

Department of Homeland Security **Office of Inspector General**

DHS' Policies and Procedures Over Conferences





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / www.oig.dhs.gov

June 11, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Peggy Sherry
Chief Financial Officer
Department of Homeland Security

FROM: Charles K. Edwards
Deputy Inspector General

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Charles K. Edwards", is positioned to the right of the typed name.

SUBJECT: *DHS' Policies and Procedures Over Conferences*

Attached for your action is our final report, *DHS' Policies and Procedures Over Conferences*. We incorporated the formal comments from the Department in the final report.

The report contains one recommendation to assist the Management Directorate in improving oversight and reporting of conference planning and approval of activities across the Department. Your office concurred with the recommendation. Based on information provided in your response to the draft report, we consider the recommendation resolved. Once your office has fully implemented the recommendation, please submit a formal closeout letter to us within 30 days so that we may close the recommendation. The memorandum should be accompanied by evidence of completion of agreed-upon corrective actions and of the disposition of any monetary amounts.

Consistent with our responsibility under the *Inspector General Act*, we are providing copies of our report to appropriate congressional committees with oversight and appropriation responsibility over the Department of Homeland Security. We will post the report on our website for public dissemination.

Please call me with any questions, or your staff may contact Anne L. Richards, Assistant Inspector General for Audits, at (202) 254-4100.

Attachment



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Abbreviations

CFO	Chief Financial Officer
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FMPM	<i>Financial Management Policy Manual</i>
FY	fiscal year
OCFO	Office of Chief Financial Officer
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget



Executive Summary

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) conducts and participates in conferences for various purposes, including employee and stakeholder training, information sharing, and mission support. According to the Department, it participated in 1,094 conferences in fiscal year 2012, with expenditures totaling approximately \$21.6 million. We conducted this audit in response to a mandate from the House Appropriations Committee, which directed the Office of Inspector General to report, no later than 30 days after the date of enactment of the DHS Fiscal Year 2013 Appropriations Bill, whether DHS has effective procedures in place to ensure compliance with all applicable Federal laws and regulations on conferences. The Fiscal Year 2013 Appropriations Bill was enacted on March 26, 2013.

The Department has established policies and procedures to ensure that conference spending is appropriate and in the best interest of the U.S. Government and taxpayers, but further improvements are needed. Although the Department complies with most aspects of the Office of Management and Budget's guidance, it has not finalized its guidance on conferences, and has not always adhered to its policies on conference oversight. To that end, DHS cannot be assured that all conference spending is appropriate or in the best interest of the U.S. Government and taxpayers.

We made one recommendation to assist the Management Directorate in improving oversight and reporting of conference planning and approval of activities across the Department. Once fully implemented, this recommendation will enhance oversight. The Department agrees with our recommendation. To further assist the Department in its efforts to oversee conference spending, we are conducting a separate audit examining the controls over conference spending at selected Components.



Background

DHS secures the Nation from many threats through five core mission areas: prevent terrorism and enhance security, secure and manage U.S. borders, enforce and administer immigration laws, safeguard and secure cyberspace, and ensure resilience to disasters. The DHS workforce consists of more than 240,000 employees who are responsible for executing these missions, along with hundreds of thousands of people across Federal, State, local, and territorial governments; the private sector; and other nongovernmental organizations. DHS conducts and participates in conferences for various purposes, including employee and stakeholder training, information sharing, and mission support.

According to the Department, during fiscal year (FY) 2012 it participated in 1,094 conferences, with expenditures totaling approximately \$21.6 million. The following nine DHS Components spent 91 percent of the total conference expenditures for FY 2012:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- National Protection and Programs Directorate
- Science & Technology Directorate
- Transportation Security Administration
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- U.S. Secret Service

In June 2011, the President's Executive Order "Delivering an Efficient, Effective and Accountable Government" launched the Campaign to Cut Waste, which intensified efforts to identify areas across the Government where waste or excess may exist, and to take immediate steps to address them. In September 2011, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum 11-35 instructed agencies to review their conference policies and internal controls to ensure they are appropriate and effective. It also required the Deputy Secretary's approval of all conference activity until DHS certifies that appropriate policies and controls are in place. In November 2011, the President signed Executive Order 13589, "Promoting Efficient Spending," which requires agencies to develop plans to ensure efficient spending in several areas, including conferences. In May 2012, OMB Memorandum 12-12 was issued, instructing agencies to initiate senior-level review of all planned conferences and approval of all future conference expenses of more than \$100,000, prohibit expenses in excess of \$500,000 on a single conference unless a waiver is obtained, and report publicly on all conference expenses exceeding \$100,000. Throughout this report, we will refer to M-11-35 and M-12-12 as OMB guidance.



We performed this audit to determine whether DHS has effective procedures to ensure compliance with all applicable Federal laws and regulations on conferences. To further assist the Department in its efforts to oversee conference spending, we are conducting a separate audit to examine controls over conference spending at selected Components.

Results of Audit

The Department has established policies and procedures to ensure that conference spending is appropriate and in the best interest of the U.S. Government and taxpayers, but further improvements are needed. Although the Department complies with most aspects of the OMB guidance, it has not finalized its guidance on conferences and has not always adhered to its policies on conference oversight. To that end, DHS cannot be assured that all conference spending is appropriate or in the best interest of the U.S. Government and taxpayers.

Compliance with Federal Policies and Requirements

Although the Department has taken positive steps to ensure that DHS complies with applicable policies and requirements governing conference spending, further improvements are needed. The Department currently does not have adequate controls to ensure that its Components adhere to the specific policy requirements over conferences.

In June 2011, DHS revised its *Financial Management Policy Manual* (FMPM) and added *Section 7.10 – Conferences* to establish stronger controls to guard against inappropriate conference spending practices and to ensure conference attendance is driven by critical mission requirements. The updated policy—

- Established a separate section dedicated to conferences to highlight specific controls rather than including conference-related policies in various places throughout the travel policy manual;
- Established additional conference-related responsibilities for the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Components;
- Clarified the definitions of and distinctions between conferences, meetings, and training;
- Incorporated requirements to use Government facilities and cost-effective alternatives to commercial facilities, and limit the number of



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DHS attendees to conferences consistent with the Efficiency Review travel directive;

- Added a section on the authority to collect conference fees from non-Federal participants, including the statutory reporting requirement;
- Better defined DHS requirements to justify, document, and report conference-related expenses; and
- Added special reminders for travel approving officials to check for specific entries in travel authorizations, such as use of noncontract carriers, deductions of per diem when meals are provided at conferences, and reasonableness of expenses requested.

As part of the Campaign to Cut Waste, the Administration has taken steps to curtail conference spending and institute strict policies and controls over conferences, to ensure that conference expenditures are cost-effective, to clearly advance the mission and programmatic goals of the agency, and to represent the optimal use of Federal funds.

OMB guidance issued in September 2011 requires that until the Deputy Secretary, or equivalent, certifies the appropriate policies and controls exist to mitigate the risk of inappropriate spending practices regarding conferences, approval of conference-related activities and expenses need to be cleared through the Deputy Secretary, or equivalent. In response to this guidance, the Department issued Acquisition Alert 11/28, also in September, which was effective immediately and mandated that all Component heads must submit conference approval requests to the Deputy Secretary through the Department's Office of Chief Financial Officer (OCFO).

On September 13, 2012, the Department amended its FMPM, and added *Section 7.10.1 – Conference Controls* guidance to incorporate the reviewing requirement and set thresholds. It required Components to obtain proper approval for all conferences prior to obligating funds or entering into any agreement that plans or supports a conference. DHS' estimated total cost of the conference determines the approval authority. The Department requires agency-sponsored conference-related spending above \$10,000 to obtain the Deputy Secretary's approval prior to obligating funds. The Component's senior financial officers approve those conferences not exceeding \$10,000. OMB's guidance requires review of all conferences whose estimated net expense will exceed \$100,000.



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The Department relies on the Components to have adequate controls and submit all proposed conferences with estimated expenditures totaling more than \$10,000 for review. For example, during our audit, one of the nine Components we reviewed did not submit proposed conferences over \$10,000 for review by the Department. According to a policy oversight official, the Component did not comply because when the guidance was issued, personnel believed there was a typographical error with the new threshold amount requirement. Instead of \$10,000, they believed it to be \$100,000, and therefore they disregarded it.

The Department also did not have controls in place to track conference attendance at the consolidated level for non-DHS hosted conferences. The Department did not have a means to ensure Department review and Deputy Secretary, or equivalent, approval of any attended conference with estimated costs to the Department exceeding \$100,000. In FY 2012 alone, the Department reported it attended or hosted 53 conferences where costs exceeded \$100,000. The Department reports that it has now implemented an attendance tracking tool. This should assist the Department in meeting OMB guidance expectations in the future.

Additionally, OMB guidance instructs each agency to publish on its website a list of all agency-sponsored conferences where the net expenses exceed \$100,000. The U.S. Coast Guard's *Innovation Expo* was published in the *Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2012 Annual Report on Conferences*, per OMB guidance. Based on costs of \$1.2 million, the conference should have been reviewed. However, this conference was not reviewed, and would have been noncompliant with subsequent OMB guidance, which prohibited conferences costing more than \$500,000 unless a waiver was obtained. According to a Department official, the conference was not reviewed because the U.S. Coast Guard's *Innovation Expo* took place just as the DHS CFO started reviewing conferences and therefore it did not go through the review process. This indicates that the Department did not review and the Deputy Secretary did not approve conferences costing more than \$10,000 during the first month of FY 2012. In October 2011, expenses exceeded \$10,000 at 38 conferences. Of these 38, 5 (including the U.S. Coast Guard's *Innovation Expo*) were more than \$100,000, which may have not been reviewed.

Department Policies

The Department has updated its policies and procedures several times since FY 2011 because of the changing OMB requirements and issues identified within other departments. As a result, the Components are still updating their policies



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and procedures to ensure compliance with all applicable Department guidance as well as Federal laws and regulations.

In response to the September 2011 OMB guidance, the Department issued Acquisition Alert 11/28, which directed all Components to submit conference approval requests to the Deputy Secretary through the Department's CFO. The Department's FMPM, *Section 7.10 – Conferences* distinguishes between a conference and training if all conditions are met under Title 5, Section 410.404 of the Code of Federal Regulations. For example, certain professional organizations sponsor professional development conferences that should be considered training. To qualify as training, all of the following conditions have to be met:

- The announced purpose of the conference is educational or instructional;
- More than half of the time is scheduled for a planned, organized exchange of information between presenters and audience;
- The content of the conference is germane to improving individual and/or organizational performance; and
- Development benefits could be derived through the employee's attendance.

If all of these conditions were met, the conference would be considered training and would not need to be submitted for conference reporting purposes.

In May 2012, OMB's guidance redefined a conference to include training events that involved travel. Four months later, in September 2012, the Department issued FMPM *Section 7.10.1 – Conference Controls*, which expanded the definition of a conference to include training and exercises and refers to the FMPM *Section 7.10* for additional guidance. However, a conference considered training under Title 5, Section 410.404 of the Code of Federal Regulation remains classified as a conference for reporting purposes.

In addition, OMB's May 2012 guidance also established a threshold for Department review of all planned and future conferences over \$100,000. The Department's FMPM *Section 7.10.1* lowered OMB's threshold for Department review of conferences to those exceeding net estimated costs of \$10,000.

According to officials at five of the nine Components, it was unclear what constituted a "conference" for reporting purposes. Components might not have completed all appropriate reviews of conference spending because some spending was not appropriately identified as conference spending. However, during January 2013, DHS issued FMPM, *Section 7.10.2 – Conference Controls*



and Approval. This guidance clarifies and establishes thresholds for submitting training and travel as conferences and should help Components understand what conference spending should be reviewed.

Department Oversight

The Department did not perform its Annual Quality Control Review, which consists of testing conference data Components submitted in FYs 2011 and 2012 as the FMPM requires.

FMPM *Section 7.10* established the requirement that the Department conduct an Annual Quality Control Review (Review) on conference spending throughout the Department. The Review requires the Department to analyze Components' data for accuracy and supporting documentation. Each Component submits to the Department its Annual Conference Spending and Activity Reports. These reports, due each December, show data from the prior fiscal year and allow the Department to track conference spending by multiple categories. However, the Department did not analyze the data for both fiscal years because of the constant revisions to OMB and Department guidance.

The Department did not conduct the Review for either FY 2011 or FY 2012. In lieu of the Review, it conducted an assessment of controls within Department policy, as OMB guidance required in FY 2011. Although the Department only reviewed the controls and did not conduct any substantive testing, it concluded that conference-related expenses and activities are conducted efficiently and effectively in most instances. Without substantive testing of the controls, the Department cannot be assured that the controls were working as designed and preventing inefficiencies or inappropriate spending. We did not evaluate specific conference spending in this audit.

A Department official stated the Review did not occur for FY 2012 because OMB guidance updates affected FY 2013. Therefore, the Department felt it would not be an efficient use of its resources to conduct the testing in FY 2012.

As a result of these weaknesses in Department oversight, DHS cannot be assured that all conference spending is appropriate or in the best interest of the Government and taxpayers.



Recommendation

We recommend that the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security:

Comply with OMB and Department guidance to ensure that—

- Components are submitting all conferences for review and approval;
- The attendance tracking tool actually captures attendance data and is being used by all Components;
- All Components have updated their Conference policy requirements to ensure compliance with DHS-wide policy requirements; and,
- The Annual Quality Control Review is conducted for FY 2013, and a plan is implemented to conduct testing for all future fiscal years.

Management Comments and OIG Analysis

The Department provided comments on this draft report. A copy of the response in its entirety is included in appendix B. The Department also provided technical comments and suggested revisions to our report in a separate document. We reviewed the Department's technical comments and made changes throughout our report where appropriate.

Management Comments to the Recommendation

Concur. The Department will ensure that Components are submitting all conferences for review and approval. The Department has established a conference review process that complies with OMB and Department guidance. Additionally, two offices within the OCFO, Financial Management, and the Risk Management and Assurance division will work in conjunction to leverage controls and compliance work. This should ensure all conferences over the \$10,000 threshold are reviewed and approved. The Department also developed a Web-based approval and tracking tool that will allow Components to request conference hosting activities electronically. This tool should be able to track actual conference expenditures and develop ad hoc reports. The estimated completion date is May 31, 2013.

The Department will ensure the attendance tracking tool actually captures attendance data and is being used by all Components. Specifically, the Financial Management office will continually monitor planned conference attendance through its Web-based tracking and reporting tool to identify those attended



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conferences that are over \$100,000 and require Deputy Secretary approval. It also will periodically test and evaluate the usage to ensure all Components are actively using the tool. The estimated completion is September 2013.

The Department will ensure all Components have updated their conference policy requirements to comply with DHS-wide policy requirements. The Office of Financial Management and the Risk Management and Assurance division are currently reviewing Components' conference policy guidance to ensure that any deficiencies are identified and policies are updated accordingly. The estimated completion date is May 31, 2013.

The Department will ensure the Annual Quality Control Review is conducted for FY 2013, and a plan is implemented to conduct testing for all future fiscal years. The Risk Management and Assurance division has incorporated conference control testing into their yearly assessment plan. The plan will examine conferences above and below the \$10,000 threshold to support assurances of the Department's conference controls and compliance with OMB guidance. The estimated completion is January 2014.

OIG Analysis

We consider the ongoing actions taken by the Department to be responsive to the recommendation and the recommendation resolved. However, it will remain open until we receive and review a copy of the following:

- Memorandum or other official notification sent to the Department and Component heads alerting them of the Web-based approval and tracking tool availability and use for conference hosting activities, a report of actual conference expenditures produced by the tool for the fiscal year quarter after its implementation, and any other ad hoc reports.
 - o A report of all attended conferences over \$100,000 identified through the attendance tracking tool for the fiscal year quarter after its implementation through the end of FY 2013, as well as a copy of the results of testing and an evaluation of evidence that the Components are using the tool.
- A Memorandum or other official notification to OIG that all Components' policies and procedures have been reviewed to identify any Component policy deficiencies, as well as notification that these policies have been updated and are compliant with DHS-wide policy requirements.



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- A copy of Risk Management and Assurance's yearly assessment plan that depicts conference control testing will be conducted on a yearly basis, and a copy of the results of Risk Management and Assurance's testing of the Department's conference controls to ensure compliance with OMB guidance for FY 2013.



Appendix A

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) was established by the *Homeland Security Act of 2002* (Public Law 107-296) by amendment to the *Inspector General Act of 1978*. This is one of a series of audit, inspection, and special reports prepared as part of our oversight responsibilities to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness within the Department.

We conducted this audit in response to a mandate from the House Appropriations Committee, which directed OIG to report no later than 30 days after the date of enactment of the DHS FY 2013 bill whether DHS has effective procedures in place to ensure compliance with all applicable Federal laws and regulations on conferences. The FY 2013 Appropriations Bill was enacted on March 26, 2013.

Our audit scope was limited to examining Department and Component policies and procedures over conferences. We reviewed prior OIG and U.S. General Services Administration reports on conferences, as well as conference reports from the Office of Senator Tom Coburn, M.D., on the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Justice. We obtained and reviewed relevant Federal laws and regulations, including OMB guidance pertaining to conference spending. We obtained, reviewed, and analyzed policies and procedures over conference expenditures from the Department and the following nine Components because they represented 91 percent of \$21.6 million of conference expenditures for FY 2012:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- National Protection and Programs Directorate
- Science & Technology Directorate
- Transportation Security Administration
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- U.S. Secret Service

We conducted interviews with officials from the Department's OCFO and officials at each of the above Components. We obtained and reviewed conference expenditure data for FY 2012 from the Department. We conducted limited testing on data obtained from the Department. However, the extent of our testing was not sufficient to enable us to verify the data's accuracy. We did not rely on the data to make any significant



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conclusions in the report; however, we used the Department's data for the number of conferences held and the total conference expenditures reported.

We conducted this performance audit between December 2012 and March 2013 pursuant to the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, and according to generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based upon our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based upon our audit objectives.



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Appendix B
Management Comments to the Draft Report


U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland
Security**

May 15, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: Charles K. Edwards
Deputy Inspector General
Office of Inspector General

FROM: 
Christopher T. Brothers
Assistant Director
Departmental GAO-OIG Liaison Office

SUBJECT: DHS' Policies and Procedures Over Conferences (Project No. 12-156-AUD-DHS)

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. We appreciate the Office of Inspector General's (OIG's) work in planning and conducting its review and issuing this report.

We are pleased to note that OIG concluded the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has taken positive steps to ensure the Department complies with applicable policies and requirements governing conference spending. DHS will continue to improve on its processes, working toward sustainable conference controls and ensuring that conference spending is driven by critical mission requirements and is in the best interest of the Government and taxpayers.

In addition to the positive steps the Department has taken to comply with applicable policies and requirements mentioned in the report, the following examples highlight the evolution of DHS's enhancements to its conference oversight program. Since April 2009, through the Department's Efficiency Review initiative, DHS has proactively addressed the management of conference spending and focused on improving efficiencies.¹ DHS's travel and conference guidance includes a stringent review policy, reviewing expenditures at the \$10,000 level versus the \$100,000 level, and efficiency mandates that have generated cost-avoidances within DHS Components and offices. DHS conference and travel policies and controls include:

- maximizing the use of Government office space and facilities for training events and meetings in lieu of renting more costly meeting space;
- limiting the number of DHS attendees to conferences; and

¹DHS's policy on conference spending and efficiencies predates OMB M-11-35 by more than 2 years. A complete representation of the timeline and substance of DHS's efforts regarding conference oversight is included in the Attachment.



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- establishing conference and travel policies and controls to ensure conferences are cost-effective and to ensure conference attendance is driven by critical mission requirements.

DHS uses policy guidance published in its Financial Management Policy Manual along with working group meetings, data calls, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Council meetings, published alerts, and Web-based reporting and tracking products to ensure Component alignment to Departmental policy and guidance.

The report contained one recommendation with which the Department concurs. Specifically, OIG recommended the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security:

Recommendation: Comply with OMB and Departmental guidance to ensure that—

- Components are submitting all conferences for review and approval;
- The attendance tracking tool actually captures attendance data and is being used by all Components;
- All Components have updated their conference policy requirements to ensure compliance with DHS-wide policy requirements; and
- The Annual Quality Control Review is conducted for FY 2013, and a plan is implemented to conduct testing for all future years.

Response: Concur. DHS is in compliance with OMB and Departmental guidance, and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's (OCFO's) Office of Financial Management (FM), in coordination with the Components, has established a sustainable and reliable conference review process. In addition, FM will work in conjunction with OCFO's Risk Management and Assurance division (RM&A) to leverage controls and compliance work to ensure all conferences exceeding a \$10,000 threshold have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate level financial official. To enhance the current manual conference approval process, OCFO has developed a Web-based approval and tracking tool that will allow Components to request conference hosting activities electronically. In addition, this tool will be used to track actual conference expenditures and develop ad hoc reports. This functionality will be available for Component use as of May 31, 2013.

Additionally, DHS is in compliance with OMB and Departmental guidance for tracking attendance by all Components. FM will continually monitor planned conference attendance through its central Web-based tracking and reporting tool to identify situations where conference attendance may approach the OMB-imposed \$100,000 threshold (for non-DHS sponsored events), which would require Deputy Secretary review and approval. During the remaining months of FY 2013, DHS will periodically test and evaluate tool usage to ensure all Components are actively using the tool. This portion of the recommendation is estimated to be complete by September 2013.

FM and RM&A are also currently reviewing Component conference policy guidance with an anticipated completion date of May 31, 2013. If OCFO identifies any Component deficiencies, we will notify the appropriate Components and request an updated policy within 120 days of the notification of any deficiency.



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RM&A has incorporated conference control testing into their yearly assessment plan. The plan will examine Department conferences on a bi-annual basis providing assessment over: (a) conferences above the DHS-mandated \$10,000 threshold that require Department-level approval; and (b) conferences below \$10,000 that require Component Senior Financial Official approval. These assessments will support assurances over the Department's conference controls and compliance with OMB and Departmental guidance. Estimated Completion Date: January 2014.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. Technical comments were previously submitted under separate cover. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Attachment



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DHS Conference Policy and Guidance History

- April 2009 – DHS issued Efficiency Review 30-Day Initiative: Employee Travel and Utilization of Government Facilities for DHS Events
- June 10, 2011 – DHS issued revised conference policy *7.10 Conferences*
- September 21, 2011 – OMB issued a memo, M-11-35, on Eliminating Excess Conference Spending and Promoting Efficiency in Government.
- September 23, 2011 – DHS CFO directed Component CFOs to submit all conference requests through the Deputy Secretary’s office for review.
- September 23, 2011 – The Department issued an updated Acquisition Alert directing components to suspend all procurement actions for DHS hosted conferences until a conference approval had been obtained through the Deputy Secretary’s office.
- October, 2011 – DHS conducted a Test of Design and assessed and certified 18 key conference controls.
- November 11, 2011 – DHS CFO issued a conference FAQ.
- May 11, 2012 – OMB issued memo M-12-12 on Promoting Efficient Spending in Support of Agency Operations.
- July 25, 2012 – OMB issued M-12-12, FAQs.
- September 13, 2012 – DHS CFO issued supplemental guidance on conferences, Financial Management Policy Manual, Section 7.10.1 *Conference Controls*. The guidance clarified the Department’s definition of a conference, and delegated to Components the authority to approve conferences costing up to \$10,000.
- October 2, 2012 – DHS issued a revised Efficiency Review 30-Day Initiative to with strengthened guidelines to eliminate non-mission critical travel; maximize the use of conference calls and Web-based training and meetings.
- On January 30, 2013 – DHS CFO issued supplemental guidance on conferences, Financial Management Policy Manual Section 7.10.2, *Conference Controls and Approval*. This guidance requires the use of the newly implemented conference tool for proposed attendance at non-DHS hosted conferences and also increases threshold for Component approval for expenses from \$10,000 in 7.10.1, to a combined total of \$35,000 (Conference expenses less than \$10k and TDY less than \$25k).

Attachment



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- March 2013 – DHS FM rolled out Conference Tracking tool for proposed attendance at conferences external to DHS.
- May 2013 – DHS FM rolled out Conference Attendance Tool (CAT) to serve as a central database and workflow manager for capturing and processing Component conference requests and assist in standardizing quarterly conference expenditure reporting.

Attachment



Appendix C

Major Contributors to This Report

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Appendix D

Report Distribution

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