

FTC Conference Expenses in FY 2017

January 31, 2018

Pursuant to [OMB Memorandum M-12-12, "Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations,"](#) agencies must report any agency sponsored conference where net expenses for the conference exceed \$100,000. OMB memorandum M-12-12 and the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) both define a "conference" as "[a] meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event that involves attendee travel. The term 'conference' also applies to training activities that are considered to be conferences under 5 CFR 410.404." See 41 CFR 300-3.1.

"Conference expenses" include all direct and indirect costs paid by the Government, whether paid directly by agencies or reimbursed by agencies to travelers or others associated with the conference, but do not include funds paid under Federal grants to grantees. Conference expenses include any associated authorized travel and per diem expenses, hire of rooms for official business, audiovisual use, light refreshments, registration fees, ground transportation, and other expenses as defined by the FTR. While outlays for conference preparation and planning are conference expenses, the time spent by a Federal employee preparing for a conference is not a conference expense. The FTR provides examples of direct and indirect conference costs included within the definition. See 41 CFR 301-74.2. Conference expenses are net of any fees or revenue received by the agency through the conference and do not include costs to ensure the safety of attending governmental officials.

The FTC did not sponsor any conferences in FY 2017 where the net expenses of any one conference exceeded \$100,000. Net conference expenses incurred by the FTC in FY 2017 totaled approximately \$682,000. This figure encompasses approximately 493 conferences.

The FTC hosts, sponsors, and attends conferences both internationally and domestically. The FTC also hosts workshops at its headquarters that bring together stakeholders from industry, academia, public interest groups and the public to discuss new and emerging technologies or markets and how the FTC can best protect both consumers and competition. In FY 2017, FTC employees sponsored, attended, or spoke at conferences in 39 states and the District of Columbia.

The FTC's consumer protection and competition law enforcement activities necessarily affect the rest of the world, as the United States of America's commerce is increasingly global in nature. Because American businesses and consumers buy products produced abroad, mergers and business practices that originate overseas often impact American consumers. The FTC hosts, sponsors, and pays for its employees to participate in international conferences that promote sound approaches to common problems by building relationships with sister agencies around the world. These efforts foster consistent outcomes in antitrust investigations, especially regarding international mergers, and take advantage of the tools provided by the [U.S. SAFE WEB Act](#) to strengthen the ability of the FTC to fight cross-border fraud that harms American consumers by sharing information with foreign law enforcement counterparts. In FY 2017, FTC employees sponsored, attended, or spoke at conferences in 44 countries.

Examples of conferences hosted by the FTC or attended by its employees in FY 2017 include:

- International Competition Network (ICN) Annual Conference
- International Consumer Protection & Enforcement Network (ICPEN) Annual Conference
- Western Economic Association International Annual Conference
- International Privacy Conference
- FTC FinTech Forum
- USENIX Security Symposium
- National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) Cybersecurity Summit
- Western Economic Association International Annual Conference
- Annual International Industrial Organization Conference

Data Source: The FY 2017 travel data set forth above is extracted from FTC's E2 travel system, consistent with the OMB and FTR definitions of "conference."