

PARTICIPANT SUPPORT COSTS POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the procedures for budgeting, managing, and reporting participant support costs in accordance with NSF guidelines and federal regulations (2 CFR §200).

DEFINITION OF PARTICIPANT SUPPORT COSTS

Participant support costs are direct costs for items such as stipends, travel, subsistence, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants (not employees) who take part in NSF-sponsored conferences, workshops, training, or other short-term educational activities. These costs are intended to facilitate participation and are not meant for compensation for services rendered.

ELIGIBILITY

Participants must:

- Be non-employees of the organization.
- Engage in activities directly related to the NSF-funded project.
- Not provide services or deliverables to the project.

Eligibility criteria must be clearly communicated to potential participants, and documentation verifying eligibility must be maintained.

ALLOWABLE COSTS

Allowable participant support costs may include:

- **Stipends** for participation.
- **Travel** to and from the event, including airfare, mileage, and other transportation costs.
- **Lodging and meals** during the event, adhering to federal per diem rates.
- **Registration fees** for conferences or workshops.

Detailed documentation must be maintained to support the allowability, reasonableness and allocability of the participant support costs. Documentation includes but is not limited to the following:

- Evidence of eligibility to participate in the event (e.g., proof of U.S. citizenship or enrollment in a STEM-related accredited degree program).
- Information on attendance at the event, such as participation sign-in sheets.
- Detailed receipts or expense reports clearly marked with the event and NSF award.

Funds budgeted for participation support cannot be used for employee participation in meetings, conferences, symposia, training projects, etc.

All costs must adhere to federal and institutional policies.

BUDGETING AND APPROVAL

- Participant support costs must be **explicitly budgeted** in the NSF proposal, with detailed justifications provided for each cost category.
- Any **re-budgeting** of these funds requires **prior written approval** from NSF.

ACCOUNTING AND TRACKING

- Participant support costs must be tracked through the **‘Participant Support Costs’ ledger and spend category**.
- These costs are **excluded from indirect cost calculations** unless specifically authorized.
- Regular reconciliations must be performed to ensure accuracy and compliance.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- Maintain **attendance records** for all participants.
- Keep **receipts and payment records** for stipends, travel, and other reimbursements.
- Ensure **compliance with federal and institutional policies**.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Principal Investigator (PI):** Ensures compliance, monitors participant activities, and provides oversight for the proper use of funds.
- **Sponsored Programs Office:** Reviews budgets, manages approvals, and serves as the primary liaison with NSF.
- **Finance Office:** Tracks expenditures, maintains payment documentation, and prepares financial reports.
- **Participants:** Adhere to the terms and conditions of their participation, including timely submission of required documentation.