

OTAs Rack Up Complaints over COVID-19 Travel Cancellations

Excerpt by [Jessica Montevago](#) / March 08, 2021

As millions of travel plans have had to be canceled, consumers have had the added problem of trying to secure refunds through **online travel agencies (OTA)**.

Those who made a reservation through a third-party site, including online travel agencies (OTAs) like Expedia or Priceline, are finding just how difficult it can be to get their cash back.

This is evident in the upswing in consumers lodging formal complaints

OTAs, including Expedia, CheapoAir, and JustFly, received 14,604 complaints from January to December 2020. **Of those, 94% were about obtaining refunds for unused or lost tickets, fare adjustments, or bankruptcies.**

Expedia, which received the most complaints in December 2020, was the subject of a class-action lawsuit for refusing refunds for flights canceled over the coronavirus outbreak last year.

The data was published in last month's [Air Travel Consumer Report](#), which contains information about the number of complaints. Overall, the DOT received 102,550 complaints against airlines, travel agencies, and tour operators last year, compared with 15,342 in 2019 – **an increase of more than 500%.**

"Despite its role as middleman or broker in its customers' purchase of air travel on these airlines, Expedia did not intervene or take steps to ensure that its customers were given the right to receive a refund on pandemic canceled flights.

This underscores why travel advisors are the unsung heroes of the pandemic, who fought on behalf of their clients to secure those refunds, spending hours on hold to do so. It's also why travel advisors are going to be in higher demand as travel recovers. Consumers burned are going to make sure they have an advocate on their behalf, and time and time again, advisors have proved they're the ones to so do.