

Q's and A's EXCEL Conference 2013 – May 20, 2013

1. What is EXCEL, and why are we holding it during a budget crisis?

The Federal Government employs 1.8 million civilian workers and is by far the nation's largest employer. EEOC's Excel training conference helps ensure the civil rights of those workers. The best way to eliminate unlawful discrimination in the workplace is to prevent it from ever happening. Educating employers on their responsibilities is the most effective way to prevent discrimination. EEOC has produced the EXCEL Program for 15 consecutive years. Federal agencies rate the training during this training conference as the best way to learn the latest case and legal developments, EEOC policy and best practices. We expect the Federal government to be a model employer. Without continuous education the federal government will never make progress toward achieving this goal. To leverage resources during these extraordinary budget constraints, EEOC is for the first time combining EXCEL with other EEOC sponsored training sessions. EXCEL historically has been a training conference for representatives of the Federal government. However, this year the Revolving Fund will sponsor the EXCEL Conference concurrently with a national Technical Assistance Program (TAP), a training conference for private sector employers. Private Sector employers will pay tuition to attend the TAPs. Additionally, EEOC is holding its annual training session for the leadership of state and local Fair Employment Practice Agencies (FEPA's) during the same timeframe. FEPA's are the state and local agencies that enforce equal employment opportunity laws. EEOC's thoughtful plan to run three vital training programs simultaneously, in the same hotel, using adjoining training rooms, and some common speakers will be cost effective and will lower production costs.

2. Why are we still holding EXCEL? Isn't EEOC furloughing employees? Shouldn't we cancel the program altogether?

The EXCEL Training Conference is managed through the EEOC's Revolving Fund. The Revolving Fund produces educational and technical assistance programs and charges attendees tuition to attend the sessions. Revenue earned through these programs offset the cost of the training conference. Cancelling the EXCEL conference has no impact on EEOC's underlying appropriated budget nor on its decision to furlough employees. Also, the agency would be forced to pay a substantial penalty. Well before sequestration-related cost cutting measures were required, the Revolving Fund signed a multi-year contract with a national hotel chain to host EXCEL conferences for three consecutive years. Standard language in these contracts imposes financial penalties for breaking the contract. Canceling the program would cost the government substantially more money than going forward with conducting the training. Additionally, if the EEOC cancelled EXCEL, HR and EEO staff from other Federal agencies will be forced to find similar training, which will most likely be at a much higher cost to the government.

3. Isn't it expensive for EEOC to send presenters based in Washington to the EXCEL Training conference? Where are the other conferences being held?

No. All costs will come directly from the Revolving Fund - which includes paying travel costs for EXCEL speakers. None of the agency funds appropriated by Congress this year will be used for any expenses, including travel expenses.

EEOC previously held EXCEL in Baltimore, Maryland (2011), in Dallas, Texas (2012) and this year it will be held in Denver Colorado. In 2014 the conference will be held in San Diego. EEOC sponsors the conference cities where the agency can secure favorable financial terms and where there is a substantial federal community, thus ensuring greater participation.