

National Science Foundation
Office of Management and Budget M-17-08 Conference Report for FY 2015

Overview

This report is submitted as required by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-17-08, “Amending OMB Memorandum M-12-12, Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations.” OMB M-17-08 requires all Federal agencies to report, by January 31st of each year, a description of 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.

This report is comprised of two sections:

- Description of the Report
- Fiscal Year 2015 Summary

Description of the Report

In compliance with OMB Memorandum M-17-08, this report includes information on conferences that were held during the period October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015, regardless of approval date. Only conferences hosted or sponsored by NSF are included. Conferences hosted by NSF grant awardees for purposes related to award objectives are not subject to the approval and reporting requirements of M-17-08.

Definition of Conference and Conference Expenses

For the purpose of this report, NSF used the definitions for “conference” and “conference expenses” provided by OMB M-17-08:

- Conference: a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel.
- Conference Expenses: all direct and indirect conference costs except for amounts paid under Federal grants to grantees and Federal employee time for conference preparation. Some examples of conference expenses are: travel and per diem, payments to merit review panelists and committee members, rental of rooms for official business, audiovisual use, light refreshments, registration fees, and ground transportation. Additionally, conference expenses are net of any fees or revenue received by the agency through the conference.

Types of Conferences at NSF

NSF sponsors and hosts a wide variety of conferences that fall into five major categories, described briefly below:

- Subject Matter: Conferences held for purposes such as providing opportunities for collaboration among members of the scientific, engineering, and education communities and discussing future direction and strategies to advance science and engineering.
- Merit Review Panels: An assembly of NSF staff and guests for the purpose of reviewing and evaluating research proposals. Panelists provide advice and recommendations concerning proposals submitted to NSF for financial support. Panels can be held on-site or off-site.
- Training: A developmental activity, meeting, seminar, class, program, symposium, or related activity that is educational in nature and the content of which is germane to improving an individual’s or organization’s performance. Training is considered a conference when it involves travel costs.
- Staff Retreats: An on-site or off-site meeting primarily attended by NSF staff to review progress and challenges associated with implementation of government or departmental policies and to engage the NSF workforce in discussions covering various aspects of NSF or divisional activities.
- Other: Conferences that fall outside of the primary conference types defined above such as NSF Grants

Conferences, Committee of Visitors (COVs), and Advisory Committee (AC) meetings. Starting in FY 2015, and for future reporting of conferences, the Chief Financial Officer of NSF, in agreement with OMB, approved the following Conference Categories and Corresponding Reporting Requirements:

NSF Conference Categories	Fundamental to NSF Operations (Excluded)	Managerial Activity (Excluded)	Conference other than Training (Included)	Training (Included)
Subject Matter – not specified below			✓	
Outreach			✓	
Workshops that inform S&E program planning/design, DCLs, or solicitations		✓		
Site or technical assistance visits to fulfill a specific program’s oversight/assistance requirements		✓		
Grantees Conference		✓		
Project/Program/Award Review if with a specific grantee or contractor regarding a specific program, grant, or contract		✓		
Staff Retreats			✓	
Merit Review Panels	✓			
Training				✓
Other – not specified below			✓	
NSF Grants Conference			✓	
COVs	✓			
AC meetings	✓			
Award ceremonies specified in legislation	✓			

Fiscal Year 2015 Summary

Conference Expenses in Excess of \$100,000

Between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015, NSF sponsored five conference(s) with net expenses in excess of \$100,000. The total cost of the conference(s) – attended by 694 individuals – was \$1,010,682. The average cost per attendee was \$1,456.

The attached table includes the following information required by OMB M-17-08, and additional information, on conferences for which the total net cost to NSF exceeded \$100,000:

- Total conference expenses incurred by NSF for the conference.
- Conference location.
- Conference dates.
- Conference name and a brief explanation how the conference advanced NSF's mission.
- Total number of individuals whose travel expenses or other conference expenses were paid by NSF.
- Sponsoring NSF organization.
- Travel expenses paid by NSF.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

FY 2015 Conference Report prepared in accordance with OMB Memo M-12-12

Directorate/ Office, Division	Start Date	End Date	Conference Title	Conference Location	Number of Participants		Number of participants whose travel /conference costs were paid by NSF		Final Cost ¹	Justification for how conference advanced NSF Mission
					Staff	Guests	Staff	Guests		
BFA/DIAS	10/6/2014	10/7/2014	NSF Grants Conference	Arlington, VA	32	245	0	0	\$156,498	The NSF Grants Conference is designed to provide attendees with information and insights about NSF funding opportunities, policies and procedures for preparing and submitting proposals, and resources and tools for managing NSF awards. Outreach is identified in the NSF 2011-2016 strategic plan, Empowering the Nation, as one method to contribute to NSF portfolio development and broadening participation. The NSF Grants Conference is the sole outreach opportunity provided for the proposer and awardee community by the Foundation that provides information about policies and procedures for both faculty and researchers to assist in preparing proposals, as well as for administrators as they seek information to assist in managing their institution's awards.
BFA/DIAS	6/1/2015	6/2/2015	NSF Grants Conference	Tampa, FL	24	292	24	0	\$206,101	The NSF Grants Conference is designed to provide attendees with information and insights about NSF funding opportunities, policies, and procedures for preparing and submitting proposals, and resources and tools for managing NSF awards. Outreach is one method which contributes to NSF portfolio development and broadening participation and also supports NSF's 2014-2018 strategic goals to transform the frontiers of science and engineering, stimulate innovation, and address societal needs through research and education. The NSF Grants Conference is the sole outreach opportunity provided for the proposer and awardee community by the Foundation that provides information about policies and procedures for both faculty and researchers to assist in preparing proposals, as well as for administrators as they seek information to assist in managing their institution's awards.
EHR/HRD	15-Jun-15	18-Jun-15	2013 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) Recognition Ceremony	Washington DC	12	105	0	98	\$330,362	Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) 2013 Year and Awardees Recognition Ceremony. NSF administers the PAEMST awards program on behalf of the OSTP. NSF selection committees, composed of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, education researchers, and educators, review PAEMST nominations, and their recommendations are then forwarded to the OSTP for final selection. Each Presidential Awardee receives a certificate signed by the President of the United States and a \$10,000 award from NSF. ²
EHR/HRD	17-Aug-15	18-Aug-15	TCUP Symposium	Washington DC	20	45	0	60	\$151,000	The symposium is a follow up to the first TCUP Research Symposium a NSF, which took place on August 18, 2014, to highlight the research activities that are conducted at TCUP-eligible institution, including those designated as 1994 Land Grant Institutions. *** Other \$91.2K covers Panelist Flat-Rate Compensation
ENG/EEC	10/26/2014	10/28/2014	ERC Biennial Mtg	Arlington, VA	14	7	14	7	\$166,721	The Engineering Research Center (ERC) Annual Meeting has been an integral part of its program since 1985. There is no other professional society or conference that covers all of these topics at one place. Therefore, the ERC Biennial Meeting is a necessary forum to bring together all ERC grantees.

694

\$1,010,682

¹ The amounts used to determine the final cost of a conference were a mix of actual costs and estimated costs; and, as a result, additional conferences may have been included, or some excluded, if only actual costs were used.

² This event was reported after initial the report was provided