

# American Airlines NDC Program

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## Background

On Friday June 23, American announced a new NDC (New Distribution Capability) Incentive Program, which offers benefits to travel agents who book and ticket American flights through a Qualified NDC Channel. Program details will be published in American's Addendum to the Governing Travel Agency Agreements (GTAA). NDC is an IATA standard that improves the technology used to deliver airline products and services to customers.

## Key Points

- Travel agency participation in American's NDC Incentive Program is optional
- We expect the program to be adopted over time; American is looking for travel agencies and corporate customers who would like to participate as we start this process
- Participating travel agencies will be entitled to a commission of \$2.00 USD per flight segment on AA NDC Net Tickets
- The incentive applies to all American marketed flights booked and ticketed using an American-approved NDC connection that is Level 3 Certified by IATA
- Please contact your Sales Account Manager or American's NDC Team for more information

## Frequently Asked Questions

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## NDC Program Benefits

### 1. What are the benefits of American's NDC Program?

American's NDC Program offers several benefits including a new financial incentive that will be available to travel agents participating in American's NDC Incentive Program, which includes a content commitment and access to new content and functionality.

### 2. What is the benefit for American?

We want to make it easier for travel agencies to do business with us. American is working in partnership with travel agencies to deliver customized content and functionality that

benefits our mutual corporate customers. We believe this will result in revenue benefits down the line.

**3. What is American’s NDC Incentive Program?**

Please see the “NDC Incentive Program” section of this FAQ.

**4. What is American’s content commitment for travel agencies participating in American’s NDC Incentive Program?**

Agent will have access to the best published fares for American marketed flights made generally available to the public (e.g., through AA.com or a GDS), and all schedule information and seat availability related to such fares.

**5. What new content and functionality exists in American’s NDC Connection?**

In addition to end-to-end shopping, booking, and ticketing capabilities, American’s NDC Connection has new content and functionality including several ancillary products and services, corporate and sub-corporate bundling functionality, and API access to American’s Flex Fund program functionality.

**6. How are travel agencies and TMCs responding to American’s NDC Program?**

We’ve generally received warm responses from agencies of all shapes and sizes. There is a lot of support in the market behind a gradual transition to better technology, which will deliver new benefits for our mutual customers. The technical transition will take time; we are working closely with TMCs and others on practical plans to bring these benefits to life.

## NDC Incentive Program

**7. What is American’s NDC Incentive Program?**

American’s NDC Incentive Program offers travel agencies \$2.00 USD per flight segment on AA NDC Net Tickets booked and ticketed using an American-approved NDC connection that is Level 3 Certified by IATA. For example, an eligible connecting round trip ticket from ORD-LHR with two outbound segments (ORD-NYC and NYC-LHR) and two inbound segments (LHR-NYC and NYC-ORD) comprises four segments eligible for \$8.00 USD total payment from American’s NDC Incentive Program.

**8. What NDC Level 3 Certified connections are currently approved by American?**

Currently approved NDC Level 3 Certified connections include American’s NDC API and the SPRK web application. American is working closely with several third parties to offer additional American-approved connections in the near future. For more information, please send an email to [ndc@aa.com](mailto:ndc@aa.com).

**9. Which travel agencies are eligible for American’s NDC Incentive Program?**

American’s NDC Incentive Program will initially be rolled out to American-approved travel agencies that meet the program requirements American will publish in its Addendum to the Governing Travel Agency Agreement (GTAA).

**10. How does a travel agency sign up for American’s NDC Incentive Program and access American’s NDC content?**

Please visit <https://www.ndc.aa.com> or email [ndc@aa.com](mailto:ndc@aa.com) to learn more about where to begin.

**11. How are American’s NDC Incentive Program payments processed?**

American’s NDC Incentive will be a back-end payment settled through existing ARC/BSP ACM (Agency Credit Memo).

**12. Is the NDC Incentive Program available to travel agencies in all points of sale?**

The program applies to all points of sale; there are limited circumstances where American’s NDC content may not be available.

**13. Is there a minimum volume commitment a travel agency must meet in order to earn American’s NDC Incentive? Is there a cap on what a travel agency can earn?**

American’s NDC Incentive applies to every eligible booking with no minimum volume or cap on incentive earnings.

**14. Does the incentive only cover AA/AA\* or does it cover interline segments as well? For example, an AA fare priced on a BA prime segment such as EDI–LHR connecting to LHR–JFK and beyond on AA. What about non-AJB (Atlantic Joint Business) interline segments such as LH/LX/EI/QR/EY/BE?**

American’s NDC Incentive applies to all American marketed flight segments booked and ticketed using an American-approved NDC connection. Interline segments not marketed by American are ineligible.

**15. How long will American’s NDC Incentive Program be in place?**

American sees NDC technology as instrumental to the future of airline distribution and as a long term journey that requires partnering with travel agencies to continue improving the products and services we provide to our mutual customers.

**16. Will American provide reporting to travel agencies on NDC Incentive Program performance? How often would these reports be available? How would a travel agency access them?**

American plans to provide regular reporting to travel agencies participating in the NDC

Incentive Program. Specific reporting capabilities are not yet available.

## Implementing NDC

### 17. Does an agency need a development team to use NDC?

While agencies have the option to develop an NDC connection using in-house resources, they can also connect through third-party technology companies that specialize in building connections on behalf of travel agency clients. Travel agencies may also use American's SPRK web-based tool to access all of American's products and services in an easy-to-use application, free of charge.

### 18. How much does it cost to connect to American's NDC solution?

Please visit <https://www.ndc.aa.com> or email us at [ndc@aa.com](mailto:ndc@aa.com) for more information.

### 19. Does American cover agency hardware costs to connect to American's NDC?

Travel agencies are responsible for their own hardware costs.

### 20. If a travel agency's staff uses an internal desktop application and its customers book using an online booking tool, would the agency need to do twice as much work in order to integrate both tools with American's NDC connection?

The amount of work required to integrate depends on how a travel agency chooses to integrate. For example, customers could book their flights using an online booking tool that is integrated with American's NDC solution without a travel agency having to integrate its desktop application.

### 21. Is production support provided?

Yes, production support is provided 24/7.

## NDC Functionality

### 22. What types of itineraries can be booked?

American's NDC supports both simple and complex itineraries including one-way, round-trip, open jaw, codeshare, and interline (for carriers that have activated American's NDC solution, including nearly all oneworld carriers).

### 23. How are tickets reported when booked using NDC?

Tickets are settled through BSP or ARC and are available in standard agency reports.

### 24. What currencies are supported?

American's NDC supports all major currencies and points of sale. If a particular currency is

not supported, the default is USD.

**25. Can award travel be booked?**

Award bookings are not currently supported in any travel agency booking sources.

**26. Is post-servicing supported?**

Yes, ticket exchange, void, and refunds are all supported.

**27. Are Special Service Requests (SSRs) supported?**

Yes, SSRs such as wheelchairs and unaccompanied minors are supported.

**28. Is queue functionality supported?**

Yes.

**29. What happens to a PNR when there is a schedule change?**

The PNR will be placed on a queue for an agency to review and acknowledge.

**30. Can name changes be performed?**

Yes, name changes are supported any time prior to ticket issuance or 24 hours prior to flight departure for ticketed PNRs.

**31. Are commissions supported?**

Yes, commissions are supported.

**32. Are group bookings supported?**

The creation of group PNRs is not supported; however, a previously booked group PNR can be claimed and serviced.

**33. Is flexible date shopping supported?**

Yes, the ability to shop +/- 3 days is supported.

**34. Are frequent flyer numbers supported?**

Yes, frequent flyer numbers are supported.

**35. Are special meals supported?**

Yes, special meals and pre-order meals are supported – the new option to pre-purchase meals is coming soon.

**36. How do NDC created bookings get serviced? Will travel agencies have the ability to make the changes they need to?**

American's NDC solution supports the same post-ticket servicing and change capabilities

available in legacy GDS systems. Changes may be facilitated through a full end-to-end connection that incorporates post-ticket servicing, or via American’s SPRK web-based tool which features an easy-to-use GUI for all travel professionals’ servicing needs.

**37. How do schedule change notifications and re-accommodation work?**

American’s NDC solution was designed for the complex travel agency use case in mind, and has 899 queues available for use, 100 of which are dedicated to airline change notifications including schedule changes and re-accommodation.

**38. Can travel professionals package air fare with ground elements such as hotels the same way they do today?**

Travel professionals may aggregate and package content from American’s NDC solution in the same way they package today, with the potential for even more opportunities given the enhanced products and services deliverable only through American’s NDC solution.

**39. Can a corporate travel manager restrict access to certain products through an NDC connection, like they can in the GDS?**

Yes, booking tools like Concur that are integrating American’s NDC solution “behind the scenes” will ensure the same configurable access to content is readily available. American’s NDC is also designed to accommodate travel agency scripts using a translation layer that converts old “EDIFACT” scripts into new “XML” scripts to help create a seamless corporate customer manager and user experience.

**40. What kind of reporting can an agency or corporate account get through NDC? Can it provide the same level of detail as a GDS?**

Yes, American’s NDC solution settles tickets through ARC and BSP – just like GDSs do – and issues tickets on neutral ticket stock. In addition, American’s NDC solution makes MIR files available in customizable, GDS-specific formats so travel management information can be seamlessly delivered into agencies’ back office reporting systems.

**41. Most travel agencies prefer their travel professionals to book using a GDS without having to use another third-party website to make NDC bookings. How will the process be seamless?**

NDC is not designed to create additional work for travel agencies. In fact, American’s NDC solution is designed to be fully integrated into travel agency and corporate travelers’ existing workflows. To front-end users, they may not even know flight results are delivered by American’s NDC solution. For example, travel agencies may integrate American’s NDC solution directly into their agency desktops by aggregating AA NDC content with GDS content themselves or via a third-party technology company. Corporate customers may

access American’s NDC solution via their travel agency’s booking tool or online booking tools like Concur who are actively integrating American’s NDC solution “behind the scenes” to facilitate a seamless user experience.

**42. Using American’s NDC solution, how can a travel agency see all carriers that they normally sell in the same screen?**

Travel agencies have the option to aggregate American’s content themselves or utilize a third-party technology company that provides this service.

**43. Can a travel agency sell all of American’s codeshare and interline partners using American’s NDC connection?**

Travel agencies can sell all American marketed flights using American’s NDC connection, as well as interline partners who have activated American’s NDC connection.

## Ancillary Products & Services

**44. What ancillary products are currently available in American’s NDC connection?**

Paid Load Factor Based Upgrades, Same-Day Flight Changes, Same-Day Standby, Paid Seat Assignments, & Pre-order Meals.

**45. How does having access to more ancillaries benefit travel agencies?**

More ancillaries at the initial point of sale will allow leisure agencies to offer the most relevant products to their customers. Travel agencies will be able to provide better post-servicing capabilities with more day-of-travel functionality available in American’s NDC Connection – including Same-Day Flight Changes, Same-Day Standby, Paid Seat Assignments, & Pre-order Meals, and Paid Load Factor Based Upgrades.

**46. Does American offer an incentive program for ancillary sales such as paid seats?**

American does not currently offer incentive programs for paid seats.

**47. Does American allow travel agencies to sell ancillary products at a discount?**

American does not currently discount ancillary products in NDC channels.

**48. Will I be able to prepay baggage charges for my customers via American’s NDC?**

American plans to offer pre-paid baggage and is evaluating a variety of other enhanced functionality and ancillaries to make available via its NDC connection.

## Accessing NDC with SPRK

**49. What is SPRK and how do agencies use it?**

SPRK is a web-based application provided to all travel agencies. It provides travel professionals the ability to shop availability, price, create bookings, ticket, shop for ancillary products, and manage post-ticket servicing.

**50. What fare types can a travel agency sell via SPRK? Can SPRK handle corporate fares and/or mark-up fares?**

SPRK supports all fare types available in other channels including corporate fares.

**51. What currencies does SPRK support?**

SPRK supports transactions in all major currencies.

## Other Questions

**52. Does American plan to differentiate content in NDC channels?**

Travel agents will have access to the best published fares for American marketed flights made generally available to the public (e.g., through AA.com or a GDS), and all schedule information and seat availability related to such fares.

**53. Isn't the point of NDC to allow the airlines to bypass travel agencies and/or GDSs?**

No, the goal is to make American's travel agencies and the third parties they use – like GDSs – more effective by empowering them to provide customers with more options, improved servicing capabilities and a better overall customer experience.

**54. How do agencies account for fare transparency given that NDC does not incorporate all results into one screen?**

American's NDC solution is designed to deliver American flights in a way that can be aggregated on one screen and compared with other airlines' flights. Travel agencies may aggregate flights themselves or use third-party technology companies that provide that service. In many cases, travel agencies will find richer sets of airline products and services to compare when using NDC, which *increases* consumer choice as compared to today's legacy GDSs, which may be constrained by outdated technology.

**55. Is it true that NDC allows airlines to use customer's PII to discriminate against them?**

No, this is not true. American does not and will not discriminate against its customers. In fact, anonymized shopping is 100% supported and if customers choose to share information like frequent flyer numbers, then American may create personalized, *more attractive* standalone and bundled content offers, tailored to customer preferences.

**56. Why don't American and BA use the same NDC solution?**

Each airline has its own priorities for NDC and determines whether to "build in-house or buy

from the market” according to its own analysis. American chose to “buy” its NDC solution by using a third-party technology company called Farelogix. Since NDC is a technology standard, regardless of whether an airlines builds or buys its NDC solution, each airline’s NDC will be comparable so that travel agencies need not worry about connecting to airlines with wide variations in NDC technology.

**57. Why is American’s approach to NDC different from its AJB partners?**

American and its Atlantic Joint Business (“AJB”) partners have their own distribution needs and considerations. Like American, British Airways’ and Iberia’s NDC solutions are built upon IATA industry technology standards. If you are interested in connecting to the AJB’s NDC solutions then please contact your AJB account manager who will coordinate with the respective AJB Distribution teams for potential joint distribution agreement coordination.

**58. If American is only a small portion of an agency’s book of business, does it really make sense to use American’s NDC connection?**

American’s NDC solution delivers the best products and services to travel agencies ensuring that those agencies are able to offer competitive levels of content to travelers seeking agency services. NDC’s technology standard ensures that airlines use common processes and XML so that the connection to one airline can be easily replicated and “reused” for connections to other airlines. Thus, even if American represents a small percentage of an agency’s volume, the extra work it would take to connect to American’s solution is relatively small. In addition to NDC’s consumer and competitive benefits, there may be economic and other commercial reasons to connect to American’s NDC solution; please contact American’s Distribution Strategy team for potential economic solutions.

**59. What if a travel agency has a volume commitment to a GDS?**

The GDS-agency agreement is between that agency and its GDS, and American cannot become involved in that discussion. The choice of whether to use a GDS or NDC is entirely up to the agency; however, there are real commercial benefits to the agency from using American’s NDC solution. Travel agencies can contact American’s Distribution Strategy team to learn more about why American’s NDC solution may still be right for them.

**60. Why shouldn’t the corporation/agency just wait to adopt NDC until there are more travel agency and airline adopters?**

A critical mass of airlines has already adopted NDC – over 90 airlines have plans to implement NDC and 40 will soon have their NDC solution in market. NDC is already one of the top sources of American’s content for the travel agency community. Connecting now will speed realization of NDC’s benefits and ensure that you have access to the best of American’s products and services.

**61. If the agency works primarily with Skyteam, why should they invest in our technology now rather than wait for Delta/AF/KLM?**

Even if American represents a small percentage of an agency's volume, the extra work it would take to connect to American's solution is relatively small because of NDC's technology standards. NDC is an IATA-created standard and thus it is likely that airlines seeking to comply with industry standards will use NDC-based solutions.

**62. Is it possible for agencies to incentivize their front line travel professionals to sell ancillaries? How would reporting work?**

Yes, agencies may use whatever commercial incentive framework is best suited for their circumstances. American's NDC solution delivers ancillary products and services that legacy technologies are unable to deliver, thus NDC opens up new front line incentive opportunities.

**63. With British Airways' NDC connection, tickets are issued by British Airways. How does American's NDC issue tickets?**

American's NDC issues tickets on neutral ticket stock to facilitate existing industry and agency processes.

## Contact Us

**64. Where can I ask questions and learn more about American's NDC?**

Please visit <https://www.ndc.aa.com> or email us at [ndc@aa.com](mailto:ndc@aa.com).