

Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 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. 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 2018, the Department of Commerce sponsored 15 conferences in excess of \$100,000. The total net cost to the Department for these 15 conferences was \$3,688,261. All conferences held during FY 2018 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

10/1/17-9/30/18

< \$500,000

MBDA

Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter
2017 National Training Conference	The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) National Training Conference (NTC) is an annual training event held for MBDA's network of business centers. The NTC served as a vehicle to train MBDA and its Business Center Staff on new and innovative programs, new and existing policies, procedures for the management of grant awards and compliance, and new initiatives as they relate to the President's Agenda, the Department of Commerce, and MBDA. It also served as a forum for the exchange of information on minority business development through general sessions, workshops, and general networking activities.	Detroit, MI	10/16/2017	61	\$204,219	1
2017 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.	Detroit, MI	10/22/2017	35	\$336,689	1
2018 National Training Conference	The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) National Training Conference (NTC) is an annual training event held for MBDA's network of business centers. The NTC served as a vehicle to train MBDA and its Business Center Staff on new and innovative programs, new and existing policies, procedures for the management of grant awards and compliance, and new initiatives as they relate to the President's Agenda, the Department of Commerce, and MBDA. It also served as a forum for the exchange of information on minority business development through general sessions, workshops, and general networking activities.	Philadelphia, PA	8/20/2018	50	\$253,840	4

Total MBDA Conferences 3 146 \$794,748

NIST

Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter
Chemistry/Instrumental Analysis and Crime Scene/Death Investigation Scientific Area Committees (SACs) Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC)	The Chemistry/Instrumental Analysis and Crime Scene/Death Investigation Scientific Area Committees (SACs) within the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) met to discuss the technical merit of the latest standards that are up for review to go on the OSAC registry. The 13 subcommittees within these SACs met to further work on the standards that were up for review. The three Resource Committees within the OSAC had members to give their feedback in regards to each of the standards up for review in their area of expertise.	Chicago, IL	3/13/2018	257	\$435,188	2
Biology/DNA, Physics/Pattern Interpretation, and Digital/Multimedia and Resource Committee Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC)	The Biology/DNA, Physics/Pattern Interpretation, and Digital/Multimedia Scientific Area Committees (SACs) within the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) met to discuss the technical merit of the latest standards that were up for review. The three Resource Committees within the OSAC had members to give their feedback in regards to each of the standards up for review in their area of expertise.	Chicago, IL	3/19/2018	258	\$468,921	2

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 influenced PSCR's strategic planning and allowed 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 Diego, CA	6/5/2018	167	\$403,147	3
Summer School on Methods and Applications of Small-Angle Neutron Scattering and Reflectivity	NIST's mission is to promote U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve our quality of life. Neutron measurements are a key component of the nation's measurement infrastructure, which can only be accessed at centralized facilities. Thus, students cannot learn the practical aspects of making neutron measurements at their universities. This event closed that gap by training the next generation of scientists in the use of these instruments. Over 70% of summer school participants return to NIST to perform research, and more than 40% of the student participants continue using the NIST Center for Neutron Research (NCNR) after graduation.	Gaithersburg, MD	6/19/2018	49	\$117,339	3
Sistema Interamericano de Metrologia (SIM) General Assembly	The annual InterAmerican Metrology System (SIM) General Assembly brought together the leadership of each National Metrology Institute affiliated with SIM, the Regional Metrology Organization of the Americas. The conference allowed participating NMIs to coordinate joint research activities, discuss developments in new and ongoing scientific exchanges, and reviewed and certified approval of quality systems vital to the international recognition of their calibration and measurement capabilities.	Gaithersburg, MD	9/24/2018	153	\$131,673	4

Total NIST Conferences							5	884	\$1,556,268
NOAA									
Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter			
22nd Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals	The Society for Marine Mammalogy held biennial international meetings with the goal of enhancing collaboration, sharing ideas, and improving the quality of research on marine mammals within the scientific community. The meeting focused on marine mammal conservation in a changing world and brought together leaders in the field from every continent. Attendance by NOAA staff at this meeting and the presentation of our scientific research and management methods were necessary to achieve NOAA's mission of marine mammal and endangered species conservation.	Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada	10/22/17	86	\$337,752	1			
Group on Earth Observations (GEO) 2017 Plenary Conference	This is the highest decision-making body of GEO and is composed of Principals at the senior official level, or their designated Alternates, who represent GEO Members and Participating Organizations. This Plenary meets annually and is responsible for describing the strategic vision for the upcoming year. The purpose was to highlight the critical role earth observations play to the new Administration. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) utilized this space to enhance and further develop ongoing partnerships critical to our mission. The Taxpayers will also see a benefit from promoting the utilization of Earth observations in informed societal decision-making.	Washington, DC	10/23/17	18	\$332,779	1			
Total NOAA Conferences							2	104	\$670,531

USPTO

Title	Purpose	Location	Start Date	Attendees	Net Cost	Quarter
Intellectual Property (IP) Attaché Consultations	<p>The objective of consultations is to annually engage industry stakeholders, educators, Intellectual Property (IP) law firms and associations, and U.S. Government Officials on the IP Attachés' activities with respect to capacity building, outreach, and advocacy overseas. Consultations allowed Attachés and locally employed staff 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.</p>	Alexandria, VA	12/7/2017	28	\$ 116,432	1
Madrid Protocol Implementation and Administration	<p>The Madrid Protocol program discussed how the United States implemented the Madrid Protocol and how it currently administers it. The program included a discussion of the legal framework used to decide how to comply with and implement the obligations and ensure compliance with international treaty obligations. The program was particularly appropriate for countries that have decided or are in the process of deciding to join the Protocol. It was also useful for representatives from countries that have recently joined the Protocol and are interested in the United States process as a model for improving their current system of administration. The information is geared to government officials in national trademark offices.</p>	Alexandria, VA	03/20/18	21	\$103,629	2
2018 Intellectual Property (IP) 5 Heads of Office Meeting	<p>The Intellectual Property (IP) 5, established in 2007, is a collaboration between the five largest patent offices in the world. An annual meeting took place at the location selected by the host office and included three major meetings between the IP5 Deputy Heads, the IP5 Heads, the IP5 Industry, and many bilateral meetings. These events provided participants with opportunities to receive feedback and discuss new ideas, initiatives, and program priorities. This overall collaboration has become central to the continued development of the worldwide patent system.</p>	New Orleans, LA	06/12/18	8	\$155,612	3
Regional Workshop on Measures To Combat Illicit Trade in Counterfeit Health and Safety Products	<p>This program had the participation of regulatory and enforcement agencies and officials, environmental regulators, and agricultural agencies, as well as police, prosecutors and customs/border officials from Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, and Mexico. The workshop focused on the problem of adulterated, substandard, and counterfeit food, beverage, agricultural, and health and safety products in the Central American region and provided training to improve the skills and knowledge of police, prosecutors, and customs/border officials to better analyze, target, and interdict those IP counterfeit and pirated products that affect health and safety. The program addressed enforcement of IPR, counterfeit product identification, investigation of IP infringing goods, and methods to strengthen coordination among police, prosecutors, customs officials, and regulatory and health officials to better collaborate with each other and with IP rights-holders and societal groups to address the IP infringing products that affect health and safety.</p>	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic	07/17/18	52	\$133,940	4

National Trademark Expo/Trademark Innovation Festival	The Expo supported the mission of the USPTO by educating the public about the history and value of trademarks. The Expo highlighted the importance of trademarks in the global marketplace through seminars, children's workshop's, displays of authentic and counterfeit goods, and exhibits featuring registered trademarks. Exhibitors included government entities, nonprofits, small businesses, and corporations, each providing valuable educational information about trademarks. The Expo also featured keynote speaker, National Basketball Association Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, a registered trademark owner who highlighted the value of intellectual property and the importance of protecting and maintaining brands.	Washington, DC	07/27/18	0	\$157,101	4
	Total USPTO Conferences	5		109	\$666,714	
	Total DOC Conferences	15		1243	\$3,688,261	