

## **NIH POLICY MANUAL**

### **26101-17-1 - ACQUISITION OF TEMPORARY NON-NIH CONFERENCE SPACE**

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#### **A. Purpose:**

This chapter describes the policies and procedures for the acquisition of temporary conference space other than NIH-owned or leased buildings.

#### **B. Scope:**

1. This chapter, as well as relevant General Services Administration (GSA), PHS, and DHHS policies and procedures, apply to:
  - a. Each conference sponsored and paid for by NIH when conference space outside of NIH-owned or leased buildings is to be used, including conferences scheduled through consultants or contractors.
  - b. Conference space outside of NIH-owned or leased buildings acquired as part of a "package deal" in which conference space is provided by a commercial establishment at no cost, contingent upon acquisition of temporary lodgings, meals, etc.
2. These policies and procedures do not apply to conferences or meetings of statutory advisory committees and conferences sponsored by non-NIH organizations for which NIH provides partial financial support. Such conferences are not subject to approval requirements of the Conference Services Branch (CSB), Division of Space and Facility Management (DSFM), Office of Research Services (ORS).

#### **C. References:**

1. Federal Property Management Regulations, 41 CFR 101-17.202-1(d), 2(b) and .203.
2. NIH Manual 1363.
3. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin 76-9, Supplement 2, Use of Travel Funds.
4. Memorandum dated February 25, 1986, from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health Operations and Director, Office of Management to the Deputy Assistant Secretaries for Health concerning rental of non-Government space for

conference/meetings.

5. Memorandum dated October 13, 1987, from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health Operations and Director, Office of Management to the Director, Administrative Service Center, Office of Management, PHS, concerning rental of non-Government space for conference/meetings.

#### **D. Definitions:**

1. Conference: Assembly of individuals, interested in the conference subject area, whose attendance is by designation or invitation, and whose expenses incurred are paid by the sponsoring Institute, Center, or Division (ICD).
2. ICD Conference Space: Conference space assigned to and controlled by NIH ICDs.
3. NIH Conference Space: Conference space under the control of CSB, DSFM, ORS.
4. PHS Conference Space: Conference space assigned to and controlled by PHS in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
5. DHHS Conference Space: Conference space assigned to and controlled by DHHS in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
6. GSA Conference Space: Conference facilities under the control of GSA nationwide.
7. Non-Government Conference Space: Commercially available conference space that is not under the control of ICD, NIH, PHS, DHHS or GSA.

#### **E. Responsibilities:**

1. The NIH Conference Space Coordinator, CSB, DSFM, ORS, is responsible for determining the availability of NIH, PHS, DHHS or GSA controlled conference space and is the final NIH reviewing and approving official for conference space requests located in other than NIH controlled space.
2. The ICD Executive Officer or Chief Administrative Officer is responsible within his/her organization for initial review and approval of conference space requests and for certifying that, pursuant to OMB Bulletin 76-9, Supplement 2, Use of Travel Funds for conferences was reviewed and determined to be:
  - (1) consistent with the ICD's travel plans, or
  - (2) essential for the accomplishment of the ICD's programs and missions.
3. The ICD conference sponsor is responsible for completion of documents cited in this chapter, and for requesting use of commercial conference space within

specified timeframes.

**F. Policy:**

1. The DHHS and PHS policy requires that the use of non- Government space for conferences be held to a minimum. These policies reflect departmental concern for economical funding, reduced travel and lodging expenditures, and conservation of energy.
2. The ICDs are required to use ICD, NIH or other Government conference facilities whenever available and adequate for meeting requirements. Rather than requesting commercial space, the ICDs should, whenever possible, adjust proposed conference dates to match available Government space.
3. When Government-controlled space has been sought but is unavailable, commercial space may be requested:
  - a. When conference participants consist primarily or totally of NIH employees, conference space should be sought in the Bethesda area or within a 55 mile driving radius thereof. Costs to be paid by the Government are limited to conference space and administrative services only.
  - b. On space requests for conferences involving outside participants to be held other than within the Bethesda area, consideration will be given to (1) the most convenient geographical location relative to travel, and (2) the availability of GSA-controlled conference facilities within the area identified for the conference.
4. Proposed arrangements for non-NIH conference space must be the most economical and effective in terms of total costs to the Government for travel, per diem, rooms, conference space, and other associated costs for facilities and services. The ICD must provide cost comparisons supporting such requests in addition to a justification for the need of an other than NIH facility. The following are unacceptable as sole justification:
  - a. To provide an environment more conducive to constructive thinking.
  - b. To provide an environment for a greater exchange of ideas through interaction of the participants.
  - c. Specific NIH-controlled space is unavailable, e.g., a preferred area, such as Conference Room 6.
  - d. Evening or weekend meeting sessions will be conducted.
  - e. Need for isolation of participants from rigors of the daily work environment.
  - f. Isolated location and environment which avoids outside distractions.

5. Under no circumstances can space or services for NIH conferences be authorized on a Travel Order, Form HHS 1, nor can such costs be claimed on a Travel Voucher Form SF 1012. Any such costs included in a Travel Voucher will be disallowed.

**G. Procedures:**

1. ICD Requesting Activity
  - a. Efforts should be taken by the sponsor to secure ICD conference space. If this is not possible, the sponsor should contact the NIH Conference Space Coordinator, Building 31, Room 6C17, (301) 496-6260, two (2) to six (6) months in advance of the scheduled conference, to ascertain the availability of conference space for the scheduled date and location of the conference. The schedule for advance notification is determined by the estimated cost of the conference as described in 'c' below. (Provide primary and alternate dates, where feasible.) If conference space is available, the procedures outlined in the NIH Manual Chapter 1363 will be followed.
  - b. If neither the ICD nor CSB conference space is available, the ICD should prepare and send the following documents to the ICD Executive Officer or Chief Administrative Officer for certification and approval:
    - copy of the on-line Market Requisition (RQM)
    - Form NIH 827-1, Request for Off-Campus Conference Space should include a cost comparison (see Item 9 of Illustration 1) to demonstrate that the proposed facility provides the most reasonable alternative in terms of total associated costs. This comparison should provide an analysis of at least three comparable and suitable facilities, including all costs involved for the conference. This is required to assure that the most suitable facility has been selected at the most advantageous cost to the Government.
  - c. After approval and certification by the ICD Executive Officer or Chief Administrative Officer, the documents listed in '1.b.' above should be sent to the NIH Conference Space Coordinator, Building 31, Room 6C17 (301/496-6260) in advance of the scheduled conference as indicated below:
    1. Documents for conferences involving estimated costs under \$25,000 must be submitted to the NIH Conference Space Coordinator two (2) months prior to the scheduled conference date to allow for PHS, DHHS, and GSA clearance.
    2. Documents for conferences involving estimated costs over

\$25,000 must be submitted to the NIH Conference Space Coordinator six (6) months prior to the scheduled conference date to allow for PHS, DHHS, and GSA clearance and procurement negotiations.

Regardless of the timing of the advance notification, the Conference Space Coordinator and DP will make every effort to provide conference space where and when requested. Failure on the part of the ICD to provide adequate advance notification, may result in the inability of the Conference Space Coordinator or Division of Procurement to arrange for the conference space by the originally scheduled conference date necessitating rescheduling of the conference.

- d. If no appropriate NIH, PHS, DHHS or GSA conference space is available, the Conference Space Coordinator will verbally notify the ICD sponsor and provide the ICD sponsor with the Form NIH 827-1 indicating that Government space is not available. If NIH space is available, the request will be disapproved, and the ICD sponsor will be verbally notified. The determination will be recorded by the Conference Space Coordinator in his/her log. At the option of the ICD sponsor, a memorandum of request may also be submitted to the Conference Space Coordinator. The Conference Space Coordinator will annotate his/her approval or disapproval on the memorandum of request and will return same to the ICD sponsor. A copy of the annotated memorandum will be retained by the Conference Space Coordinator.
2. ICD Executive Officer or Chief Administrative Officer:
    - a. Reviews and approves the documents requesting outside conference space. The Executive Officer or Chief Administrative Officer's signature on the Form NIH 827-1, Part B, certifies the necessity and appropriateness of the use of funds for travel, meeting facilities, and support services outlined in the request.
    - b. Forwards the documents to the NIH Conference Space Coordinator, Conference Services Section, Building 31, Room 6C17, taking into account the time constraints specified in '1.c.' above.
  3. Conference Services Branch, DSFM, ORS:
    - a. Reviews reservations for conference space for the dates requested and certifies on the memo the non-availability of NIH space.

If a statement of non-availability is issued and a cancellation subsequently occurs, the conference may be rescheduled into the available space by the NIH Conference Space Coordinator in coordination with the ICD. This action is limited to those situations

where available space is suitable, sufficient time remains, rescheduling is considered practical and economical, and NIH is not subject to cost penalties for cancelling reservations.

- b. Reviews the RQM and Form NIH-827-1 for adequacy and adherence to established regulatory requirements. If not acceptable, the request will be returned to the ICD sponsoring office with: (1) an explanation for the disapproval and (2) resubmission requirements.
- c. If the request is acceptable and complete, the NIH Conference Space Coordinator will secure appropriate PHS, DHHS, and GSA clearance.
  1. If suitable Government-owned space is available, the NIH Conference Space Coordinator will verbally notify the ICD sponsor. The determination will be recorded by the Conference Space Coordinator in his/her log.
  2. If suitable Government-owned space is not available, the NIH Conference Space Coordinator will annotate his/her approval in Part B of Form NIH 827-1 and forward it to the Administrative Services Center, OM, PHS, for approval. When approval is received from PHS and the annotated Form 827-1 is returned, the NIH Conference Space Coordinator will forward the Form 827-1 to the ICD's originating office who will forward it to the Division of Procurement for final processing.

**Additional Information:**

For additional information contact the Chief, CSB, DSFM, ORS, Building 31, Room 6C17.

**I. Additional Copies:**

Additional copies of this chapter may be obtained by submitting Form NIH 414-5 to the Division of Support Services, ORS, located at Building 31, Room B4BN09.

