



OCT 20 2015

To: Operating and Staff Division Heads and Executive Officers

From: Ellen G. Murray   
Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources

Subject: HHS Policy on Promoting Efficient Spending

On January 23, 2015, ASFR updated the Department's Policy on Promoting Efficient Spending<sup>1</sup> to ensure that funds spent for conferences are spent efficiently and consistently with HHS's mission and all legal requirements. This policy update also addressed a new provision in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 which enabled HHS to implement the approval authority for conference activities at the Operating Division Head. In approving this policy update, I reiterated your responsibility to ensure compliance with all laws related to reporting conference data. I write today to remind you of your responsibilities under this policy and to provide you with additional clarification of your responsibilities.

It is your responsibility to assure a thorough assessment for all conference spending and to streamline costs in accordance with our policy; specifically when using contractor support, it is important to assess the location, equipment, agenda, and other factors to ensure that the event meets the need at a fair and reasonable price. This assessment should be summarized in the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) which is required by the Federal Acquisition Regulation. The IGCE and supporting justifications for the estimated cost should be included with all requests for conference approval.

Over the last year we have noticed the continued use of technical support contractors to provide logistical services, often at costs which are not the most reasonable. It is your responsibility to ensure a thorough cost review/comparison is conducted in the early stages of the acquisition lifecycle to allow for the development of a supportable IGCE to inform decisions leading to the best contract method to support your conferences and meetings. In such instances where savings can be realized, the expectation is to separate logistical support services from existing technical support contracts and to make separate awards for these services. There are several existing contract vehicle available which may provide these services at a more efficient cost such as NCATS II or other Federal contract vehicles<sup>2</sup> to include awarding a new contract.

<sup>1</sup> HHS Policy on Promoting Efficient Spending: Use of Appropriated Funds for Conferences and Meeting Space, Food, Promotional Items, and Printing and Publications located at <http://www.hhs.gov/grants/contracts/contract-policies-regulations/efficient-spending/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> The HHS Conference Procurement and Planning Toolkit provides a list of available vehicles. Please reference appendix 2 in the toolkit located at <http://www.hhs.gov/asfr/ogapa/acquisition/policies/hhs-conference-procurement-planning-toolkit-homepage.html>.

The Office of Grants and Acquisition Policy and Accountability (OGAPA), along with the Office of General Counsel, is actively considering the impact of other provisions of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 on efficient spending policies and will continue to look for opportunities to further streamline conference administrative processes.

HHS invests a significant level of effort in planning, vetting, and hosting conferences to ensure efficient and effective use of program resources which directly contributes to our mission. Sharing our scientific discoveries and providing technical assistance to our human services programs is a critical part of our work; however, we must continue to do so in a manner that promotes efficient spending. I appreciate your personal attention and commitment to these efforts.

Please share this message with all appropriate officials within your Divisions. Questions may be addressed to Dr. Angela Billups and Clarence Randall in OGAPA at [angela.billups@hhs.gov](mailto:angela.billups@hhs.gov) or [clarence.randall@hhs.gov](mailto:clarence.randall@hhs.gov).