National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

March 5, 2014

Reply to Attn of: Office of the Chief Financial Officer

TO: Officials-in-Charge of Headquarters Offices
Directors, NASA Centers
Chief Financial Officers, NASA Centers

FROM: Chief Financial Officer

SUBJECT: FY 2014 Revised Guidance for Conference Attendance and Travel

REF: April 1, 2013, Chief of Staff Memorandum "Consolidated Sequestration Guidance" Version 1.0 and October 30, 2013, Memorandum "FY 2014 Guidance for Conference Attendance and Travel"

In January, the President signed into law a budget agreement for FY 2014 and FY 2015 that sets Government spending levels at a point slightly higher than their fully sequestered levels, but well below the non-sequestered levels. During FY 2013, NASA programs made adjustments to these lower funding levels and are now operating on a more stable funding outlook.

In March 2013 and again in October 2013, NASA issued guidance, in response to the Office of Management and Budget's Memorandum M-13-05, to address heightened scrutiny concerns for certain types of activity, including conference attendance and travel.

In light of the FY 2014 and FY 2015 budget agreement, the Executive Council has reviewed the conference attendance and travel guidance and has made the following decisions. These decisions are effective April 1, 2014.

Executive Council Decision Points:

1) The following conferences remain disapproved for attendance, except by waiver from the Agency Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO):

   - ✓ National Space Symposium. (Note: A waiver is in work in OCFO.)
   - ✓ The American Astronautical Society's Robert H. Goddard Memorial Symposium. (Note: A waiver has been approved by OCFO with a limit on attendees.)
   - ✓ IAF Spring Meeting. (Note: A waiver has been approved by OCFO with a limit on attendees.)
   - ✓ Rotary International Conference.
   - ✓ Paris Air Show (and other air shows).

- ✓ Annual NASA Small Business Symposium and Awards Ceremony.
- ✓ Gartner Symposium/IT Expo.
- ✓ TED Meetings.

2) OCFO approval for domestic and foreign conferences with total Agency cost below $75k is suspended. Agency OCFO approval is still required for conference events with total Agency cost of $75k or more.

3) Domestic conference attendance continues to be limited to scientific and technical conferences that contribute to the agency's core mission and for which there are no alternative methods of participation. The requirement for a waiver from the Agency OCFO to have more than 50 attendees is suspended for domestic conferences.

4) OIC approval for the following types of travel is suspended and reverts back to standard policy, which requires supervisory approval:

   - ✓ Foreign travel.
   - ✓ Travel to launches.
   - ✓ Travel for speaking engagements not at a NASA Center or not part of an approved conference.

5) Foreign conferences continue to require substantive involvement (i.e. presenting, speaking, session moderator, or facilitating a scientific or technical exhibit) and are subject to the legislated 50-person limit.

Procurement Guidance for Contractors:

Effective April 1, 2014, the guidance outlined in "Attachment A2" for conference and conference related travel applies to those conferences with an agency-wide cost of $75k or more. It does not apply to conferences with total Agency cost less than $75k. In order to ensure proper approvals, cross agency collaboration is critical for all events, regardless of agency-wide cost.

Guidance Related to Communications and Education Activities that occur at Conferences:

For those Communications and Education activities that occur at conferences, this guidance applies and the event must obtain approval from the Office of Communications or Office of Education prior to seeking OCFO approval. Participation includes exhibits, education and public outreach activities, as well as media and social media activities that occur at a given conference. The dollar thresholds outlined above apply (e.g. $75k or above). Further guidance related to Communications and Education, activities at conferences and large-scale public outreach events can be found in the March 5, 2014, memorandum issued by the Associate Administrator for Communications.

Other Guidance Remaining in Effect and Important Notes to Consider:

- ➢ Attendees and coordinators must continue to use NASA's Conference Tracking System (NCTS) for conference attendance, as it is the primary tool for facilitating cross-agency collaboration.

- Moreover, in order to ensure proper approvals are obtained and also to ensure proper documentation of reportable conference events is achieved, it is critical that Centers, Mission Directorates, and Headquarters' Offices continue to collaborate together regarding conference participation and attendance for both civil servants and contractors.

- Deputy Administrator and Administrator approvals are statutorily required for those conference events with total Agency cost of $100k or above and $500k or above, respectively.

- The following conference reporting is required. (The Agency OCFO facilitates these requirements.)

  - Sponsored conferences with total Agency cost of $20k or more to the Inspector General (IG).
  - All conference events with total Agency cost of $100k or more with expense and procurement details to the IG.
  - All conference events with total Agency cost of $100k or more with detailed descriptions and a discussion of overall conference activity for the Agency. This is required to be published to a NASA Web site available to the public.

- Government agencies overall travel must remain at no more than 30 percent below FY 2010 levels. It is therefore critical that NASA continues to exercise due diligence and ensure that travel expenditures are mission essential and expects each employee to exercise sound stewardship and judgment for conferences and travel.

- NASA Interim Directive (NID) 9700.1 "NASA Conference Approval and Reporting" remains in effect. The NID can be found at the following link: http://nodis3.gsfc.nasa.gov/OPD_docs/NID_9700_1_.pdf

Unless otherwise noted, all other guidance in the Chief of Staff April 1, 2013, memorandum will continue to apply. This memorandum, along with consolidated conference guidance and business process flowcharts, can be found at the following link: https://max.omb.gov/community/display/NASA/NASA+CFO+Conference+Administration+community

Questions concerning this guidance should be directed to Joe McIntyre, Pamela Hanes, or your Center Chief Financial Officer Office.

Elizabeth (Beth) Robinson

Enclosure:
Attachment A2

Officials-in Charge of Headquarters:
Administrator/Mr. Bolden
Deputy Administrator/Vacant
Associate Administrator/Mr. Lightfoot
- Deputy Associate Administrator/Ms. Roe

Chief of Staff/Mr. Radzanowski
- Director for Office of Evaluation/Ms. Grant (Acting)
- Director for Council Staff/Vacant

Associate Deputy Administrator/Mr. Keegan
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Assistant Associate Administrator/Mr. Maples (Acting)
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Inspector General/Mr. Martin
Associate Administrator for Communications/Mr. Weaver
Associate Administrator for Diversity and Equal Opportunity/Ms. Manuel
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Associate Administrator for International and Interagency Relations/Mr. O'Brien
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Associate Administrator for Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate/Dr. Shin
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- Assistant Administrator for Protective Services/Mr. Mahaley
- Assistant Administrator for Strategic Infrastructure/Ms. Dominguez
- Director, Internal Controls and Management Systems/Ms. Baugher
- Director, NASA Management Office/Mr. Watkins
- Executive Director, Headquarters Operations/Mr. Henn
- Executive Director, NSSC/Ms. Dubuisson (Acting)

Directors, NASA Centers:
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Dryden Flight Research Center/Mr. McBride
Glenn Research Center/Mr. Free
Goddard Space Flight Center/Mr. Scolese
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Marshall Space Flight Center/Mr. Scheuermann
Stennis Space Center/Dr. Gilbrech

Chief Financial Officers, NASA Centers:
Ames Research Center/Mr. Agnew
Dryden Flight Research Center/Ms. Zellmer
Glenn Research Center/Mr. Sivic
Goddard Space Flight Center/Ms. Baker
Jet Propulsion Laboratory/Mr. Stephen
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cc:
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Office of the Administrator/Ms. Manuel
Office of the Administrator/Ms. McNair
Office of the Administrator/Ms. McCannon
Office of the Deputy Administrator/Ms. Ross
Office of the Deputy Administrator/Ms. McWilliams
Office of the Deputy Administrator/Ms. Nelson
Office of the Associate Administrator/Ms. Wijdoogen
Office of Agency Council Staff/Mr. McMurry
Office of the Chief Engineer/Mr. Bell

Sequestration Guidance
Attachment A2

Applicability of Conference and Travel Guidance to Contractors

The following guidance supplements Attachment A1 to the NASA Chief of Staff Memorandum, subject: Consolidated Sequestration Guidance: Version 1.0 (April 1, 2013). It addresses questions raised over the applicability of the guidance to contractors.

Applicability of Sequestration Policy to Contractors for Conferences, Conference-Related Travel and Other Travel – April 22, 2013

Conference and Conference Related Travel

1. If the contractor is directed to attend and/or travel to a conference, and even if the requirement is explicitly stated in the contract or task order statement of work or other contract document, the guidance applies. Contractor needs to get approval. However, the program manager or COR should evaluate the requirements of the contract to determine if a change is necessary. If so, Contracting officer direction and/or a formal contract modification may be required.
2. If the contractor planned, proposed or otherwise determined that attending a conference and/or traveling to a conference is necessary to carry out a specific requirement of a contract, the guidance applies. Contractor needs to get approval. However, the program manager or COR should evaluate the requirements of the contract to determine if a change is necessary to ensure compliance with NASA policy. If so, Contracting officer direction and/or a formal contract modification will be required.
3. If the contractor wants 1 or more employees to attend a conference and/or travel and the conference and travel is **not** required by the contract or necessary to carry out a specific requirement of the contract, but is discretionary, the guidance applies if the contractor will charge a NASA contract directly for the costs of the conference and travel. If the discretionary conference and travel will be properly charged to indirect accounts (overhead, G&A, etc), the guidance does not apply.
4. If the contractor wants 1 or more employees to attend a conference and/or travel on its own discretion and does not charge a NASA contract directly or indirectly, the guidance does not apply.

Other Non-Conference-related Travel

- If contractor travel, for other than a conference, is planned, proposed or otherwise determined by the contractor to be necessary to perform, or otherwise meet the requirements of a NASA contract, regardless of whether it is charged directly or indirectly to the contract, the guidance does not apply. Government approval is not required unless specifically required under the terms of the contract (e.g., 1852.242-71 Travel Outside of the United States). However, program managers, CORs and contracting officers should ensure contractors exercise due diligence in authorizing and approving travel.