

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
 Farm Production and Conservation Mission Area  
 Business Center  
 Washington, DC 20250

<b>FPAC NOTICE</b>		<b>FPAC-N FMD-002</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	FY 2022 Individual Event Approval in the Agriculture Conference Management System (AgCMS) and Post Conference Cost Submission	<b>Effective date:</b> August 5, 2022
<b>Approved By:</b>	<i>/s/ Sherry Laws for</i> Chief Financial Officer Farm Production and Conservation Business Center	<b>Expiration Date:</b> September 30, 2022

**1. PURPOSE**

- a. This notice provides FPAC agencies guidance on individual event approval using the AgCMS approval and post-conference submission process to ensure compliance with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) AgCMS policy. Also included are:
  - (1) Explanation of the following for events:
    - (a) Approval requirements;
    - (b) Type definitions;
    - (c) Engagement definitions;
    - (d) Approval timeline;
    - (e) Documentation requirements;
    - (f) Cost tracking; and
    - (g) Approval routing;
  - (2) Contact information for AgCMS and event support.
- b. This notice applies to FSA, FPAC Business Center, NRCS, and RMA.
- c. Overview of procedures for events.
  - (1) The Office of Management and Budget and OCFO outline event approval requirements in FTR and Agriculture Travel Regulations (ATR). Event approval is required to ensure that event expenditures are cost -effective, clearly advance the FPAC mission and goals, represent the optimal use of Federal funds, and are in accordance with the Under Secretary’s approved Annual Conference Plan (ACP).
  - (2) All aspects of conference management (planning, approval, and reporting) are accomplished through AgCMS.

- (3) Any event with costs in excess of \$20,000 require two approvals. The first is prior to the start of the FY based on estimates through the ACP process, and the second is conducted when the event is entered in AgCMS. The second approval will occur closer to the time of the event when cost estimates are more accurate.
- (4) The ACP process conducted prior to the start of each FY precedes individual event approvals. Each Agency creates a conference plan for the year, which is approved by agency and FPAC leadership. It is then required that each event is uploaded into AgCMS.
- (5) An event on the approved ACP may proceed with detailed planning and the second approval process at any point in the FY, which may include contacting vendors, determining attendees, and selecting the date and location for the event.
- (6) The individual event approval is a collaboration between the event submitter and their agency POC. The submitter provides the event data to the POC, who then stewards that data through the AgCMS tool for approval.
- (7) AgCMS allows USDA to track expenditures and report on approved conferences, trainings, and operational events. AgCMS supports submission of the ACP, individual event requests, and quarterly reports.

## 2. SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

- a. The [FTR part 301-74](#) implements the statutory requirements and Executive branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at the Government's expense.
- b. [DR 2300-005, Agriculture Travel Regulation](#) supplements the FTR and is USDA's primary temporary duty travel policy. The ATR applies to all Departmental employees and other non-contractor individuals executing official Department activities.

**Note:** Sources of authority, forms, and AgCMS guidance and home page are on the [OCFO Travel Express website](#).

## 3. RELATED POLICY

FPAC-N-2300-006, Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Annual Plan for Conferences, Meetings, and Trainings

## 4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. **Agency Head** is responsible for approving AgCMS submissions according to the approval threshold table in section 5 f. (3).
- b. **Agency POC** is responsible for serving as the lead for all AgCMS responsibilities for the Agency. Agency POCs are listed under Contacts. Responsibilities also include:
  - (1) Following submission as the event request proceeds through an approval workflow in AgCMS. Agency specific approvals are granted in accordance with each Agency's

routing list, and where necessary, are followed by FPAC approvals based on the threshold value. See section 5 f for issues concerning approval routings for your state/area.

- (2) Submission status monitoring (log into AgCMS and access the desired request). If the event submitter desires information on the status of an approval, they may contact the Agency POC.
- c. **Event Submitter** is responsible for providing required event information and cost estimates to the Agency POC for upload and approval of the event request in AgCMS. Post-event, the submitter collaborates with the Agency POC to ascertain the actual expenses incurred for the event, which are then loaded into AgCMS by the Agency POC.
- d. **Agency Budget POC** is responsible for setting up event Work Breakdown Structure codes, ensuring codes are funded and available, and sharing codes with the Agency POC.
- e. **Financial Management Division POC** is responsible for centralizing management of AgCMS for FPAC.
- f. **Management Services Division (MSD) Business Management Branch (BMB) Event Coordinator** is responsible for assisting FPAC Agencies with event coordination and execution, as needed. See FPAC-P 1900-001- FPAC Conference and Event Management Logistical and Coordination Support for information about MSD support.
- g. **OCFO** is responsible for policy that promotes fiscally sound, cost-effective program delivery that is supported by reliable financial management information and infrastructure.
- h. **Under Secretary** is responsible for approving AgCMS submissions according to the approval threshold table in section 5 f (3).
- i. **Host** is responsible for all event costs for all attendees.
- j. **Sponsor** is responsible for a portion of the event's costs (shares this joint responsibility with another Agency or group)
- k. **Attendee** is to be responsible for no portion of the event costs. Another Agency or group is hosting or sponsoring the event and has assumed responsibility for all costs.

## 5. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PLANNING EVENTS

- a. The following events require approval.
  - (1) Conference and training with costs in excess of \$20,000 (not including salaries and benefits); and
  - (2) Operational events with costs in excess of \$250,000 (not including salaries and benefits).

b. Event Type and Engagement Definitions:

- (1) **Conference Event:** A conference is a trip, event, or meeting **not** organized primarily for operational or training purposes.

**Example:** All Employee Meetings, Joint Agency Meetings, National Wild Turkey Federation Convention and Conservation Conference, American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers meeting.

- (2) **Training Event:** A training is a trip, event or meeting organized substantially to dispense new or additional orientation and training.

**Example:** General Employee Training, State Leadership Development Program, Environmental Systems Research User Conference, Working Effectively with Alaskan Natives, Farm Bill Training, Program Training (Farm Loan Programs & Farm Programs).

- (3) **Operational Event:** An operational event is a trip, event, or meeting organized primarily to coordinate or execute USDA business.

**Example:** State Director Meeting, Regional Meeting, District Director Meeting, Soil and Plant Science Division, State NCSS Cooperators Meetings.

c. Event Approval Timeline:

- (1) Days Prior to Event, 60-90: The Event submitter completes an event data checklist, which is provided through the agency POC. Upon completion, the submitter returns the checklist to the agency POC for entry into AgCMS and approval routing.

**Note:** For events scheduled early in the FY where such lead time is not feasible, contact your Agency POC to coordinate approval.

- (2) Days Prior to Event, 60-90: Request MSD logistics and planning support from Business Management Branch (BMB) via [myFPAC Services Event Manager](#).

**Note:** BMB support is optional.

- (3) Days Post Event, 30-90: Event submitter informs Agency POC of event's actual costs and POC enters the event's actual costs into AgCMS.

d. Documentation Requirements:

- (1) A Deputy Secretary Decision Memorandum ([OCFO Conference/Training Templates](#)) directed to the required approver noted on the table in section 5 g (3) and based on the relevant threshold value **is required** for the requested event when:

- (a) cost is equal to or greater than 20 percent of that reflected on the ACP; **or**
- (b) it was not previously approved on the ACP.

- (2) Location Cost Worksheet is required.

**Note:** The optional Attendee Detailed Cost Analysis spreadsheet may be helpful when completing the Location Cost Worksheet. Both worksheets may be found on the [OCFO Travel Express](#) website, under Conference Training Templates.

e. Event Cost Tracking:

- (1) Actual event costs are required to be reported to Congress on a quarterly basis.
- (2) The process for tracking and reporting actual event costs is still under development and will be provided in a future notice.

f. Approval Routing:

- (1) The AgCMS approval workflow for an event is determined in accordance with specific Agency approval routing hierarchy and the threshold value of the event.
- (2) Agency event approval “routing” lists are managed by the Agency POC. For information about contacting an Agency POC, see section 9 c.
- (3) Following Agency approval, submissions are routed for leadership approval according to the following cost thresholds.

<b>Threshold Value</b>	<b>Required Approver (or acting)</b>	<b>Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) Code</b>
\$0 - \$39,999	Agency Head / Senior Accountable Travel Official / Delegated Authority	Agency standard set of WBS codes
\$40,000 - \$74,999	Agency Head / SATO	Event specific WBS code
\$75,000 - \$449,999	Under Secretary	Event specific WBS code
>\$450,000	USDA Deputy Secretary	Event specific WBS code

**6. AgCMS APPROVAL AND POST-EVENT COST SUBMISSION PROCESS**

a. Determine the accounting code to use for the event and request from Budget POC/Financial Specialist:

- (1) The event submitter will work with their Agency POC to determine the appropriate accounting code to use for their event.
- (2) The Agency POC will work with the appropriate Business Center budget office to ensure the WBS codes are available and funded. The Agency POC will share the appropriate code with the event submitter.
- (3) The event submitter will use the WBS codes for centrally paid event costs and communicate these codes to participants.

b. Record required event information using the event submittal checklist. This checklist includes required information that will be needed for input to AgCMS, an essential step in

the submission process. The submitter populates the data relevant to their event and forwards the checklist to the Agency POC for input to AgCMS.

c. Event submittal in AgCMS:

- (1) Upon receipt of the checklist from the submitter, Agency POC enters request in AgCMS.
- (2) [OCFO AgCMS User Guide](#) 2.0, Section 4C provides detailed instruction on how to submit a conference request in AgCMS.

**7. MONITORING APPROVAL IN AGCMS**

- a. Following submission, the event request proceeds through an approval workflow in AgCMS. Agency specific approvals are granted in accordance with each Agency’s routing list, and where necessary, are followed by FPAC approvals based on the threshold value. See section 5 f. for issues concerning the approval routings for your State/area.
- b. Contact the Agency POC for information on the status of an approval.

**8. COMPLETING POST EVENT DETAILS IN AGCMS**

- a. Within 30-60 days following the event, the Agency POC, in consultation with the event submitter, updates the actual costs incurred from the event in AgCMS.
- b. Update the following fields, as applicable:
  - (1) Actual Number of Agency Participants;
  - (2) Actual Travel Expenses;
  - (3) Actual AV Costs;
  - (4) Actual Food or Beverage Costs;
  - (5) Actual Other Costs; and
  - (6) Salary Costs.
- c. This completion process ensures that conference reports to OCFO and Congress are based on actual costs incurred and not estimates.
- d. Completing the Post Event Details concludes the event submitter’s reporting responsibility. Agency POC subsequently reports event on applicable quarterly Conference Transparency Report.

**9. CONTACTS**

- a. Submit questions about this notice to Financial Management Division through the [myFPAC Services](#) according to the following instructions:

- (1) Select “Travel” for “Request Type”;
  - (2) Select “General TDY” for “Request Type Subcategory”;
  - (3) Select “Requesting on Behalf of”;
  - (4) “Watch List” is an option field;
  - (5) In the description box, enter that this request is AgCMS-related;
  - (6) Add attachments, if any; and
  - (7) Click “Submit.”
- b. Direct questions about event execution support to Tamera Wright at [Tamera.Wright@usda.gov](mailto:Tamera.Wright@usda.gov) or Kimberly Pritchett at [Kimberly.Pritchett@usda.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Pritchett@usda.gov).
- c. Direct questions about managing events or updating internal Agency routing lists to each Agency’s POC:
- (1) FSA: State Offices: Julia King at [Julia.King@usda.gov](mailto:Julia.King@usda.gov); Headquarters: Shannon Peterson at [Shannon.Peterson@usda.gov](mailto:Shannon.Peterson@usda.gov).
  - (2) FPAC-BC: Gilbert James at [Gilbert.James@usda.gov](mailto:Gilbert.James@usda.gov), or William Willer at [William.Willer@usda.gov](mailto:William.Willer@usda.gov), or Ray Bonner at [Ray.Bonner@usda.gov](mailto:Ray.Bonner@usda.gov).
  - (3) NRCS: Yvette Dillard at [Yvette.Dillard@usda.gov](mailto:Yvette.Dillard@usda.gov), or Rebecca Salazar at [Rebecca.Salazar@usda.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Salazar@usda.gov) or Lona Leeson at [lona.leeson@usda.gov](mailto:lona.leeson@usda.gov).
  - (4) RMA: Young Kim at [Young.Kim@usda.gov](mailto:Young.Kim@usda.gov) or Marissa Persetic at [Marissa.Persetic@usda.gov](mailto:Marissa.Persetic@usda.gov).