

**National Science Foundation**  
**Office of Management and Budget M-17-08 Conference Report for FY 2020**

**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 2020 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, 2019 through September 30, 2020, 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	Exclude from Conference Reporting			Include in Conference Reporting	
	MISSION (OPERATIONAL)			CONFERENCE OTHER THAN TRAINING	TRAINING
	Fundamental to NSF Operations	Managerial Activity			
		Planning	Oversight		
<b>Subject Matter – not specified below</b>				✓	
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			✓		
<b>Staff Retreats</b>				✓	
<b>Merit Review Panels</b>	✓				
<b>Training</b>					✓
<b>Other – not specified below</b>				✓	
NSF Grants Conference				✓	
COVs	✓				
AC meetings	✓				
Award ceremonies specified in legislation	✓				

## **Fiscal Year 2020 Summary**

### Conference Expenses in Excess of \$100,000

Between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020, NSF sponsored one conference with net expenses in excess of \$100,000. The total cost of the conference – attended by 374 individuals – was \$206,245. The average cost per attendee was \$551.

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 2020 Conference Report prepared in accordance with OMB Memo M-17-08

					Number of Participants						
Directorate/ Office, Division	Start Date	End Date	Conference/ Event Title	Conference/ Event Location	Staff	Guests	Travel/ Transportation	Lodging	Final Costs	Justification for how conference advanced NSF Mission	
BFA/DIAS	11/18/2019	11/19/2019	Fall 2019 NSF Grants Conference	Boston, MA	28	346	\$ 25,573.00	\$ 19,099.00	\$ 206,245	<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. 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. Since fall 2007, more than 4,400 participants from over 1,700 institutions in all fifty states have attended an NSF Grants Conference. While the majority of attendees come from four-year colleges and universities, the conference is also attended by representatives from community colleges and non-profit organizations. 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. Each conference is attended by faculty, researchers and administrators from around the country, with the majority coming from the region of the country where the conference is located. For equity of representation, it is necessary to hold this conference in different regions around the country.</p>	