

Participant Support Costs

POLICY STATEMENT

Agencies may fund a project whose objective is to sponsor outreach programs which bring together experts to discuss research, educational findings or to expose researchers and students to new teaching and research techniques. To cover the associated costs, the sponsor may include a category of expenses generally referred to as participant support costs. Wages or other amounts paid to employees in their normal role, monies paid to presenters or those participating in a study as a human subject must not be classified as Participant Support Costs. This policy sets forth the unique requirements that apply to participant support costs.

Participant support costs, as defined in [2 CFR 200.1](#) include “direct costs for items such as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences, or training projects.” Per 2 CFR 200.456, these costs are allowable with the prior approval of the Federal awarding agency.

Participant support costs may include, but are not limited to:

1. Registration fees
2. Travel allowances
3. Manuals and supplies
4. Tuition
5. Stipends
6. Costs associated with supporting the cost of attendance at such events.

If the primary purpose of the individual’s attendance at the project event is learning and/or receiving training as a participant, then associated costs for the individual may be included as participant support. If the primary purpose of the individual is to speak or assist with management of the project, then associated costs for the individual should be expended in appropriate categories in a non-participant support fund.

Participant support costs are generally granted for specific projects (such as NSF Research Experience for undergraduates (“REU”) and Research Experience for Teachers (“RET”)) and are often subject to special sponsor regulations, such as:

1. Re-budgeting to/from the participant support cost category to/from other categories without prior approval is not permitted.
2. The University is prohibited from applying the Facilities & Administrative (“F&A”) cost to participant support costs. As a result, the University generally establishes a separate fund for participant support costs from the primary grant fund which includes non-participant support costs.
3. The University must return any unexpended participant support costs.

4. Any additional categories of participant support costs, other than those described in [2 CFR 200.1](#) (such as incentives, gifts, souvenirs, t-shirts and memorabilia), must be justified in the budget justification, and such costs will be closely scrutinized by the agency.

When a sponsored project includes participant support costs, the principal investigator and his/her administrative support personnel are required to be familiar with the specific requirements as set forth by the sponsor, and to insure compliance with those requirements. Evidence of attendance by participants, in the form of a daily log or similar documentation, must be maintained within the project's records. For further information on participant support costs, and NSF proposals for conferences, symposia and workshops that incur participant support costs, please refer to the [NSF's Grant Proposal Guide, Chapter II.C.2.g.\(v\)](#).