

Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Report on Conferences Sponsored by the Department of Commerce

Background

The Department of Commerce is committed, within current budget constraints, to enabling Commerce employees to participate in official conferences as required to meet the mission to support American businesses, create jobs, and strengthen the economy. Beginning in October 2011, the Department of Commerce began an in-depth review of conferences and related travel across the Department and developed a comprehensive process for gaining approval to sponsor, host, or attend conferences. In FY 2017, in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-17-08, Amending OMB Memorandum M-12-12, Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations, the Department continued to focus its efforts on oversight of expenses related to Federally-sponsored and Federally-hosted conferences to ensure that all conference expenses were appropriate, necessary, and managed in a prudent manner while acting as good stewards of taxpayer dollars and ensuring that our policy meets all Office of Management and Budget mandates and Federal Travel Regulations.

Conference Activity

Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-17-08, Amending OMB Memorandum M-12-12, Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations requires that by January 31 of each year, the agency shall report on conference expenses on a dedicated place on their official website that describes all agency-sponsored conferences from the previous fiscal year where the net expenses for the agency associated with the conference were in excess of \$100,000 and in addition, for any instances where the net expenses for an agency-sponsored conference exceeded \$500,000, the website shall include the agency designated official's rationale and approval.

In FY 2019, the Department of Commerce sponsored 18 conferences; 16 in excess of \$100,000 and two in excess of \$500,000. The total net cost to the Department for the 18 conferences was \$5,213,553. The agency designated official's rationales and approvals are included on the website with the report. All conferences held during FY 2019 related to accomplishing the Department of Commerce's mission to promote job creation, economic growth, and sustainable development to improve the standards of living for all Americans by working in partnership with businesses, universities, and the nation's workforce.

Department of Commerce Conferences							10/1/2018-9/30/2019
> \$500,000							
NIST							
Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter	
Chemistry/Instrumental Analysis and Crime Scene/Death Investigation OSAC Standards Meeting	Supports the congressionally directed execution of OSAC to develop scientifically sound forensic science documentary standards (Chemistry & Crime Scene disciplines)	Orlando, FL	7/8/2019	266	\$565,629	4	
Biology/DNA, Digital/Multimedia, Physics/Pattern Interpretation, and Resource Committee OSAC Standards Meeting	Supports the congressionally directed execution of OSAC to develop scientifically sound forensic science documentary standards (Biology, Digital, & Physics disciplines)	Orlando, FL	7/23/2019	249	\$506,842	4	
Total NIST Conferences		2		515	\$1,072,471		
< \$500,000							
CENSUS							
Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter	
2019 State Data Center and Census Information Center Annual Training Conference	This conference assisted the State Data Center and the Census Information Center with its planning and promotional efforts, which helped increase response rates.	Charlotte, NC	6/12/2019	102	\$189,226	3	
Total CENSUS Conferences		1		102	\$189,226		
ITA							
Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter	
2019 SelectUSA Investment Summit	The SelectUSA Investment Summit is the highest-profile event dedicated to promoting foreign direct investment (FDI) in the United States. This signature event provided an unparalleled opportunity to bring together companies from all over the world, economic development organizations from every corner of the nation, and other parties working to facilitate business investment in the United States. Featuring senior government officials, C-Suite business executives, and other thought leaders, each summit focuses on a timely theme related to the U.S. investment environment, industry trends, and new opportunities. Participants gained valuable, first-hand insight into the U.S. investment environment through focused, thematic sessions in which expert practitioners from a variety of investment-related fields share practical tools, strategies, and actionable information.	Washington, DC	6/10/2019	366	\$204,660	3	
Total ITA Conferences		1		366	\$204,660		
MBDA							
Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter	
2018 National Minority Enterprise Development Week (MED Week)	The U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency, has been honored to host this national celebration for more than three decades. Since 1983, U.S. Presidents have continued to observe MED Week and reinforce their commitment to the minority business community with an official White House proclamation.	Austin, TX	10/13/2018	36	\$350,000	1	
National Stakeholder Summit (NSS)	Annual training conference for MBDA equities including the 40 MBDA Business Centers and the 35 grantees awarded under the Broad Agency Announcement.	Detroit, MI	6/17/2019	10	\$155,644	3	
2019 National Minority Enterprise Development Week (MED Week)	The U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency, has been honored to host this national celebration for more than three decades. Since 1983, U.S. Presidents have continued to observe MED Week and reinforce their commitment to the minority business community with an official White House proclamation.	Washington, DC	9/9/2019	75	\$331,000	4	
Total MBDA Conferences		3		121	\$836,644		

Department of Commerce Conferences			10/1/2018-9/30/2019				
NIST							
Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter	
Chemistry/Instrumental Analysis and Crime Scene/Death Investigation Organization of Scientific Area Committee (OSAC) Standards Meeting	The Chemistry/Instrumental Analysis SAC & six Subcommittees and Crime Scene/Death Investigation SAC & seven Subcommittees within the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science met to discuss the technical merit of the latest standards that are up for review.	Houston, TX	11/5/2018	240	\$473,337	1	
Biology, Physics, Digital, and Resource Committee Organization of Scientific Area Committee (OSAC) Standards Meeting	The Biology SAC & three Subcommittees, Digital SAC & four Subcommittees, Physics SAC & five Subcommittees, and Resource Committees within the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science met to discuss the technical merit of the latest standards that are up for review.	Phoenix, AZ	12/11/2018	279	\$465,589	1	
Large Outdoor Fire Modeling Workshop	NIST is undertaking Structural Engineering Research for Reducing Risks Due to Earthquakes and Other Extreme Hazards. Post-earthquake fires and wildland fires currently represent risks due to these hazards. NIST conducted a workshop to help identify measurement needs to inform future research activities in the area of Large Outdoor Fire Modeling. There is a particular need to identify and understand the measurement needs for implementation of technical solutions for such fires, which shall be achieved through greater use of existing technologies, development and deployment of emerging technologies, and use of fire protection design. The intended audience was comprised of experts in fire science, wildland fire modeling, atmospheric modeling, and high-performance computing communities.	Gaithersburg, MD	3/18/2019	0	\$128,959	2	
Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) (671) Communications Technology Laboratory (670) 2019	The annual Public Safety Broadband Stakeholder Meeting brought together representatives from public safety, federal agencies, industry, and academia. Participants heard from PSCR engineers and researchers about testing updates, upcoming R&D efforts, and opportunities to get involved. The Annual Stakeholder Meeting also enabled PSCR to receive direct input, guidance, and feedback from its diverse stakeholder community.	Chicago, IL	7/9/2019	114	\$451,844	4	
Total NIST Conferences		4		633	\$1,519,729		
NOAA							
Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter	
OceanObs19	OceanObs'19 galvanized the ocean observing community ranging from scientists to end-users. OceanObs'19 sought to improve response to scientific and societal needs of a fit-for-purpose integrated ocean observing system, for better understanding the environment of the Earth, monitoring climate and informing adaptation strategies, as well as the sustainable use of ocean resources.	Honolulu, HI	9/16/2019	82	\$312,190	4	
2019 Joint Satellite conference	To reach out and interact with our customers, provide them with updates on our current and future systems and receive feedback from to improve knowledge and user readiness for products and broadcast services on current and next generation of environmental satellites, to discuss and highlight future capabilities.	Boston, MA	9/30/2019	110	\$352,413	4	
Total NOAA Conferences		2		192	\$664,603		
NTIA							
Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter	
FirstNet Authority Roadmap Summit	The FirstNet Authority Roadmap Summit allowed for the gathering of public safety experts from all disciplines and areas of the country to provide direct input into the FirstNet Authority Roadmap. The Summit allowed the FirstNet Authority to learn about the technological and operational capabilities that will be most important to public safety over the next five years, which was critical to our strategic planning.	Phoenix, AZ	6/11/2019	132	\$205,638	3	
Total NTIA Conferences		1		132	\$205,638		

Department of Commerce Conferences			10/1/2018-9/30/2019				
USPTO							
Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter	
Intellectual Property Attaché Consultation	The objective of consultations is to annually engage industry stakeholders, educators, IP law firms and associations, and U.S. Government Officials on the IPR Attachés’ activities with respect to capacity building, outreach, and advocacy overseas. Consultations allow attachés and LES to be updated on current IP issues, trends, policies, and legislation. The program included meetings with IP partners such as Department of State, Department of Commerce, and U.S. Trade Representative; and round tables with various regionally-focused trade councils or associations who engaged in specific IP discussions with the Attachés on a variety of issues regarding USPTO Strategic goals and initiatives: overseas IP Enforcement training activities, regional program development, and IP awareness. All Regional IP Attachés and their locally employed staff (LES) was present.	Alexandria, VA	12/10/2018	121	\$139,825	1	
Africa Regional Intellectual Property Enforcement Training for Judicial Instructors	The purpose of this program is judicial capacity building in sub-Saharan Africa.	Botswana, Africa	4/23/2019	27	\$118,663	3	
Advanced Trademark Examination Training	This program provided comprehensive instruction on advanced trademark examination.	Alexandria, VA	6/10/2019	27	\$151,249	3	
Copyright Seminar	The audience was comprised of government officials who performed functions related to copyrights. The conference provided information about international treaty obligations to the people directly fulfilling those obligations.	Alexandria, VA	7/15/2019	37	\$110,844	4	
Total USPTO Conferences		4		212	\$520,582		
Total DOC Conferences		18		2,273	\$5,213,553		

**CFO/ASA Approval for exceeding the \$500,000 Single-Conference Limitation
Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC)
Chemistry/Instrumental Analysis and Crime Scene/Death Investigation Scientific Area
Committee Meetings on July 9-12, 2019**

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) exceeded the \$500,000 single-conference limitation when members and affiliates of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) Chemistry/Instrumental Analysis and Crime Scene/Death Investigation Scientific Area Committees attended their NIST-sponsored meeting on July 9-12, 2019.

In submitting its request to exceed the \$500,000 threshold, NIST has indicated that:

- The meeting is the preeminent standards development forum for the forensic science community in the United States;
- The meeting allowed the 266 OSAC members and affiliates to advance the OSAC mission, which is to strengthen the quality, accuracy, and consistency of forensic science through the identification, development, and promotion of rigorous, science-based standards and guidelines;
- No other conferences or professional organizational meetings during the year cover the same broad range of forensic science standards issues and bring together the same diverse collection of forensic scientists, academic researchers, laboratory managers, judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys;
- Because the mission of OSAC aligns with the Department's commitment to foster national leadership to strengthen and implement quality standards in the forensic science and criminal justice communities, NIST manages its OSAC travel and conference planning resources throughout the year to support maximum attendance at this OSAC meeting;
- This was the fourth time these 18 OSAC units met together to conduct joint standards development tasks in a single venue with one large plenary session as well as meeting in separate breakout sessions to complete deliverables;
- The conference was required to provide comprehensive face-to-face interaction representative of the entire national forensic science community dedicated to implementing consistent, consensus-based, and scientifically rigorous standards. While most OSAC committee meetings are held virtually to limit costs, the major cultural transformation in the forensic science field that NIST is helping to generate also requires face-to-face interaction to enable groups to conduct uninterrupted candid deliberations crucial to achieving meaningful consensus among the relevant stakeholders;
- NIST has requested approval for this event only, and should future similar events become necessary, they will be separately evaluated at that time;
- The list of attendees was confined only to appointed OSAC members and a limited number of invited affiliates, carefully scrutinized to ensure the personnel selected to attend would provide the most benefit to NIST and OSAC; and
- The total cost of this event was \$565,629.48.

In this context, I hereby approve exceeding the \$500,000 single-conference limitation for the NIST- sponsored OSAC meeting.

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Thomas Gilman
Chief Financial Officer and
Assistant Secretary for Administration

Date

**CFO/ASA Approval for exceeding the \$500,000 Single-Conference Limitation
Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC)
Biology/DNA, Digital/Multimedia, and Physics/Pattern Analysis Scientific
Area Committee Meetings on July 23-26, 2019**

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) exceeded the \$500,000 single-conference limitation when members and affiliates of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) Biology/DNA, Digital/Multimedia, and Physics/Pattern Analysis Scientific Area Committees attended their NIST-sponsored meeting on July 23-26, 2019.

In submitting its request to exceed the \$500,000 threshold, NIST has indicated that:

- The meeting is the preeminent standards development forum for the forensic science community in the United States;
- The meeting allowed the 249 OSAC members and affiliates to advance the OSAC mission, which is to strengthen the quality, accuracy, and consistency of forensic science through the identification, development, and promotion of rigorous, science-based standards and guidelines;
- No other conferences or professional organizational meetings during the year cover the same broad range of forensic science standards issues and bring together the same diverse collection of forensic scientists, academic researchers, laboratory managers, judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys;
- Because the mission of OSAC aligns with the Department's commitment to foster national leadership to strengthen and implement quality standards in the forensic science and criminal justice communities, NIST manages its OSAC travel and conference planning resources throughout the year to support maximum attendance at this OSAC meeting;
- This was the fourth time these 15 OSAC units met together to conduct joint standards development tasks in a single venue with one large plenary session as well as meeting in separate breakout sessions to complete deliverables;
- The conference was required to provide comprehensive face-to-face interaction representative of the entire national forensic science community dedicated to implementing consistent, consensus-based, and scientifically rigorous standards. While most OSAC committee meetings are held virtually to limit costs, the major cultural transformation in the forensic science field that NIST is helping to generate also requires face-to-face interaction to enable groups to conduct uninterrupted candid deliberations crucial to achieving meaningful consensus among the relevant stakeholders;
- NIST has requested approval for this event only, and should future similar events become necessary, they will be separately evaluated at that time;
- The list of attendees was confined only to appointed OSAC members and a limited number of invited affiliates, carefully scrutinized to ensure the personnel selected to attend would provide the most benefit to NIST and OSAC; and
- The total cost of this event was \$506,841.90.

In this context, I hereby approve exceeding the \$500,000 single-conference limitation for the NIST-sponsored OSAC meeting.

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Thomas Gilman

Chief Financial Officer and

Assistant Secretary for Administration

Date