

Social Security Administration

Conference Information Report

Fiscal Year 2023

Overview

Our conference events are mission critical and support our goal of better serving the public by improving our business practices, adopting new technology, or training our employees. We have a strong review and approval process for all our agency-sponsored conferences and for employee attendance at other Federally-sponsored and Federally-hosted events. We oversee, monitor, and review our conference spending to ensure that we use Federal funds efficiently and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Our internal conference planning policies ensure that we minimize costs to preserve agency resources for other agency priorities and critical needs. We continue to use cost-cutting initiatives, including hosting events as close as possible to employee duty stations to reduce travel, maximizing our use of free Federal space, and adhering to policies restricting meals and light refreshments. In addition, we require agency components to research virtual alternatives to hosting in-person events, such as online video conferencing.

Most of our conference expenses for fiscal year (FY) 2023 were for training (technical, programmatic, and non-programmatic) and associated travel costs and speaker fees.

Conferences where expenses associated with the conference exceeded \$500,000

For FY 2023, we did not sponsor any conferences or have employees attend Federally-sponsored and Federally-hosted conferences where the expenses exceeded \$500,000. Therefore, we did not require approval from the Acting Commissioner for conference spending greater than the \$500,000 limit.

Conferences where expenses associated with the conference exceeded \$100,000

For FY 2023, we held three agency-sponsored conferences where the expenses exceeded \$100,000. In addition, our Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has its own conference review and approval process and held one event over \$100,000. The FY 2023 Conference Information Table lists these four agency-sponsored conferences, in date order, with total expenses of \$541,100. We did not incur expenses exceeding \$100,000 for employee attendance at other federally-sponsored and federally-hosted conferences.

For each conference, we include the following information in the table:

- Name of the conference;
- Total conference expenses the agency incurred for each event;
- Location;
- Date(s);
- Total number of attendees whose travel expenses or other conference expenses were paid by the agency; and
- Brief explanation of how the conference advanced the mission of our agency.

Social Security Administration Fiscal Year 2023 Conference Information Table

SSA-Sponsored Conferences

Conference Name	Total Expenses	Location	Date	Number of Attendees	Mission Related Narrative
New Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Training	\$102,577	Social Security Administration (SSA) facility; Woodlawn, MD	November 6, 2022 – November 19, 2022	39	We provided technical and programmatic training to the agency’s newly-hired ALJs. The training curriculum included the basic functions and responsibilities of the position and introduced the new ALJs to national policy. This mission-critical training also ensured our new ALJs learned the correct application of laws, regulations, and agency policy necessary for the efficient and consistent adjudication of our disability claims, which will help reduce our backlog of disability cases in a timely manner. We trained 28 judges with 8 agency trainers and presenters and 3 agency support staff.

Conference Name	Total Expenses	Location	Date	Number of Attendees	Mission Related Narrative
Supplemental ALJ Training	\$114,298	SSA facility; Woodlawn, MD	August 15, 2023 – August 18, 2023	85	We provided technical and programmatic training to the agency’s ALJs who have been on duty for approximately one year. This supplemental training built on the ALJs’ experiences and challenges in the first year, provided more intensive coverage of policy and procedure, and reinforced application of national standards. This mission-critical training helped ensure that our judges issue decisions that are policy-compliant, legally sufficient, and timely. We trained 85 judges using 24 agency trainers and speakers, and 5 agency support staff.
New ALJ Training	\$164,969	SSA facility; Woodlawn, MD	August 28, 2023 – September 15, 2023	55	We provided technical and programmatic training to the agency’s newly-hired ALJs. The training curriculum included the basic functions and responsibilities of the position and introduced the new ALJs to national policy. This mission-critical training also ensured our new ALJs learned the correct application of laws, regulations, and agency policy necessary for the efficient and consistent adjudication of our disability claims, which will help reduce our backlog of disability cases in a timely manner. We trained 32 judges with 19 agency trainers and presenters and 4 agency support staff.

<p>2023 Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Managers' Conference: Connection Through Collaboration</p>	<p>\$159,256</p>	<p>Baltimore, MD</p>	<p>September 19, 2023 – September 23, 2023</p>	<p>114</p>	<p>We provided training to supervisors and team leaders on the following key topics: federal budget process, performance management, federal hiring process, organizational health, responding to employees who allege violations of whistleblower protections, and managing complexity, change, and conflict. The conference and trainings enhanced SSA OIG's managers' knowledge in domains critical to accomplishing SSA OIG's mission and strengthened their leadership skills in building a culture of collaboration.</p>
--	------------------	----------------------	--	------------	--