



**U.S. Department
of Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

OCT 24 2018

Subject: Updated Department of Transportation (DOT) Conference Policy

From: Jennifer Funk
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Office of the Chief Financial Officer/Assistant Secretary
For Budget and Programs

To: Operating Administration (OA) Chief Financial Officers, Deputy Chief
Financial Officers, and Senior Financial Management Officials

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, enacted on March 23, 2018, included changes to existing conference reporting requirements, as previously proposed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in memorandum M-17-26, *Reducing Burden for Federal Agencies by Rescinding and Modifying OMB Memoranda*. While additional changes to conference approval requirements may still be forthcoming, this guidance provides the necessary updates to current departmental policy.

The following policy and procedural changes are effective immediately:

- 1) Conferences exceeding \$20,000 will be reported to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) within 15 days after the end of a quarter. The bi-weekly reporting frequency is no longer required.
- 2) An annual report of all conferences in excess of \$100,000 will be submitted to the OIG. This requirement is only applicable to fiscal year 2018 but could be continued in future appropriations. There is no longer a public reporting requirement.

While these changes reduce the administrative burden surrounding conference activity, it is nonetheless critical that we maintain a heightened level of oversight to ensure vigilant stewardship of conference-related funds. To achieve a sustained level of integrity, Operating Administrations (OAs) should continue to follow their internal approval procedures for conferences and related events, including Administrator (or designee) approval of all events.

The following provides a complete recap of the departmental policies and procedures for conference approvals and reporting:

Conference Approvals by the Deputy Secretary

Conferences and related events over \$500,000 must be approved by the Deputy Secretary. Conference packages must be submitted to the Deputy Secretary no later than 45 days prior to the event and should include:

- OA Management Approval Memorandum;
- Conference synopsis;
- Cost estimate and breakdown;
- Estimate of local and non-local OA attendees;
- Evidence that attempts were made to secure a competitively-priced venue; and
- Conference Agenda.

Reporting of Conferences Greater Than \$20,000

Within 10 days of the end of a quarter, OAs will submit reports to the Office of Financial Management (B-30) for all conferences exceeding \$20,000. Reports will include the name and date of the event; location; number of OA participants; and cost. B-30 will consolidate the information and report to the OIG by the 15th day.

Reporting of Conferences Greater Than \$100,000

When requested, OAs will submit a report to B-30 for all conferences exceeding \$100,000 for the annual report to the OIG. Reports must include the following information:

- Name and date of the event;
- Description of the event purpose;
- Number of OA participants; and
- Detailed statement of costs, including:
 - The cost of food or beverages;
 - The cost of audio-visual services;
 - The cost of employee or contractor travel to and from the event; and
 - A description of the contracting procedures used including:
 - Whether contracts were awarded on a competitive basis; and
 - A discussion of any cost comparison conducted by the OA or office in evaluating potential contractors for the conference.

We will continue to monitor legislative and OMB-directed changes to conference oversight and will make policy changes as necessary. In the meantime, please feel free to direct any questions to Shelly Davis (x66092).