


The County Connection



TO: A&F Committee

DATE: November 23, 2011

FROM: Rick Ramacier 
General Manager

SUBJECT: Travel Policy

Background

For many years, CCCTA has had a board travel policy that allows for each board member to travel to one out of state transit conference and to travel to one in state transit conference each fiscal year. The policy for staff travel has been for staff to travel when it is deemed necessary or clearly beneficial to CCCTA under the direction of the General Manager. Staff travel has also been controlled by the budget.

In late 2008, the board discussed updating the board travel policy in response to CCCTA's financial situation. As a result, the board decided to limit board travel through the budget. Thus, in fiscal year 2009, fiscal year 2010, and fiscal year 2011, the budget allowed only three total CCCTA trips by board members in each of those fiscal years.

For FY 2012, the board decided to provide a budget for up to five board members to during the fiscal year. This was to accommodate travel to the very valuable and useful triennial APTA Expo. Typically, board attendance at the triennial APTA Expo is higher than at other transit conferences. Since Expo is only every three years, it was believed to be a sound decision to budget for more board members to attend.

Thus, in FY12 CCCTA budgeted \$10,000 for board travel as opposed to \$2,000 in FY09, FY10, and, FY11. I anticipate that we will budget \$2,000 for board travel in FY13 as it is not an Expo year.

In terms of an attendance controller, the budget has proven to be effective as a total of four board member attendees went to a total of five conferences - less than one per conference between November 2008 and September 2011.

Staff travel in recent years has been budgeted at \$20,000 annually. A number of CCCTA staff serve on the boards and committees of both state and federal transit associations in critical capacities. This necessitates their travel. Also, much of staff travel facilitates important training and staff improvement that is critical to our success. Staff does not travel on behalf of CCCTA unless a direct benefit(s) to CCCTA can be shown.

Travel Policy Update

Staff believes that controlling board and staff travel has been largely effective through the budget. While concern has been raised regarding the number of board members who attended the recent triennial APTA Expo in New Orleans, it should be noted that the total number of board member trips over the past three years is nine. Moreover, having an appropriate number of board members attend the triennial APTA Expo is both a proven value to both the individual board member as well as CCCTA.

There are ways to tighten the application of the board travel policy through budget by doing the following:

- Set the amount of money to be made available for board travel for the coming fiscal year in the initial draft budget for that fiscal year.
- Have that noted by the Board of Directors prior to budget adoption.
- Maintain the board travel budget at relatively low levels with a modest and justified increase in Expo years or when it is determined that additional board members should go to Washington DC to address explicate and significant federal concerns affecting CCCTA.
- Have the Board Chair – working with the Board Clerk – determine how many board members can travel to certain conferences based on the available budget. Attendees to be selected on a first come, first serve basis.
- The first come, first serve basis will be processed by the Board Clerk.
- The Board Chair and the Vice Chair will have first call to attend any conference that CCCTA deems as important and appropriate for board member attendance.

Another alternate approach is to cap the number of board members that can attend anyone conference. If this approach is used, the number could be set by conference type. For example, CCCTA could set a policy that only X number of board members can travel to the annual APTA Legislative Conference, while Y number can go to the APTA Annual Conference, and Z can go to the triennial APTA Expo. This approach though is less flexible than a budget based process.

Action Requested

At this time, staff is not yet making a formal recommendation. We seek to receive your feedback and discussion of this topic at your meeting on December 2nd. Afterwards, staff will develop a specific proposal if desired.