RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Office for Research

Research and Sponsored Programs Procedure

Participant Support on Sponsored Programs

1. Overview

Participant support is allowable as a direct cost when the sponsor (federal or non-federal agency) funds a project aimed at supporting outreach programs. These programs aim to bring experts together to discuss research and educational findings or to expose other researchers or students to new research and educational techniques. Funding provided by the sponsor may include expenses in these categories.

2. Purpose

Participant support costs are those direct costs paid to (or on behalf of) participants or trainees (not employees) for participation in meetings, conferences, symposia, workshops, and/or other training projects when there is a category for participant support costs in the award.

3. Who Must Comply

This policy applies to all members of the University community involved in sponsored projects that include or may include fabricated equipment, including:

- Principal Investigators (PIs)
- Department Personnel/Administrators
- Research Financial Services

4. Procedure

A. Proposal Preparation

- Inclusion of Participant Costs requires a detailed budget justification.
- Identified specifically on National Science Foundation (NSF) awards.
- Other agencies may use another cost category, such as stipends.
- Amounts allocated in the participant support cost budget category of federal awards are excluded from the Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) base.
- Please refer to the following matrix to determine if Research Assistant vs Participant Support vs Research Subject Payment.

B. Participant support costs may include the following expenses:

- Tuition and registration fees if required to participate in the project.
- Event registration fees.
- Supplies and manuals – only those directly attributable to individual participants.
- Stipends – a predetermined amount for housing and subsistence allowance.
- Travel costs – sole purpose of the trip is to participate in the project activity.

C. Supplies and manuals – only those directly attributable to individual participants. The following expenses, except when specifically allowed by the award, should not be processed as participant support costs:

- Event support cost facility rentals, media equipment rentals, food/refreshments) not made on behalf of or paid to participants.
- Travel for project PI or staff.

- Entertainment/food for non-participants.
- Honoraria paid to guest speakers or lecturers.
- Incentive payment to encourage an individual to participate as a research subject.
- Payments to a participant's employer for reimbursement of the costs relating to sending the employee to the project event.
- Travel for a consultant who provides service to the university.

D. Re-budgeting

- Re-budgeting from the participant support cost category into other categories without prior sponsor approval is not allowed.
- The NSF Award and Administration Guide states that "funds provided for participant support may not be used by grantees for other categories of expense without the specific prior written approval of the cognizant NSF Program Office".
- Unexpended participant support costs are reported as unspent funds on the award.

E. Stipends or Subsistence Allowances

- To help defray the costs of personal maintenance while participating in a conference or training activity, participants may be paid a stipend, per diem, or subsistence allowance, based on the type and duration of the activity, as outlined in the pertinent program solicitation and in the grant.
- Such allowances must be reasonable, in conformance with the policy of the grantee organization.
- Limited to the days of attendance at the conference, plus the actual travel time required to reach the conference location on the most direct route available.

F. Travel Allowances

- Travel costs of participants may be allowable as outlined in the pertinent program solicitation and in the grant.
- In training activities that involve field trips, the costs of transportation of participants are allowable.
- Where meals or lodgings are furnished without charge or at a nominal cost (e.g., as part of the registration fee), the per diem or subsistence allowance will be correspondingly reduced.
- Although local participants may participate in conference meals and coffee breaks as provided for in AAG Chapter V.C.5, http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf13001/aag_5.jsp#VC5, grant funds may not be used to pay per diem or similar expenses for local participants in the conference.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Principal Investigators (PIs):

The PI and their project staff should be familiar with the sponsor's specific requirements and are expected to ensure compliance. In addition to the financial restrictions noted above, the PI/department is also required to retain records detailing:

- Criteria by which participants in the program are selected.
- Copies of applications of selected participants, including documentation as to how they meet the selection criteria.
- List of program participants and documentation of their participation in the program.

6. Resources

Related Procedures

- Allowable Costs on Sponsored Programs
- Cost Transfers on Sponsored Programs
- Human Subject Payments

Sponsor Policies

- NIH Grants Policy Statement 7.9: Allowability of Costs/Activities
- NSF Grants Policy Manual: Chapter X – Allowability of Costs
- NASA Uniform Guidance Supplement 1800.209 Pre-award costs

7. Contacts

- Research and Sponsored Programs: (848) 932-0150, ru-orsp@research.rutgers.edu.
- Research Financial Services: (848) 932-4146, financialservices@research.rutgers.edu.