



October 27, 2010

Washington, D.C. 20201

MEMORANDUM FOR OPDIV AND STAFFDIV HEADS

From: Bill Corr, Deputy Secretary

Subject: Eliminating Excess Conference Spending and Promoting Efficiency in Government

On September 21, 2011, the Office of Management and Budget issued Memorandum [M-11-35](#) emphasizing the President's priority to make sure that the Government operates with the utmost efficiency and eliminates unnecessary or wasteful spending. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars, supports the tenet that we must seize every opportunity to improve Government performance and management so that we save money and deliver a higher quality of service to the American people.

Specifically, and in light of concerns over wasteful spending, this memorandum calls for departments and agencies to conduct a thorough review of the policies and controls associated with conference-related activities and expenses. This memorandum also requires that until such time that I can certify that the appropriate policies and controls are in place to mitigate the risk of inappropriate spending practices with regard to conferences, approval of conference-related activities and expenses must be cleared through me.

Accordingly, I have tasked the Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources' Office of Grants and Acquisition Policy and Accountability (OGAPA) to: (1) assess HHS' existing policies and controls with regard to conferences, (2) coordinate across the Department in updating these policies and controls as necessary, and (3) report to me on their finding and progress.

Effective immediately and until this effort is complete, you must request and obtain my approval prior to awarding any new contract, grant or cooperative agreement, reserving a conference facility, or incurring a new obligation for an HHS-sponsored conference¹. Your requests must be sent to OGAPA at ogapa@hhs.gov at least fifteen (15) calendar days in advance of issuing any solicitation or funding opportunity announcement. These requests must contain sufficient detail to understand the nature and scope of the conference and use the attached template. OGAPA will review each request prior to my approval.

I appreciate in advance your cooperation and support of this initiative. Every dollar saved on unnecessary conference expenses provides resources that can be spent to enhance the health and well-being of Americans. If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Nancy Gunderson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for OGAPA.

Attachment

¹ This does not apply to conferences sponsored or funded by other departments, agencies or organizations that HHS federal employees are attending.

Conference Approval Request

OPDIV/STAFFDIV:			
Sponsoring office:			
Conference Title:			
Dates:	From:		To:
Purpose (Note 1):			
Audience:	Profession:		
	Composition:	% Federal:	% Non-Federal:
	Total Estimated Number Attending:		
Location:			
Total Estimated Cost:			
Food:	Will Food be Provided?	Yes:	No:
	If yes, describe (e.g. lunch, snacks, etc.)		
	If yes, estimated % of total cost:		
	Authority (Check One):	Government Employees' Incentive Awards Act	
		Other OPDIV Specific Statutory Exception	
If Other, specify:			
Method used to support and administer the conference:	100% Govt. Staff:	Contractor (Note 2):	
	Grantee:	Cooperative Agreement	
	Combination (Describe):		
OPDIV/STAFFDIV Conference Point of Contact:	Name:		
	Title:		
	Phone / Email:		
OPDIV/STAFFDIV Approving Official:	Name:		
	Title:		
	Phone / Email:		
	Signature:		

Note 1: The proposed agenda shall be attached to this request.

Note 2: In October 2011, the NIH acquisition office will award the NIH Conference and Administrative Travel Services II (NCATS II) contract as the Department's Strategic Sourcing vehicle for conference support – to increase HHS' wide efficiencies and leverage spending. If not using NCATS, II, attach a justification signed by your respective OPDIV/STAFFDIV Head of Contracting Activity.