

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Report on Conferences Sponsored by 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. The Department continued to focus its efforts on oversight of expenses related to Federally-sponsored, Federally-hosted, and attended 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 2017, the Department of Commerce sponsored 12 conferences; 11 in excess of \$100,000 and one in excess of \$500,000. The total net cost to the Department for these 12 conferences was \$2,669,554. The Secretarial Waiver that identifies the exceptional circumstances that necessitated exceeding the \$500,000 threshold is included on the website with the report. All conferences held during FY 2017 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 business, universities, and the nation's workforce.

Department of Commerce Conferences

10/1/2016 - 9/30/2017

NIST

Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter
Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) Full Meeting	The OSAC strengthened forensic science in the United States by publicly identifying forensic science standards and guidelines that have technical merit and were developed through an approved standards development process to be elevated for listing on the OSAC Registry. During this meeting, 34 OSAC units met concurrently to prioritize standards development for the year and approved documents under review.	Leesburg, VA	4/3/2017	479	\$716,677	3
Total NIST Conferences greater than \$500K		1		479	\$716,677	

< \$500,000

ITA

U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT) Meeting	The JCCT was held at the Principals level (Secretary of Commerce, U.S. Trade Representative, and Chinese Vice Premier, along with other cabinet members). The JCCT was held annually and alternated its location between the U.S. and China. The Department of Commerce played the lead role in organizing the 2016 JCCT. The event brought together approximately 100 Chinese government officials, including the Vice Premier, Ministers, and Vice-Ministers, as well as 100 U.S. Government officials, to engage in trade and investment policy discussions and negotiations.	Washington, DC	11/21/2016	47	\$358,529	1
Total ITA Conferences		1		47	\$358,529	

MBDA

2016 MED Week Conference	MED Week Conference provided technical and business development sessions on strategies for growing minority-owned business both domestically and abroad through a series of workshops, plenary sessions, and business to business matching sessions. During the National MED Week Conference, MBDA recognized the accomplishments of minority-owned firms through networking events and an awards program.	Chicago, IL	10/23/2016	39	\$227,437	1
Total MBDA Conferences		1		39	\$227,437	

NIST

Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter
Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) 2017 Summit	The Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Summit provided a venue for training and development for all levels of the MEP Network (MEP Center staff and their regional partners) with educational and experiential deliverables directly enhancing the capabilities of the system. The Summit programming and networking focused on training MEP Center staff and their regional partners on best practices, processes, and procedures that assisted in the overarching mission of creating a more robust and competitive manufacturing sector in the U.S., primarily through service to small and mid-sized U.S. manufacturers.	Denver, CO	4/30/2017	44	\$230,046	3
Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) Public Safety Broadband Stakeholders Meeting	The Public Safety Broadband Stakeholder Meeting is PSCR's primary method of interacting with its diverse set of stakeholders, reporting technical findings and project progress, and soliciting input, guidance, and feedback from the stakeholder community at-large. Information gathered at the Stakeholder Meeting directly influences PSCR's strategic planning and allows the program to work efficiently and effectively with the community. The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 directs NIST to execute a Research & Development effort to address public safety communications broadband technologies; as part of this effort the Act directs NIST to convene stakeholders and working groups.	San Antonio, TX	6/12/2017	153	\$268,774	3
Global City Teams Challenge Expo 2017	The Global City Teams Challenge (GCTC) is a collaborative network of project teams or "Action Clusters," working on groundbreaking applications of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies within the smart city/community environment. The GCTC program is a collaborative platform for the development of smart cities. It enables local governments, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, technologists, and private corporations from all over the world to form project teams or "action clusters," to work on groundbreaking IoT applications within the smart city environment.	Washington, DC	8/28/2017	30	\$163,406	4

Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter
Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) Fall Meeting	The Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB), governing body of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC), met to discuss OSAC policies, subcommittee agendas, standard priorities for 2017, and consider several proposals from the OSAC subcommittees. In addition to the FSSB meeting, each SAC chair, Resource Committee chair and Subcommittee chair met separately to discuss the latest OSAC developments in 2017 and moving forward to 2018. Supporting the development of scientifically valid standards in the forensic science industry advances NIST's mission.	Tampa, FL	9/25/2017	98	\$126,073	4

Total NIST Conferences

4

325

\$788,299

NOAA

North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) 2016 Annual Meeting	The annual meeting of the North Pacific Marine Science Organization furthered the scientific objectives of PICES and is the annual opportunity to conduct the business of this international organization of which the United States is a member country represented by attendees, presenters, and conveners.	San Diego, CA	11/2/2016	75	\$130,623	1
8th National Summit on Coastal and Estuarine restoration & 25th Biennial Meeting of the Coastal Society	NOAA's mission includes the responsibility of management, conservation, and protection of coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. Restore America's Estuaries and the Coastal Society Summit brought together the restoration and coastal management communities for an integrated discussion to explore issues, solutions, and lessons learned. The collaboration provided an opportunity to address many of the issues that the interdisciplinary group of presenters and audience have in common in a more holistic way and offered a more cost-effective way to convene discussion. NOAA expanded networks, developed relationships, and leveraged opportunities to find solutions for common problems.	New Orleans, LA	12/10/2016	54	\$114,434	1

Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter
2017 Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill & Ecosystem Science Conference (GOMRI/GOMOSEs)	The Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference improved society's ability to understand the Gulf of Mexico, from its ecosystems to its people, and ensured the region's long-term health and resiliency. The conference focused on the impacts of pollution and related stressors on marine and coastal ecosystems and on coastal populations, and to applied that information to improve future responses, mitigation, and restoration following spills. The Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill & Ecosystem Science conference facilitated interdisciplinary discussion and promoted outcomes that required integration and synthesis across fields and themes.	New Orleans, LA	2/6/2017	56	\$122,225	2
Office of Oceanic & Atmospheric Research (OAR) Management and Budget Training	This training represented a critical annual training effort to ensure the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) Administrative Budget Officers and Lab and Program Deputies comply with training and professional development requirements. Learned opportunities included Supervisory training, Internal Controls (Appropriations Law), an IT Strategic Planning meeting, and Management and Budget training in the areas of Strategy, Leadership, Communication, and Administrative Office Duties. NOAA shared knowledge and information with others on budget formulation and execution, policy and planning, workforce management, and grants and acquisition services. By participating in this training program, attendees increased their knowledge of the Federal system and the rules and regulations within their work units.	Boulder, CO	3/13/2017	86	\$101,789	2
Total NOAA Conferences		4		271	\$469,071	
NTIA						
Fall 2016 Single Point Contact (SPOC) Meeting	The SPOC Meeting gathered the Governor-appointed State and Territory Single Points of Contact for each of the 56 U.S. states and territories to discuss the latest FirstNet, State, and Local Implementation Grant Program (SLIGP) updates, solicited state and territory feedback on FirstNet activities. The meeting provided a forum for states and territories to collaborate with FirstNet and NTIA staff in small group settings. FirstNet consulted with states and territories on many of the required topics outlined in FirstNet's enabling legislation. Discussions included the Consultation, State Plan Delivery, the Post-Award State Plan Process, and the Governor's decision. Updates from Federal partners included the Federal Communications Commission, Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) Program, and NTIA.	Phoenix, AZ	11/16/2016	57	\$109,541	1
Total NTIA Conferences		1		414	\$109,541	
Total DOC Conferences		12		1218	\$2,669,554	



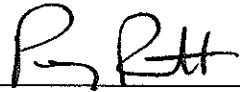
**Waiver of \$500,000 Single-Conference Limitation
Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for
Forensic Science Meeting from April 3-7, 2017**

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has requested approval to exceed the \$500,000 single-conference limitation in order to send members and affiliates of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science to the NIST-sponsored OSAC meeting from April 3-7, 2017.

In submitting its waiver request, NIST has indicated that:

- The meeting is the preeminent standards development forum for the forensic science community in the United States;
- The meeting will allow the 585 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 will be the second time that all of the 34 units will meet 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 is 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 is 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 estimated budget in this context would be \$883,037.

In this context, I hereby waive the \$500,000 single-conference limitation for the NIST-sponsored OSAC meeting such that NIST may proceed consistent with its estimated budget.



Penny Pritzker
Secretary of Commerce

NOV - 1 2016

Date