



**Overview**

This guide provides a comprehensive overview of participant support costs, defining eligibility criteria for individuals and detailing allowable expense categories such as stipends, travel, and subsistence. It further outlines essential budgeting rules, including the exclusion of indirect costs (F&A), re-budgeting restrictions, and specific sponsor approval requirements.

**Important**

This does not apply to NIH National Research Service Award (NRSA) Fellowship programs.

**What are Participant Support Costs (PSC)?**

Participant support costs are direct costs for items such as stipends, travel, subsistence allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with sponsored conferences or training projects.

Who IS a Participant	Who IS NOT a Participant?
Individuals who are recipients, not providers, of a service or training associated with a workshop, conference, or other short-term instructional activity.	An employee of the grantee institution.
Non-Rutgers employees without an employer/employee relationship with the institution.	Project staff, including Principal Investigators, Senior/Key Personnel, or Other Personnel who have an employee relationship with the university.
Individuals who do not perform work or provide services for the project, unless it is for their own benefit (e.g., as a trainee).	An Advisory Board member or anyone who has a deliverable or is primarily providing support to the project.
Examples include students, scholars, scientists, teachers, and private sector representatives attending a training event.	Guest speakers, lecturers, consultants, or project collaborators.
	Human subjects paid for participating in a research study.



### Sponsor and Program Guidance

**Sponsor Approval:** Participant support costs are allowable on grants only with prior sponsor approval, as stated in the Uniform Guidance. Always review the specific funding solicitation for instructions.

**Typical Programs:** These costs are common in projects with an education or outreach component. The National Science Foundation (NSF) frequently includes PSC in programs like REU, RET, NRT, and IGERT.

**Other Sponsors:**

- NIH only allows PSC if explicitly identified in the Funding Opportunity Announcement.
- Other federal sponsors like the EPA, USDA NIFA, NOAA, and others may allow PSC.
- Non-Federal sponsors may allow PSC in some cases.

These costs are typically not part of standard research grants.

### Key Budgeting and Management Rules

**F&A (Indirect Costs):** F&A costs CANNOT be applied to the Participant Support Cost category.

**Re-budgeting Restrictions:**

- Funds awarded for participant support cannot be transferred to other expense categories without prior written approval from the sponsor’s Program Officer.
- Re-budgeting between the defined participant support cost categories (e.g., from travel to stipend) is generally permitted.
- Any re-budgeting that changes the project’s scope of work requires agency approval, even if the university has been granted re-budgeting authority.

Allowable Participant Support Cost Categories	Unallowable Participant Support Cost Categories
Stipend: A set amount paid directly to an individual participant.	Salaries, wages, fringe benefits, or travel for the PI or any project staff.
Travel: Transportation costs (e.g., airfare, train) for participants. Must follow sponsor and university policies.	Fees or travel for consultants, trainers, guest speakers, or lecturers.
Subsistence: Housing and meal costs for participants, limited to the days of attendance.	Travel costs for collaborators.
Other: Fees for the conference or workshop, such as registration. Can also include lab supplies, training materials, or tuition for the participant.	Conference/workshop support costs, such as facility rental, catering, supplies, or A/V equipment rental.
	Payments to human subjects for research participation.