

# **Social Security Administration**

## **Conference Information Report**

### **Fiscal Year 2020**

#### **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 on the complex policies and procedures of the Social Security Act. We have a strong review and approval process in place for all our sponsored conferences and for employee attendance at other federally sponsored and federally hosted conferences. Our internal conference planning policies ensure that we reduce costs for our agency activities. We oversee, monitor, and review our spending for all agency-sponsored conferences and employee attendance at other federally sponsored and federally hosted conferences to ensure that we use Federal funds efficiently and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. We continue to maximize our use of free Federal space, adhere to policies restricting meals and light refreshments, and use cost-cutting initiatives, including hosting events as close as possible to employee duty stations to minimize travel. In addition, we require agency components to research alternatives to hosting events, such as video conferencing and interactive video teletraining. The pandemic has caused us to rethink alternatives to in-person conferences in fiscal year (FY) 2020 and beyond.

Most of our conference expenses for FY 2020 were for training (technical, programmatic, and non-programmatic) and associated travel costs.<sup>1</sup> Besides training and associated travel costs, our conference expenses included costs for speakers and presenters, supplies, facilities, and other miscellaneous conference costs. Following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, we curtailed conference activity, restricted travel, and cancelled previously planned events or held events virtually in order to protect the health and welfare of our employees.

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

For FY 2020, 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 Commissioner for conference spending in excess of the \$500,000 limit for a single event.

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

The FY 2020 Table lists all our agency-sponsored conferences, in date order, where the expenses exceeded \$100,000. For FY 2020, the Table includes four agency-sponsored conferences totaling \$471,508. We did not incur expenses exceeding \$100,000 for employee attendance at other federally sponsored and federally hosted conferences.

---

<sup>1</sup> Travel costs incurred prior to COVID-19 pandemic-related travel restrictions.

Our Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has its own conference review and approval process. OIG confirmed it did not hold any events over \$100,000 in FY 2020.

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

- Name of the conference;
- Total conference expenses incurred by the agency;
- 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 2020 Conference Information Table

### SSA-Sponsored Conferences

Conference	Total Expenses	Location	Date	Number of Attendees	Mission Related Narrative
Social Security Administration (SSA)/American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) National Agreement Training	\$114,780	SSA facility, Atlanta, Georgia	November 18, 2019 to November 20, 2019	113	We provided training on the 2019 collective bargaining agreement between the agency and AFGE. This agreement contained new provisions that significantly changed long-standing rules, practices, and responsibilities of the union, management, and employees. This mission-critical training ensured that management officials and labor/employee relations practitioners understood the content of the agreement and the appropriate interpretation, intent, and application of its language, which was necessary for consistent implementation. We trained 105 supervisors, managers, and labor/employee relations practitioners with 4 agency instructors and 4 agency support staff.
SSA/AFGE National Agreement Training	\$107,262	SSA facility, Atlanta, Georgia	November 20, 2019 to November 22, 2019	109	We provided training on the 2019 collective bargaining agreement between the agency and AFGE. This agreement contained new provisions that significantly changed long-standing rules, practices, and responsibilities of the union, management, and employees. This mission-critical training ensured that management officials and labor/employee relations practitioners understood the content of the agreement and the appropriate interpretation, intent, and application of its language, which was necessary for consistent implementation. We trained 99 supervisors, managers, and labor/employee relations practitioners with 6 agency instructors and 4 agency support staff.

Conference	Total Expenses	Location	Date	Number of Attendees	Mission Related Narrative
SSA/AFGE National Agreement Training	\$130,967	SSA facility, Atlanta, Georgia	December 9, 2019 to December 11, 2019	119	We provided training on the 2019 collective bargaining agreement between the agency and AFGE. This agreement contained new provisions that significantly changed long-standing rules, practices, and responsibilities of the union, management, and employees. This mission-critical training ensured that management officials and labor/employee relations practitioners understood the content of the agreement and the appropriate interpretation, intent, and application of its language, which was necessary for consistent implementation. We trained 108 supervisors, managers, and labor/employee relations practitioners with 7 agency instructors and 4 agency support staff.
SSA/AFGE National Agreement Training	\$118,499	SSA facility, Atlanta, Georgia	January 13, 2020 to January 15, 2020	107	We provided training on the 2019 collective bargaining agreement between the agency and AFGE. This agreement contained new provisions that significantly changed long-standing rules, practices, and responsibilities of the union, management, and employees. This mission-critical training ensured that management officials and labor/employee relations practitioners understood the content of the agreement and the appropriate interpretation, intent, and application of its language, which was necessary for consistent implementation. We trained 97 supervisors, managers, and labor/employee relations practitioners with 6 agency instructors and 4 agency support staff.