



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNITED FAMILY SERVICES OFFERS VACATION BUDGET SAVING IDEAS

Charlotte, NC – With vacation season around the corner, consumers with mounting debt may believe travel fun is too expensive for their budget and they must forego time-honored getaways. For families, especially those with children, Barbara Robinson, Director, Economic Independence, suggests they take a closer look at their budget and develop a plan to continue the vacation tradition.

“Vacations and weekend getaways are something to look forward to and with careful planning they can fit into your budget. Showing children you can have fun without spending hundreds of dollars is an important lesson in their financial literacy education,” Barbara Robinson said. “Creating a vacation budget results in a more relaxed vacation knowing you are not interfering with your ability to pay your debt obligations on time.”

According to the Travel Industry Association of America, the summer months bring the highest volume of US resident travel with fall and spring running close behind. July is the biggest vacation month. When planning your vacation consider the following money saving tips to help you stay within your vacation budget:

- **Surf the Internet.** Spend time on the Internet comparing prices for transportation and lodging options, searching for special web only offers and discounts, and identifying fun and affordable events and attractions.
- **Enroll in consumer advantage programs.** Frequent flyer, hotel rewards and preferred customer programs maximize future savings and usually have no membership fee.
- **Book lodging with amenities.** Given that 55% of US residents who travel stay in hotels, motels or a bed and breakfast, spending on average 3.2 nights per trip*, choose lodging with free breakfasts, swimming pools and fitness centers to save money on restaurant and recreational outings.
- **Consider driving.** A family can save hundreds of dollars otherwise spent on airline tickets and destination rental cars by driving. Traveling by car, truck, camper/RV and rental car account for 79% of US domestic trips.
- **Pack food and snacks.** Using coolers and insulated containers for packing sandwiches,

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fruit and beverages rather than eating in a restaurant can save a family of four almost \$50 per meal.

- **Research airline ticket options.** Be flexible with your air travel plans. Layover flights are often less expensive than non-stops. If there are several airports within an hour of your final destination compare ticket prices to save from \$50-\$125. Staying over a Saturday night and purchasing your ticket at least seven days in advance could reduce your airfare by two-thirds.
- **Book cruises months ahead.** Rates are typically cheaper with advanced purchase. Remember to budget for drinks, tips, side trips and souvenirs.
- **Go out for lunch rather than dinner.** Restaurants charge less for lunch than dinner so treat yourself to the best restaurants at noontime.

Planning for a vacation can be a challenge for consumers who do not feel they have a handle on their personal finances or are digging out from deep debt. Consumers can get help developing an expense plan that meets their debt obligations and fits their vacation plan by contacting United Family Services at 704.332.9034.

United Family Services is a member of the NFCC, which was founded in 1951. NFCC is the nation's largest and longest serving national nonprofit credit counseling organization. NFCC's mission is to set the national standard for quality credit counseling, debt reduction services and education for financial wellness, through its member agencies. With more than 1,000 community-based offices nationwide, NFCC members help over a million households annually.

United Family Services is a nonprofit United Way member that connects individuals, families and the community with resources that promote stability, security and self-sufficiency. Programs offered by United Family Services are Child Abuse Prevention, Consumer Credit Counseling & Housing Services, Counseling & Education, Employee Assistance, Rape Crisis, The Shelter for Battered Women and Victim Assistance. For more information, call 704.332.9034 or check us out on the Internet, www.unitedfamilyservices.org.

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