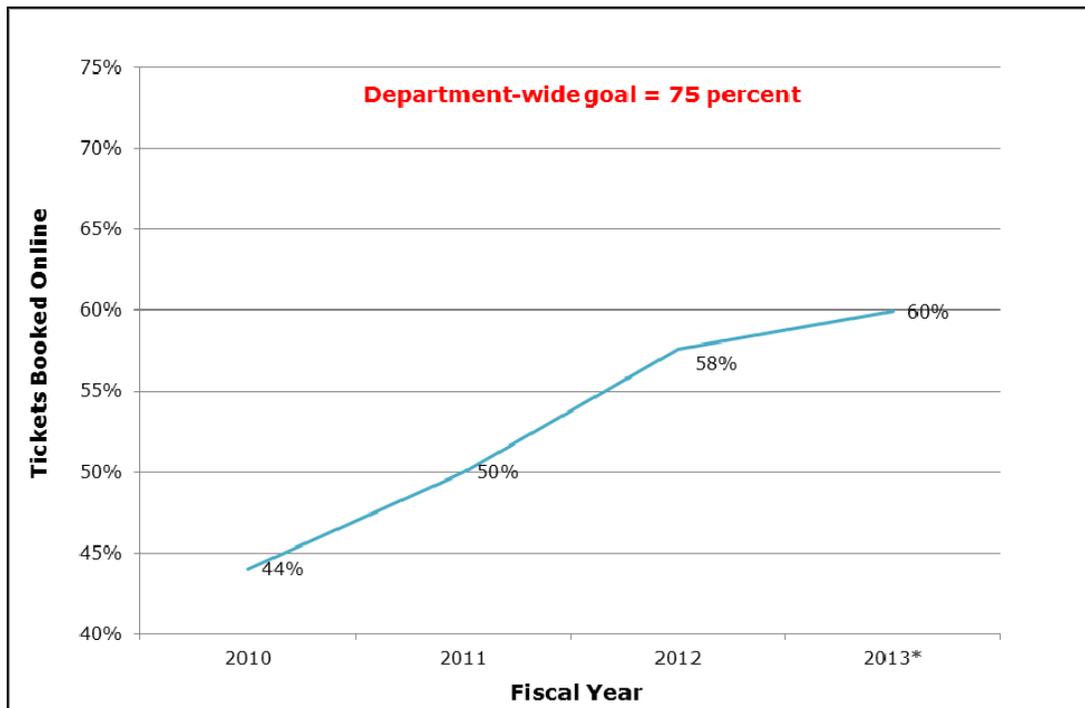
¹¹ The DEA considers the difference in price between City Pair (or comparable fully refundable) airfares and lowest airfares available as cost savings because it believes this figure captures the full effect of the DEA-wide “change of behavior” as a result of enforcing this policy. DEA officials told us that prior to the policy, employees largely purchased only fully refundable airfares. Our review does not include an assessment of the \$6.5 million in reported savings.

Maximizing the Percentage of Online Bookings

As stated previously, DOJ employees may make travel arrangements either directly with a vendor travel agent in person or by phone, or online. A direct-agent booking costs \$31.49 and online bookings using GetThere cost \$6.49 each, a difference of \$25. In August 2010, the Assistant Attorney General for Administration requested that all components develop an “aggressive outreach strategy” to maximize the number of travel bookings employees placed online instead of booking through a travel agent.

JMD Finance Staff keeps track of and reports online booking statistics throughout the fiscal year. As shown in Exhibit 5, these statistics show that the percentage of online bookings occurring across the DOJ have generally increased, rising from 44 percent for FY 2010 to 60 percent for the first nine months of FY 2013.

EXHIBIT 5: PERCENTAGE OF DOJ TRAVEL BOOKINGS PLACED ONLINE (October 2009 to June 2013)



Source: JMD Online Booking Statistics

Note: FY 2013 booking rate based on data as of June 2013

As of our review, online bookings could not be made for travel by individuals without government travel cards (such as travel for new employees, invitees, witnesses, and inmates). In addition, emergency travel was booked with the assistance of an agent because the online booking process generally requires 24 hours to finalize ticketing. JMD told us it estimates that about 25 percent of all DOJ travel is for these types of trips that cannot be booked online.¹² We note JMD has begun developing a method that would permit those making travel arrangements for travelers without travel cards to use GetThere. We encourage JMD to continue this effort to increase the amount of DOJ travel that can be booked online.

In light of the estimated number of bookings that cannot currently be placed online, JMD has established a DOJ-wide goal of a 75-percent online booking rate. The highest online booking rate DOJ has achieved overall has been 60 percent for the first 9 months of FY 2013, 15 percent less than the established goal. JMD Finance Staff officials attributed at least some of the shortfall to the fact that some employees prefer to make travel plans with an agent and therefore remain reluctant to book online.

Before our review, JMD had CWT update its agent reservation process so that all DOJ employees calling for agent assistance receive a recorded message informing them that booking with a travel agent costs \$25 more than booking online. JMD also reports that it is in the process of drafting a bulletin to guide DOJ employees in how best to navigate GetThere to display flight options and make travel plans. We believe this bulletin, once finalized, will represent an important step necessary to enhance employee familiarity with GetThere and thereby increase the number of bookings employees choose to make online.

Some components have taken aggressive actions designed to encourage online booking, with the most notable examples being the DEA and ATF. Both the DEA and ATF only reimburse the traveler for the lower online booking fee of \$6.49 unless the employee can specifically justify why he or she needed travel agent assistance to book travel. We believe that if other components followed this example and required that travelers who incur a more expensive agent-assisted booking fee justify why they could not book more cheaply online, DOJ as a whole would be better positioned to meet its 75-percent goal for online bookings. Therefore, we recommend that JMD update DOJ travel policy so that individual travelers are responsible for paying unnecessary agent-assisted booking fees.

¹² Our review did not include an assessment of this 25 percent figure.

Recommendations

We recommend that JMD:

1. Work with DOJ components to configure the online booking engine so that: (1) the search results will show all available airfares by default and (2) all instructions, informational banners, and justification requirements comport with updated DOJ travel policies.
2. Work with DOJ components to ensure that officials approving travel have the information necessary to ensure that employees comply with the DOJ travel policy and select the lowest-priced ticket available that meets mission requirements.
3. Update DOJ travel policy so that individual travelers are responsible for paying unnecessary agent-assisted booking fees.

JUSTICE MANAGEMENT DIVISION'S RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT REPORT



U.S. Department of Justice

Washington, D.C. 20530

SEP 19 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR RAYMOND J. BEAUDET
ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AUDIT

FROM: Lee J. Lofthus
Assistant Attorney General
for Administration

SUBJECT: Justice Management Division Response to the Office of the Inspector
General Draft Report: Review of Department of Justice Airfares and
Booking Fees October 2012 Through June 2013

This responds to Office of the Inspector General (OIG) draft report: Review of Department of Justice Airfares and Booking Fees October 2012 Through June 2013. We are pleased that many of the efforts of the Department's components to reduce travel costs were recognized. Further, I note that as part of the President's "Campaign to Cut Waste," the Department has exceeded its savings targets for 2010-2013. The Department's components have also made significant efforts and recognized significant savings in booking fees and by using the lowest cost airfares that met the Department's mission, both of which have been long standing cost savings initiatives for the Department.

The Justice Management Division (JMD) has reviewed the draft OIG report and provides the following responses to the OIG's three recommendations to the JMD.

Recommendation 1: Work with DOJ components to configure the online booking engine so that: (1) the search results will show all available airfares by default and (2) all instructions, informational banners, and justification requirements comport with updated DOJ travel policies.

Response: The JMD concurs with the recommendation. JMD will: (1) work with the U.S. Marshals Service; Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); Bureau of Prisons; Federal Prison Industries; and Office of Justice Programs to implement the default configuration to show all available airfares in the online booking engine, and (2) work with the Department's Travel Policy Working Group and travel coordinators to development minimum standards for the instructions and information banners to ensure clear consistent guidance to the traveler that are consistent with the Department's travel policies.

JMD will also work with the General Services Administration (GSA) to ensure the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), Chapter 301-10.107(c) and the recent GSA Bulletin FTR 13-07

Subject: JMD Response to OIG Draft Report: Review of Department of Justice Airfares and Booking Fees October 2012 Through June 2013

“Emphasizing FTR Opportunities for Achieving Reduced Travel Costs through Use of City Pair Program (CPP) Contract and Non-Contract Airfares” is consistent with implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 2: Work with DOJ components to ensure that officials approving travel have the information necessary to ensure that employees comply with the DOJ travel policy and select the lowest-priced ticket available that meets mission requirements.

Response: The JMD concurs with the recommendation. JMD will work with the components currently not using the E2 Solution (E2) to (1) determine a reasonable and efficient method to provide the official approving travel the information necessary to ensure the lowest-priced ticket available that meets mission requirements is selected and (2) continue future implementations of E2.

Recommendation 3: Update DOJ travel policy so that individual travelers are responsible for paying unnecessary agent-assisted booking fees.

Response: The JMD concurs with the recommendation. JMD will work with the Department’s Travel Policy Working Group and Travel Coordinators to review the Drug Enforcement Administration, ATF, and Executive Office for United States Attorneys processes to develop a reasonable and cost effective approach for other Components to implement the recommendation.

If you have any question please contact me on (202)514-3101 or have you staff contact Chris Alvarez, Deputy Director, Finance Staff, JMD on (202)616-5234.

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT REPORT



U. S. Department of Justice
Drug Enforcement Administration

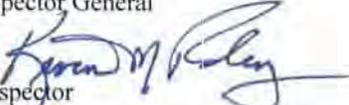
www.dea.gov

Washington, D.C. 20537

SEP 19 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Raymond J. Beaudet
Assistant Inspector General for Audit
Office of the Inspector General

FROM: Kevin M. Foley 
Deputy Chief Inspector
Office of Inspections

SUBJECT: DEA's Response to the OIG's Draft Report: *Review of Department of Justice Airfares and Booking Fees October 2012 through June 2013*

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has reviewed the Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) Draft Audit Report, entitled: *Review of Department of Justice Airfares and Booking Fees October 2012 through June 2013*. DEA acknowledges OIG's efforts in conducting the review to evaluate DOJ wide travel policies and procedures to reduce excessive spending.

The OIG report contains three recommendations for the Justice Management Division's (JMD) action. Although the DEA appreciates the acknowledgement by the OIG of the advances DEA has made in achieving savings through its Lowest Available Airfare policy, DEA would like to provide additional information that may help DOJ identify excessive expenditures and areas of savings.

In the Senate Conference Report accompanying the FY 2012 Appropriations Bill, the Senate expressed its concern that Federal travel contractors might be overcharging Federal agencies for their services. As stated in the Conference Report, "These contractors charge Federal agencies hundreds of dollars more per ticket, along with a service fee, than can be purchased on-line or directly through the air carrier." DEA believes that an examination of the cost structure of the travel contractors themselves could prove useful in identifying areas where additional savings could be achieved.

DEA briefed the OIG review team on the excessive manual efforts required by government staff to ensure compliance with DEA policy and identified several improvements that have been requested to JMD. These include the ability to book dependent travel on the travel website and a system edit that would automatically notify the DEA travel office whenever a DEA employee

books a flight that is not the lowest available fare for the flight(s) they have chosen. These improvements, when implemented, would help DEA and other DOJ components achieve additional travel savings and correct system deficiencies that currently require extensive work-around efforts by the components.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding DEA's response to the OIG Audit Report, please contact the Audit Liaison Team at (202) 307-8200.

**BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND
EXPLOVIVES' RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT REPORT**



U.S. Department of Justice

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms and Explosives

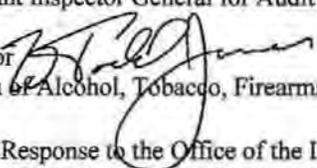
Office of the Director

SEP 18 2013

Washington, DC 20226

MEMORANDUM TO: Inspector General

THRU: Assistant Inspector General for Audit

FROM: Director 
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)

SUBJECT: ATF's Response to the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG)
Review of the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Airfare and Booking
Fees October 2012 Through June 2013

This memorandum is to provide the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives response to the Office of Inspector General's recommendations regarding the review of the Department of Justice Airfares and Booking Fees Order 2620.7.

Recommendation #1

Work with DOJ components to configure the online booking engine so that: (1) the search results will show all available airfares by default and (2) all instructions, informational banners, and justification requirements comport with updated DOJ travel policies.

ATF Response

ATF agrees with this recommendation. ATF will work with DOJ and Electronic Travel Services (ETS) to ensure that (1) online booking agent will show all available airfares, and (2) devise informational banners which will appear to remind employee to choose the lowest available airfare that meets mission requirements. This action will be completed by April 2014.

Recommendation #2

Work with DOJ components to ensure that officials approving travel have the information necessary to ensure that employees comply with the DOJ travel policy and select the lowest-priced ticket available that meets mission requirements.

Inspector General

ATF Response

ATF agrees with this recommendation. ATF will send out a broadcast to all ATF supervisors and personnel notifying them that when traveling by air they are to choose the lowest-priced ticket available that meets mission requirements. In addition, notifying supervisors and or authorization officials approving travel to validate that employee chose the lowest priced fair based on mission requirements. This action will be completed by December 2013.

Recommendation #3

Update DOJ travel policy so that individual travelers are responsible for paying unnecessary agent-assisted booking fees.

ATF Response

ATF agrees with this recommendation. ATF currently has a policy in place which mandates online booking by employees. A justification with supervisory approval is required if policy is not followed.

Should you have any questions regarding this memo, please feel free to contact Steve Kolcio at 202-648-7707.

**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF ACTIONS
NECESSARY TO CLOSE THE REPORT**

The OIG provided a draft of this report to the eight Department of Justice components included in our review. Of these, three components provided responses to the draft report. JMD's response is incorporated in Appendix I. The DEA's response is incorporated in Appendix II. ATF's response is incorporated in Appendix III. The following provides the OIG's analysis of these responses and a summary of actions necessary to close the report.

Analysis of Draft Report Responses

In response to our report, JMD concurred with our recommendations and discussed the actions it will implement with other DOJ components. The ATF's response concurred with our recommendations to JMD. The DEA's response acknowledged the OIG's efforts to identify excessive spending by performing this review and made three additional observations intended to help DOJ identify excessive expenditures and areas of savings. In this appendix, we first reply to the DEA's three observations, and then discuss JMD's specific responses to our recommendations and the actions necessary to close those recommendations.

First, the DEA stated that it believes that an examination of the cost structure of travel contractors could prove useful in identifying additional cost savings. The DEA cites language from Senate Report No. 112-158 noting that travel contractors charge federal agencies hundreds of dollars more per ticket, as well as a service fee, than would be charged if the same ticket were purchased online or directly from the carrier. While we appreciate this suggestion by DEA and also took note of the language in the Senate Report on this issue, our review did not assess the cost structure of travel contractors because those issues involve agreements entered into by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). The Federal Travel Regulation requires that each federal agency deploy e-Travel Services (ETS) and that federal agencies acquire ETS by issuing task orders under one of

three master contracts negotiated by GSA.¹³ A review of DOJ travel contractor fees structure of the ETS task order would require a review of the larger GSA ETS master contract that sets the fees, which is beyond the jurisdiction of the DOJ OIG. Therefore, we focused our review on specific ways DOJ employees could reduce travel contractor costs incurred under the GSA ETS master contract, and encourage the DOJ to identify and pursue other opportunities to save money through the purchase of lowest airfares available, the use of online booking, and the reduction of travel contractor booking costs.

Second, the DEA stated that the online booking engine should be adjusted so that it automatically notifies the DEA whenever an employee does not purchase the lowest available airfare for the chosen flight. Without such a notification, the DEA stated, its staff must make “excessive manual efforts” using an “extensive work-around” to ensure that its employees comply with its lowest airfare available policy. Our report notes that the DOJ ETS tool, E2 Solutions, does provide lowest airfare available information to travel authorizers. Our report also notes that some DOJ components (including the DEA) do not use E2 Solutions, and thus travel-approving officials in those components do not know whether the employee requesting travel actually selected the lowest airfare available. We therefore included a recommendation that JMD work with each component to develop a method by which officials approving travel receive this information.

Third, the DEA stated that the booking engine prevents employees from booking travel online if they are traveling with dependents, such as when travel is related to a permanent change of station. As a result, those traveling with dependents must book flights with travel agent assistance and incur additional costs. Our report notes that there are various categories of official travel, such as invitational and emergency travel, that cannot be booked online. During our review, we found that JMD had begun working with CWT to address this limitation and expand the categories of official travel that can be booked online, and our report explicitly encourages JMD to continue this effort.

¹³ 41 C.F.R. § 301-73.101 (2013). Employees must book official travel using their agency’s approved ETS unless they have a specific exemption from their agency head or designee. 41 C.F.R. § 301-50.3 (2013). An employee who purchases airline tickets outside their agency’s ETS without such an exemption violates the Federal Travel Regulation. 41 C.F.R. § 301-73.102 (2013).

Summary of Actions Necessary to Close the Report

1. **Resolved.** JMD concurred with our recommendation to work with DOJ components to configure the online booking engine so that: (1) the search results will show all available airfares by default and (2) all instructions, informational banners, and justification requirements comport with updated DOJ travel policies. In addressing these configuration changes, JMD said it will work with members of the DOJ Travel Policy Working Group and travel coordinators to develop minimum standards for booking engine instructions and informational banners, and with GSA to ensure that relevant travel regulations are consistent with implementation of this recommendation.

This recommendation can be closed when we receive evidence that DOJ employees using the online booking engine are provided: (1) all available airfares by default and (2) instructions, informational banners, and justification requirements that comport with the minimum standards that JMD has agreed to develop in cooperation with the DOJ Travel Policy Working Group, travel coordinators, and as appropriate, GSA.

2. **Resolved.** JMD concurred with our recommendation to work with DOJ components to ensure that officials approving travel have the information necessary to ensure that employees comply with the DOJ travel policy and select the lowest-priced ticket available that meets mission requirements. JMD stated in its response that it will work with components not using E2 Solutions (which provides such information) to determine a reasonable and efficient method to provide relevant lowest-priced ticket information to officials approving travel. JMD also reports it plans to continue future implementations of E2 Solutions across DOJ.

This recommendation can be closed when we receive evidence that components not using E2 Solutions have developed a method of providing relevant lowest-priced ticket information to officials approving travel.

3. **Resolved.** JMD concurred with our recommendation to update DOJ travel policy so that individual travelers are responsible for paying unnecessary agent-assisted booking fees. JMD stated in its response that it will work with the DOJ Travel Policy Working Group and travel coordinators to develop a reasonable and cost-effective approach for components to implement this recommendation.

This recommendation can be closed when we receive evidence that the DOJ travel policy has been updated so that individual travelers are responsible for paying unnecessary agent-assisted booking fees.