conference costs paid by the Government, whether paid directly by agencies or reimbursed by agencies to travelers or others associated with the conference. Some examples of such costs are:

(a) Authorized travel and per diem expenses;

(b) Hire of rooms for official business;

(c) Audiovisual and other equipment usage;

(d) Computer and telephone access fees;

(e) Light refreshments;

(f) Printing;

(g) Registration fees;

(h) Ground transportation; and

(i) Employees' time at the conference and on en route travel.

§ 301–74.3 What must we do to determine which conference expenditures result in the greatest advantage to the Government?

To determine conference expenditures, you must:

(a) Assure there is appropriate management oversight of the conference planning process;

(b) Always do cost comparisons of the size, scope, and location of the proposed conference;

(c) Determine if a Government facility is available at a cheaper rate than a commercial facility;

(d) Consider alternatives to a conference, e.g. teleconferencing; and

(e) Maintain written documentation of the alternatives considered and the selection rationale used.

§ 301–74.4 What should cost comparisons include?

Cost comparisons should include, but not be limited to, a determination of adequacy of lodging rooms at the established per diem rates, overall convenience of the conference location, fees, availability of meeting space, equipment, and supplies, and commuting or travel distance of attendees. (See Appendix E to Chapter 301, Guidance for Conference Planning.)

§ 301–74.5 How should we select a location and a facility?

Site selection is a final decision as to where to hold your conference. The term ''site'' refers to both the geographical location and the specific facility(ies) selected. In determining the best site in the interest of the Government, you should exercise strict fiscal responsibility to minimize costs. The actions in § 301–74.3 must be followed. Cost comparisons must cover factors such as those listed in § 301–74.4. As part of the cost comparison, you must use the established per diem rate for the locations for which you are comparing costs.

§ 301–74.6 What can we do if we cannot find an appropriate conference facility at the chosen locality per diem rate?

While it is always desirable to obtain lodging facilities within the established lodging portion of the per diem rate for the chosen locality, it may not always be possible. In negotiating lodging rates with the properties in the chosen location, you may exceed the established lodging portion of the per diem rate by up to 25 percent under §§ 301–74.8 and 301–74.9, if necessary. This will provide flexibility in selecting an appropriate property at the most advantageous location. It will also permit agencies to reimburse their employees' subsistence expenses by using the conference lodging allowance method as prescribed in § 301–74.8 for a Government sponsored conference and in § 301–74.9 for non-Government sponsored conferences, rather than the actual expense method prescribed in subpart D of part 301–11 of this chapter.

§ 301–74.7 What is the conference lodging allowance?

The conference lodging allowance is a pre-determined maximum allowance of up to 25 percent greater than the applicable locality lodging portion of the per diem rate. Under this reimbursement method, employees will be reimbursed the actual amount incurred for lodging up to the conference lodging allowance.

§ 301–74.8 Who may authorize reimbursement of the conference lodging allowance for a Government sponsored conference?

The approval authority for the conference lodging allowance is the Government agency sponsoring the conference. The sponsoring agency will determine the appropriate conference