Travel is often necessary for Federal employees to discharge their duties effectively and the travel industry plays an important role in creating jobs and supporting local economies; however, as good stewards of Federal funds, agencies must do all they can to manage their travel budgets efficiently. Accordingly, in FY 2013, each agency shall spend at least 30 percent less on travel expenses covered by this memorandum than in FY 2010. Agencies must maintain this reduced level of spending each year through FY 2016.
In August, we submitted an alternative plan to OMB that would reduce travel obligations by $3.9 million below the FY 2010 OMB baseline to a level of $27.67 million. ... Under the OMB M-12-12 travel reduction exercise, all travel obligations incurred in FY 2013 will be counted against the travel target ceiling. This includes travel funded with current year and carry-over allocations; domestic and foreign travel; IPA and staff travel; as well as travel funded with all NSF appropriations, plus trust and H1B funds.
MPS Travel

* 9% reduction relative to FY 09-13 average
Increased Scrutiny of Certain Activities

In determining the appropriate manner to achieve funding reductions, agency heads must also ensure that their agencies have risk management strategies and internal controls in place that provide heightened scrutiny of certain types of activities funded from sequestered accounts. To the extent these accounts remain at the post-sequestration funding level, increased scrutiny should apply to:

- hiring new personnel;
- issuing discretionary monetary awards to employees, which should occur only if legally required until further notice; and
- incurring obligations for new training, conferences, and travel (including agency-paid travel for non-agency personnel).

Agency Planning Activities

OMB Memorandum 13-03, Planning for Uncertainty with Respect to Fiscal Year 2013 Budgetary Resources, directed agencies to begin planning activities to operate with reduced budgetary resources in the event that sequestration occurs. Agencies' planning efforts must be guided by the principle of protecting the agency’s mission to serve the public to the greatest extent practicable. Planning efforts should be done with sufficient detail and clarity to determine the specific actions that will be taken to operate under the lower level of budgetary resources.
[S]ustained low levels of travel funding threaten NSF’s ability to achieve its mission by:

- reducing participation in scientific meetings,
- impairing the agency’s ability to recruit key scientific talent, and
- reducing travel for purposes of providing advice to and oversight of major scientific infrastructure and centers.