

For: FSA Employees

**Guidelines for Requesting/Sending Employees to
National Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Training Conferences**

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A Background

SEP is a management program that is an integral part of FSA’s EEO Program. SEP’s primary objective is to identify barriers to the recruitment and advancement of special emphasis groups, devise solutions, and draft plans to implement the solutions. FSA values the developmental opportunities provided by the national SEP conferences and will provide for participation within funding limits. SEP conferences provide excellent opportunities for employees to receive valuable training and educational experience.

B Purpose

This notice informs all FSA employees of guidelines for requesting/sending and paying for employees to attend national SEP training conferences.

C Labor Relations Obligations

Where exclusive representation exists, this notice does not apply until bargaining takes place. Where contract language addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

Disposal Date	Distribution
February 1, 2012	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

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1 Overview (Continued)

D National SEP Training Conferences

The following table provides a list of national SEP training conferences.

Conference	Date	Location	Cost
Blacks in Government Conference	August 22-26, 2011	Boston, MA	To Be Determined (TBD)
Web Site: http://www.bignet.org/			
Federal Asian Pacific American Council Conference	May 9-13, 2011	Bellevue, WA	Member by March 31: \$595; Member after March 31: \$795; Nonmember by March 31: \$645; Nonmember after March 31: \$845
Web Site: https://www.fapac.org/event/current_events.aspx			
Federally Employed Women Conference	July 18-22, 2011	Philadelphia, PA	Member by May 31: \$850; Member after May 31: \$925; Nonmember by May 31: \$1,050; Nonmember after May 31: \$1,125
Web Site: http://www.fewntp.org/			
National Conference on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Equality	2012-TBD	TBD	TBD
Web Site: http://www.thetaskforce.org/events/creating_change			
National Congress of American Indians	October 30-November 4, 2011	Portland, OR	TBD
Web Site: http://www.ncai.org/Conferences-Events.7.0.html			
Hispanic-American Leadership in Employment-Education and Civil Rights National Training Conference (IMAGE)	April 25-29, 2011	Orlando, FL	TBD
Web Site: http://www.nationalimageinc.org/			
Perspectives on Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Federal Sector - Annual Training Conference	2011-TBD	TBD	TBD
Web Site: http://www.graduateschool.edu/Conferences/Perspectives/index.php			

Note: The costs provided in the table do **not** include lodging, per diem, and transportation. FSA **cannot** pay for additional events that are **not** included in the conference fee. Training conference information can be found on provided web sites.

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2 Guidelines for Selection and Attendance at National SEP Conferences

A Priority Consideration for State Offices

The national SEP conferences are recognized as formal training for SEP managers (SEPM's) and meet the requirement of mandated SEP/diversity training. Therefore, priority consideration should be given to full-time and collateral duty SEPM's to attend the conferences, if funding is available.

B Officers' Attendance

The current officers will be allowed to attend according to the following:

- national level (**not** USDA or FSA) **SEP officers** in the holding positions of **president, vice-president, first-vice president, second-vice president, secretary, and treasurer** will be authorized to attend; FSA will pay for the conference fee, lodging, per diem, and transportation costs paid from FSA funds
- FSA national officers in the holding position of **president** will be authorized to attend; FSA will pay for the conference fee, lodging, per diem, and transportation costs from FSA funds
- FSA national officers in the holding positions of **vice-president, first-vice president, second-vice president, secretary, and treasurer** will be authorized to attend; **FSA will pay for the conference fee only** from FSA funds.

Note: FSA will grant administrative leave to attend the conference; however, leave shall **not** exceed the number of hours designated for the main conference. Any travel to and from the conference is **excluded** from leave time and **must** occur on personal time. Approval will depend on the needs of the office and workload.

OCR will maintain the current list of FSA national officers authorized to attend.

C All Other Employees' Attendance

If the conference registration is paid "**out of pocket**" by the employee, the employee may request administrative leave to attend the conference. Leave shall **not** exceed the number of hours designated for the main conference. Any travel to and from the conference is **excluded** from leave time and **must** occur on personal time. Approval will depend on the needs of the office and workload.

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3 Registration and Contacts

A Registration

Participants shall submit national SEP training conference requests through the AgLearn approval process.

Note: USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program. Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, OCR, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 800-795-3272 or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

B Contacts

Direct questions about SEP’s to Donald Wright by e-mail to **donald.wright@wdc.usda.gov**.

Direct questions about this notice, or persons with disabilities requiring accommodations, to the appropriate contact as follows.

Office	Contact
State and County Offices	State Training Officer
All other offices	Tracey Foster by e-mail to tracey.foster@wdc.usda.gov

Note: Some accommodation services, such as a sign language interpreter, require at least 3 workdays to schedule.