Airline Travel Arrangements

State Travel Policy Rules & Regulations
Section 109 Public Carrier (Airplane)
A. Airline Travel – General Information. pg 17

USM Travel Website:
House Bill 1488, effective July 1, 2002, allows state agency employees to make reservations for all travel arrangements, either through one of the state contract travel agencies or by other methods. Basically, this means the employee has the option of booking flights over the Internet if they can save money. If reservations are made over the Internet or by other methods, a receipt and itinerary shall accompany the request for reimbursement. For all flights which are not booked through one of the contract travel agencies, the state agency must maintain in its files a cost comparison showing a minimum of two (2) fares. This cost comparison must show the fare and any issuance cost and must show a savings, and shall be submitted along with the employees Travel Voucher. Neither of these quotes should be through a travel agency if they will not be used. The least expensive routing shall be used. If the employee must book a flight at a price in excess of the lowest rate on the cost comparison, a eWaiver request is required to justify using that fare and must be attached to the travel voucher.

Additional information regarding this policy:
When traveling by regularly scheduled air service, travelers are to utilize their local airport. Use of the local airport is assumed to result in travel costs that are most economical to the state. The criteria for determining which airport or mode of transportation to use should be based on travel costs that are most economical to the state. All costs should be considered, i.e., travel, labor, lodging, meals, mileage reimbursement, etc., in making the determination. The least expensive routing shall be used. In calculating the difference between airfare and travel by personal vehicle, factor in additional lodging and meal expenses, taxi fares, parking, and other airport related expenses. Delays enroute that will not delay the traveler’s arrival at the destination by more than 3 hours actual travel time within the same day travel was begun and that result in a substantial cost benefit to the state will be used.

Alternate departure and return dates and times will be proposed to all travelers when they will result in lower fares. It is incumbent upon the traveler to provide information to the travel agent which could result in lower fares. If routing or accommodations other than the most economical are required, the agency head or designee may specify alternate routing and accommodations and eWaiver Requests shall be submitted to the Travel Office.

"Direct" does not mean nonstop. It only means that you will not be changing aircraft. Choose the flight with the fewest stops for fewer chances for delay. A "direct" flight with only one stop might be preferable to connecting nonstop flights, however.
Preferred seating, business, first-class service may be authorized if at least one of the flight segments exceeds 6 hours. A flight segment is defined as time in the air between stopovers, changing aircraft, or change of airline. Preferred seating, business or first-class travel is not reimbursable unless approved in advance. A waiver signed by the agency head (or his designee) must be submitted and approved by Travel Office prior to the trip.

**How do I prove I picked the lowest fare to fit my schedule?**

When searching the internet for fares, you should print the searches that shows the different carriers and different prices for the ticket you ended up selecting. Choose another carrier or departure/arrival location to search for an additional comparison. Print that search. The lowest fare of those searched, that meets your schedule should be purchased.

**I already purchased my ticket, what do I do now?**

Do another mock search for a ticket that uses the same search criteria (weekday of departure, departure time, airports, etc) using 3-4 weeks out from today’s date. Use different airports to get a variety of prices. If you find that all prices are lower than what you paid – do a eWaiver form so you can be reimbursed for your ticket price.