



FISCAL YEAR 2016 CONFERENCE SPENDING REPORT

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A. Background

Building on the Administration's efforts to eliminate wasteful and inefficient spending, the Office of Management and Budget issued Memorandum-12-12, "Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations," in May 2012, which established additional controls over conference spending.¹ This memorandum included a requirement for reporting of conference expenses on each agency's website starting January 31, 2013.

This report provides information on conference expenses in excess of \$100,000 during the fiscal year.² In this report, the agency provides a description of all conferences where the net expenses for the agency, in excess of \$100,000 includes:

- the total conference expenses incurred by the agency for the conference;
- the location of the conference;
- the date of the conference;
- a brief explanation how the conference advanced the mission of the agency; and
- the total number of individuals whose travel expenses or other conference expenses were paid by the agency.

In addition, this report provides information on the EPA's overall conference activities throughout the year, efforts taken to reduce conference spending, and the controls the agency has enacted to ensure conference spending is reviewed and approved at an appropriate management level.

Section 3003 of the FY 2013 Continuing Resolution, P.L. 113-6, lowered the reporting threshold on conference spending to \$20,000 and included language with new requirements for conference spending. For conferences occurring April 15, 2013 and after, agencies are required to notify their Inspector General of any conference exceeding \$20,000 *within 15 days* from the conclusion date of the conference for any conference taking place in FY 2013 and beyond.

¹"Conference expenses" are defined in OMB M-12-12 as "all direct and indirect conference costs paid by the Government, whether paid directly by agencies or reimbursed by agencies to travelers or others associated with the conference, but do not include funds paid under Federal grants to grantees. Conference expenses include any associated authorized travel and per diem expenses, hire of rooms for official business, audiovisual use, light refreshments, registration fees, ground transportation, and other expenses as defined by the [Federal Travel Regulations]. All outlays for conference preparation and planning should be included, but the Federal employee time for conference preparation should not be included. Conference expenses should be net of any fees or revenue received by the agency through the conference and should not include costs to ensure the safety of attending governmental officials."

² The EPA uses the same definition provided in OMB M-12-12: a "conference" is defined as "[a] meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event that involves attendee travel. The term 'conference' also applies to training activities that are considered to be conferences under 5 CFR 410.404."

B. Activities and Internal Controls Undertaken by the EPA

1. The EPA requires Assistant Administrator or Regional Administrator approval of all conference-related activities above \$20,000. The approval must be completed prior to obligating any funds for a conference-related activity requiring resources above \$20,000.
2. The EPA's Office of Inspector General conducted an audit of conference related events and did not find any significant issues with non-compliance with either OMB or EPA guidance.
3. The EPA requires Senior Resource Officials or their designee to report conferences for their organization with net expenses greater than \$20,000 to the OIG within 15 calendar days of the conference conclusion date. This information will include the: name of the conference, conference location, conference date(s), and number of agency employees that attended.
4. For conferences with net expenses greater than \$100,000, EPA organizations must track and report the methodology to determine which costs relate to a conference and provide a description of the contracting procedures used.
5. The EPA is utilizing video conferencing in lieu of in person meetings to conserve resources. If in person meetings are required, all EPA organizations are required to attest that no adequate federal space was available prior to obligating federal funds for meeting space.

C. Overall Size and Scope of Conference Spending throughout the Year

During FY 2016, the EPA spent \$5,026,860 for 25 "conferences" above \$100,000. Below is a complete listing of conference-related activities above \$100,000 for events either hosted/co-hosted or sponsored/co-sponsored by EPA.

D. "Conferences" above \$100,000**1. 29th Annual Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Annual Conference**

- **Date:** 10/09/2015 – 10/13/2015
- **Location:** Miami, FL
- **Cost:** \$121,705
- **Total Attendees:** 29
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 10 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** HACU is an excellent source for workforce recruitment outreach and access opportunities to the under-represented Hispanic American demographic, facilitating recruitment of high-performing college students to our available Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) positions, and positioning the EPA to effectively meet future recruiting requirements and challenges in a competitive hiring environment.

Additionally, this event provides unfettered access to executives and educators, affinity groups, and student organizations who serve as influencers to our target recruiting groups. HACU involvement promotes EPA employment opportunities to under-represented communities in support of the EPA Diversity and Inclusion Plan, 2012-2016 while providing compliance with the President Executive Order 13583, Management Directive 715 to EEOC, establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to promote diversity and inclusion in the Federal Workforce.

2. 2015 ENERGY STAR Products Partner Meeting

- **Date:** 10/12/2015 – 10/14/2015
- **Location:** Portland, OR
- **Cost:** \$155,909
- **Total Attendees:** 544
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 21 (14 EPA travelers, 7 Non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The ENERGY STAR Products Partner Meeting directly supports the network of partners who leverage ENERGY STAR to improve the energy efficiency of homes and industrial facilities, benefitting the public through enhanced education the value of energy efficiency to all of us, as well as delivering energy and utility bill savings, and related greenhouse gas emissions reductions. The meeting also provides an opportunity to showcase the EPA's environmental stewardship in meeting management, through informing meeting participants about environmental efforts associated with the meeting, and providing opportunities for partners to contribute to these efforts. Additionally, the event is focused on creating an opportunity for partners to take action and deliver results, directly advancing the EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment through increased energy efficiency that reduces energy production and the associated greenhouse gas emissions.

3. SAB Hydraulic Fracturing Research Advisory Panel Meeting

- **Date:** 10/28/2015 – 10/30/2015
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Cost:** \$104,803
- **Total Attendees:** 177
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 31 (28 EPA travelers, 3 Non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) Hydraulic Fracturing Research Advisory Panel host a peer review meeting and provide advice to the agency on the scientific quality of EPA's research on the potential effects of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. Due to the complexity of the review of the technical materials, it is necessary to conduct its deliberations in a face-to-face meeting accessible to the public while offering opportunities for public comment and participation.

4. North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Technical Working Group on Pesticides Meeting

- **Date:** 11/03/2015 – 11/05/2015
- **Location:** Durham, NC
- **Cost:** \$115,321
- **Total Attendees:** 559
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 12 (8 EPA travelers, 4 Non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The NAFTA Technical Working Group on Pesticides meeting is a collaboration among the pesticides regulatory government agencies of the United States, Canada and Mexico. The primary objective of the meeting is to develop more efficient and less expensive pesticide regulation and trade among the three countries and meet the environment, ecological and human health objectives of NAFTA. The NAFTA host a three-day meeting annually with government and regulatory officials, growers, industry and public interest groups.

5. ORD ALL Managers Workshop

- **Date:** 11/16/2015 – 11/18/2015
- **Location:** Research Triangle Park (RTP), NC
- **Cost:** \$196,044
- **Total Attendees:** 229
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 147 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The ORD All Managers Workshop is a two and half day event to bring together all 229 managers of ORD's Lab, Centers and Offices for training in RTP. The workshop agenda covers areas such as communication and translation of ORD science to internal and external stakeholders, enhancing ORD's work environment through leadership and engagement, safe work environment training and developing a framework for integrating environmental health and public health.

6. OSC Academy Training Program

- **Date:** 01/25/2016 – 01/29/2016
- **Location:** Atlanta, GA
- **Cost:** \$240,552
- **Total Attendees:** 136
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 118 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The OSC Academy Training Program is the primary source of continuing education for the EPA's Superfund On-Scene Coordinators. OSCs are the line level workforce responsible for implementing the Superfund program and for overseeing on-site emergency response and removal actions at hazardous waste sites. An OSC is required to coordinate, review and direct the work at one or more sites beginning with site discovery to completion of the time-critical removal action activities or emergency response activities, including cost recovery activity.

The OSC Academy Training Program also serves as an essential vehicle for the EPA Headquarters senior managers and personnel to interact with this important audience in a single venue. Program provides education on key skills that enable OSCs to manage complex environmental cleanups, including the dynamic nature of the technologies, policies and issues surrounding cleanups, to protect human health and the environment. The training provided at the OSC Academy event helps fulfill EPA's statutory responsibility for technology transfer, training and requirements under the National Contingency Plan to train OSCs and to meet certification and training requirements to maintain Contracting Officers Representative (COR) certification.

7. 2016 National Academy of Science (NAS) Workshop on Health Risks of Particulate Matter Indoors

- **Date:** 02/10/2016 – 02/11/2016
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Cost:** \$137,139
- **Total Attendees:** 60
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 18 Non-EPA traveler
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The workshop was sponsored by EPA's Indoor Environment Division under EPA Contract EP-C-14-005, Task Order 0006 with the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. The purpose of this activity was to provide EPA with an authoritative assessment of the risks of particulate matter indoors as EPA pursues national health improvements in the indoor environment.

8. New Partners for Smart Growth Conference

- **Date:** 02/11/2016 – 02/13/2016
- **Location:** Portland, OR
- **Cost:** \$135,015
- **Total Attendees:** 70
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 46 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The New Partners for Smart Growth Conference provides an opportunity to train EPA staff on a wide variety of sustainable community development issues. This conference allows for regional staff to better understand how we do our work and improves coordination with the regions when provide technical assistance to communities across the country.

9. The Use of Life Cycle Concepts in the Supply Chain to Achieve Resource Efficiency

- **Date:** 03/22/2016 – 03/23/2016
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Cost:** \$250,787
- **Total Attendees:** 188
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 10 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The US hosted workshop is part of a series of workshops by G7 member countries under the G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency. Important and visibility expectations and G7 protocol for these international workshops require significant national and international collaboration, inclusion participation from G7 member countries, industry sectors, academics and other national and international stakeholders and expert planning and facilitation.

The G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency workshop directly supports EPA's overall mission and efforts related to EPA's Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) Program. The G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency is an important International platform to elevate the SMM message, specifically encouraging the use of life cycle concepts to advance sustainable supply chains and end of life across sectors. It offers opportunities to reduce the burden on the environment while strengthening the sustainability, competitiveness and growth of the economy.

10. 2016 Global Methane Forum

- **Date:** 03/28/2016 – 03/30/2016
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Cost:** \$286,368
- **Total Attendees:** 498
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 22 (14 EPA travelers, 8 Non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The 2016 Global Methane Forum is a key element of the US Government's International climate change strategy to promote development and deployment of cost effective greenhouse gas emission reduction technologies. EPA is the lead US Government Agency for the Global Methane Initiative (GMI). The GMI 2016 forum is an event that brings together all partners and private sector stakeholders to discuss and learn about methane emission abatement and reduction in a unique international forum. This event provides important insights on the most effective ways to promote methane abatement and capture and use projects around the world.

11. 2016 Budget Technical Training Workshop

- **Date:** 04/04/2016 – 04/07/2016
- **Location:** Lenexa, KS
- **Cost:** \$185,498
- **Total Attendees:** 313
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 150 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The purpose of this training event is to give the budget community a chance to come together to obtain information and hands-on training, discuss current and future budget issues. It allows for those in the budget community to be trained on the latest software through demonstrations and hands-on training. Lastly, this training event will enhance the effectiveness of the EPA's budget community and improve operations.

12. 2016 Recreational Waters Conference

- **Date:** 04/12/2016 – 04/15/2016
- **Location:** New Orleans, LA
- **Cost:** \$239,732
- **Total Attendees:** 250
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 60 (30 EPA travelers, 30 Non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The 2016 Recreational Waters Conference addresses the recreational water quality criteria human health exposure to fecally contaminated water. Section 303(i)(B) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) directs adoption of the revised criteria within three years of publication. Since finalizing the 2012 Recreational Water Quality Criteria, states have requested help from EPA on integrating the many new tools and data analysis approaches connected with implementing the new criteria. The BEACH Act states welcomed this opportunity to provide review to the technical support materials from EPA, developed in the past few years, as well as the opportunity to network with other states, tribes and territories on this important human health concern.

13. 2016 ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year Awards Meeting

- **Date:** 04/13/2016
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Cost:** \$196,635
- **Total Attendees:** 985
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 1 Non-EPA traveler
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year winners help to transform the market for energy efficiency services and products across the residential, commercial and industrial sectors. The ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year Awards are also a positive, affirming experience for partners, demonstrating the EPA's appreciation of all of their hard work in improving energy efficiency and protecting the environment. We receive very positive, enthusiastic partner feedback after each year's ceremony. Organizations leave with renewed enthusiasm for their partnership with the EPA and with more knowledge about the ENERGY STAR brand and our combined benefits for the environment. They also take home key best practices in corporate leadership, individual commitment, problem-solving innovation, cost-effective investments and teamwork that contribute to even greater energy efficiency efforts.

Due to the recognition ceremony, partners are further encouraged to increase their support of ENERGY STAR and their protection of the environment and public health. Partners work harder to meet energy efficiency goals within their own organizations and increase the outreach they do to educate the public about ENERGY STAR. Also, the positive press from the event increases interest in the brand, resulting in new, active partners that further advance the EPA's mission

14. Superfund Cost Recovery Conference

- **Date:** 05/02/2016 – 05/06/2016
- **Location:** Chicago, IL
- **Cost:** \$153,850
- **Total Attendees:** 165
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 105 (100 EPA travelers, 5 Non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The Superfund Cost Recovery Conference is a training event design to facilitate interaction between the Superfund Finance and Cost Recovery communities and EPA's agency partners to improve the cost recovery process and plan for future changes. EPA's headquarters and regional offices, finance centers in addition to outside agencies participate in the conference to improve the agency ability to recover Superfund cost.

15. National Association of Remedial Project Managers (NARPM) Training Program

- **Date:** 05/02/2016 – 05/06/2016
- **Location:** Pittsburg, PA
- **Cost:** \$420,902
- **Total Attendees:** 340
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 230 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The NARPM Training Program is the primary source of continuing education for EPA's superfund remedial project managers. The training program provides a venue to deliver multiple necessary training courses thereby utilizing economies of scale to reduce cost and maximize efficiency with respect to time and delivered objectives. The NARPM Training Program supports EPA's mission by promoting the exchange of information between RPMs from all regional offices and headquarters and providing a forum where RPMs discuss regional and national issues of concern, including identifying the ways that RPMs respond to those issues.

16. 10th National Monitoring Conference

- **Date:** 05/02/2016 – 05/06/2016
- **Location:** Tampa, FL
- **Cost:** \$165,628
- **Total Attendees:** 1,010
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 55 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The National Monitoring Conference is sponsored by the National Water Quality Monitoring Council which the EPA is a co-chair along with the US Geological Survey. The conference provides a national forum for water monitoring professionals at the federal, state, local, academic and watershed levels to share the latest information on advances in water monitoring, assessment, reporting, restoration, management, communication and research. More importantly, it supports the agency mission to improve and protect waters quality.

17. SDWA Stakeholder Engagement

- **Date:** 05/26/2016 – 06/02/2016
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Cost:** \$214,397
- **Total Attendees:** 123
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 0 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Stakeholder Engagement meetings is an eight-day event sponsored by the EPA. The purpose of these meeting is to engage state co-regulators, regulated utilities and key non-governmental stakeholders on priority issues related to effective implementation of the SDWA. The objective of each meeting is to discuss strategic opportunities to advance federal, state and local policy development and program implementation.

18. 2016 National Executive Leadership Development Conference

- **Date:** 06/06/2016 – 06/07/2016
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Cost:** \$258,397
- **Total Attendees:** 325
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 105 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The National Executive Leadership Development Conference (NELDC) is for the EPA's senior leaders to obtain leadership training, discuss agency priorities with the Administrator, and provide an opportunity to network. The NELDC provides EPA senior leaders the forum to discuss building strengthened relationships as well as seek out diverse views and tools to provide integrated solutions. Leaders have the opportunity to engage with headquarters and regional staff to discuss and compare how their individual organizations are performing and develop ways to work across the agency to advance EPA's mission.

19. Office of Audit 2016 Conference

- **Date:** 06/14/2016 – 06/16/2016
- **Location:** Arlington, VA
- **Cost:** \$100,998
- **Total Attendees:** 79
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 79 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The Office of Audit hosted the training workshop to maintain, increase and enhance staff expertise in the following areas: auditing core skills as quality assurance, data analytics and fraud detection; team work and team building; GAO internal control guidance; Congressional and OMB perspectives; and Office of Audit directorate missions, functions and results. This workshop also enables attendees to exchange knowledge and share ideas to promote employee engagement, mission orientation and cohesive working relationship.

20. National Site Assessment Symposium Training

- **Date:** 06/27/2016 – 06/30/2016
- **Location:** Philadelphia, PA
- **Cost:** \$104,567
- **Total Attendees:** 175
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 66 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The National Site Assessment Symposium (NSAS) Training Program provides essential program and job specific training to support the Superfund workforce by enabling Site Assessment Managers (SAMs) to maintain and develop the knowledge and skills essential to successful job performance. Featuring regional case studies and tools and resources available to SAMs, the program helps bring uniformity to national Superfund program training while also helping foster national consistent program guidance and policy implementation. The training program provides education on key skills that enable SAMs to characterize and assess complex environmental cleanups, to protect human health and the environment.

21. OEI Symposium and Training

- **Date:** 06/28/2016 – 06/30/2016
- **Location:** Chicago, IL
- **Cost:** \$482,960
- **Total Attendees:** 450
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 350 EPA travelers
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The 2016 OEI Symposium and Training event provides training to EPA Program, Regional and Laboratory Offices, opportunities to discuss and strategize the best and most innovative ways to support EPA's mission. Participants include Program Managers and Directors, Senior Executives and IT Staff, who engage in a series of OEI related tracks. The tracks range from sharing new development practices to showcasing a new model for IT Governance. The public benefits from the OEI Symposium and Training event include, but are not limited to promoting increase in government transparency, collaboration, information sharing and efficient application development practices.

22. Urban Waters National Training Workshop

- **Date:** 07/26/2016 – 07/28/2016
- **Location:** Arlington, VA
- **Cost:** \$221,235
- **Total Attendees:** 300
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 50 (20 EPA travelers, 30 Non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The Urban Waters National Training Workshop advance EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment by supporting community-led efforts to improve water quality in our nation's urban waters, spur a wide range of economic, health and social benefits to the surrounding communities. The Urban Waters National Training Workshop continues on the success of prior workshop by bringing together technical experts, regional staff, local government and non-government organizational representatives and local stakeholders in order to foster an atmosphere for participants to share their expertise, to network and to engage in peer knowledge exchange to help effectively advance regional and local urban water efforts.

23. 2016 National Ambient Air Monitoring Conference

- **Date:** 08/08/2016 – 08/11/2016
- **Location:** St. Louis, MO
- **Cost:** \$216,184
- **Total Attendees:** 692
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 74 (70 EPA travelers, 4 Non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The 2016 National Ambient Air Monitoring Conference is hosted every two years in conjunction the Nation Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA). The conference provides a national and international forum for EPA, state, local, tribal, international and other agencies who are involved in implementing criteria pollutant and air toxics monitoring programs. Attendees discussed changes to the monitoring networks as a result of revisions to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQs) and ambient air monitoring regulations. This event also fosters and enhances effective partnerships among those involved in providing the public with comprehensive, timely, accurate air quality information to use in making choices that may protect their health and community.

24. 2016 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum

- **Date:** 08/15/2016 – 08/18/2016
- **Location:** Uncasville, CT
- **Cost:** \$166,389
- **Total Attendees:** 503
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 104 (103 EPA travelers, 1 Non-travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The Tribal Lands and Environment Forum is mission critical to the EPA by providing direct interaction and collaboration with tribal co-regulators including tribal environmental professionals and tribal leaders. The TLEF is the only national training and meeting dedicated to bringing tribal co-regulators and the federal, state, local and non-profit organizations together to address the most pressing land-related environmental issues in tribal communities and now is even stronger with the addition of water-related issues. This event brings tribes and EPA together to discuss and learn about protecting and restoring water resources and providing access to safe drinking water.

25. 13th Annual EPA Small Drinking Water Systems Workshop

- **Date:** 09/13/2016 – 09/15/2016
- **Location:** Cincinnati, OH
- **Cost:** \$155,836
- **Total Attendees:** 259
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 70 (55 EPA travelers and 15 Non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The 13th Annual EPA Small Drinking Water Systems Workshop is designed primarily for state personnel responsible for the compliance of drinking water regulations and the permitting of treatment technology. Majority of the small drinking water systems in the US are limited in their ability to absorb scientific research data and comply with EPA regulation. The workshop provides the EPA and State exchanges to establish positive relationship to gain a better understanding of regulatory and compliance challenges that confront states. This event supports the Agency mission in proving training and technical assistance to states in carrying out the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act.