

National Science Foundation
Office of Management and Budget M-17-08 Conference Report for FY 2021

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 2021 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, 2020 through September 30, 2021, 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 2021 Summary

Conference Expenses in Excess of \$100,000

Between October 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021, NSF sponsored four conference(s) with net expenses in excess of \$100,000. The total cost of the conference(s) – attended by 9549 individuals – was \$744,393. The average cost per attendee was \$78.

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 2021 Conference Report prepared in accordance with OMB Memo M-17-08

Directorate/ Office, Division	Start Date	End Date	Conference/ Event Title	Conference/ Event Location	Number of Participants		Travel/ Transportation	Lodging	Contractor Support	AV/IT Suppor	Other	Final Costs	Justification for how conference advanced NSF Mission
					Staff	Guests							
BFA / DIAS	11/16/2020	12/3/2020	NSF Fall 2020 Virtual Grants Conference	Virtual	25	2760	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 150,549.00	\$ -	\$ 7,039.00	\$ 157,588.00	<p>Outreach to the nation's research community is a critical component of NSF's work. 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 strategic goals to transform the frontiers of science and engineering, stimulate innovation and address societal needs through research and education.</p> <p>The NSF Grants Conference is a primary outreach opportunity provided for the proposer and awardee community by the Foundation that shares 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. This conference is consistently rated as excellent by attendees, and feedback is routinely incorporated as we strive to always improve the conference for future attendees.</p> <p>Each conference is attended by faculty, researchers and administrators from around the country. For the virtual grants conference, we had a much larger audience than usual given the new format.</p>
EHR / DGE	11/30/2020	12/1/2020	ECR PI Meeting	Virtual	43	419	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 89,873.00	\$ 84,400.00	\$ 17,130.00	\$ 191,403.00	<p>To help accomplish the mission, the EHR Core Research (ECR) program supports both fundamental STEM education research initiatives and projects that build capacity to conduct such research. This meeting will bring together over 400 investigators—including Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) awardees.</p>
EHR / DGE	1/27/2021	1/28/2021	NRT PI Meeting	Virtual	15	372		\$ -	\$ 160,365.58	\$ 84,282.69	\$ 14,024.64	\$ 258,672.91	<p>To help accomplish the mission, the NSF Research Traineeship (NRT) program is designed to ensure that graduate students in research-based master's and doctoral degree programs develop the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to pursue a range of STEM careers. The NSF Research Traineeship (NRT) program is also designed to encourage the development and implementation of bold, new, potentially transformative, and scalable models for STEM graduate education training. The annual meeting will consist of participants from approximately 110 awards, meeting over a two-day period to discuss issues in graduate education.</p>
BFA/DIAS	6/7/2021	6/11/2021	NSF Spring 2020 Virtual Grants Conference	Virtual	18	5998	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 129,948.84	\$ -	\$ 6,780.00	\$ 136,728.84	<p>Outreach to the nation's research community is a critical component of NSF's work. 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 strategic goals to transform the frontiers of science and engineering, stimulate innovation and address societal needs through research and education.</p> <p>The NSF Grants Conference is a primary outreach opportunity provided for the proposer and awardee community by the Foundation that shares 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. This conference is consistently rated as excellent by attendees, and feedback is routinely incorporated as we strive to always improve the conference for future attendees.</p> <p>Each conference is attended by faculty, researchers and administrators from around the country. For the virtual grants conference, we had a much larger audience than usual given the new format.</p>