

For Immediate Release

April 20, 2020

TSTOA Covid-19 Information Update #1

(Texas) As this unprecedented global disaster continues, the Texas Student Tour Operator Association (TSTOA) would like to reach out to the educators that our member companies serve in Texas. We recognize this remains a very challenging time for all the communities and group leaders who have been affected by this pandemic. It is our intention to provide information you hopefully find helpful as you answer questions regarding your previously planned group travel affected by this crisis.

The financial aspect of this task is difficult enough when all you have to do is collect the funds and pay the bills. Due to the current crisis this year, your work includes overseeing potential refunds and answering legitimate questions from numerous parents and administrators. Over the next few weeks, TSTOA will share some information that will hopefully assist you in this endeavor of answering questions you may receive.

Depending on the complexity of a trip, your tour operator coordinated with industry and consumer groups keeping the safety and financial security of your students as the top priority. As the reaction to this global pandemic continues, many of the suppliers are finding it impossible to maintain financial viability as their business has completely stopped. Vendors have taken steps to persevere including company-wide layoffs making it difficult for tour operators to confirm the status of potential refunds. Vendors have been paid, have performed much of the requested service, and in many cases contractually can keep the funds. Unfortunately, this all means the tour operator might be unable to secure a partial or full refund and certainly not in a timely fashion.

Those group leaders who planned less complex trips are probably wondering why their funds cannot be returned immediately. Tour operators are finding themselves in a position of managing all the groups' requests before making any financial commitments regarding refunds to any single group. Like the suppliers, tour operators too are trying to 'weather this storm' and remain viable for the future. We hope you know, all reputable companies will not profit from this crisis and are working on behalf of their clients for the best financial outcome possible.

Our members are tireless advocates on behalf of teachers, parents, schools and the students who travel. On behalf of the Texas Student Tour Operator's Association, we hope this has been helpful to you and your group. This is a difficult situation for everybody and understanding has never been more important as we work through all of this together!

Sincerely,

Your friends at TSTOA
Director's Choice
Tour-Rific of Texas
Unique Travels & Tours
Winter Park Ski-Music Festival

The Texas Student Tour Operator's Association (TSTOA) promotes travel experiences for Texas students and youth to enhance their social, cultural, and educational growth. TSTOA offers educational resources to empower group travel leaders, educators, school administrators, and district business officers to properly evaluate travel vendors.