

PARTICIPANT SUPPORT COST GUIDANCE

This guidance addresses fundamental concepts related to participant support costs. Participant support costs are allowed by a number of Federal agencies and other sponsors. Participant support costs are defined by the Uniform Guidance in §200.75:

“Participant support costs means 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.” (This does not include NIH Kirschstein-NRSA programs).

Participant support costs are typically incurred for projects that include an education or outreach component. These types of costs are most commonly included in National Science Foundation (NSF) grants, such as the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) or Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) program. NIH indicates that participant support costs are allowable only if specified in the Funding Opportunity Announcement.

Participant support costs are budgeted in a separate category in the application budget and must be accounted for separately.

- **What are participant support costs?**

Participant support costs are costs to support individuals who are receiving a training opportunity as part of a workshop, conference, seminar, symposium or other short-term instructional or information sharing activity funded by a sponsored award. Costs may include stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants (not employees). A participant does not perform work or service for the project or program. The participant is not required to deliver anything or provide any service to the university in return for these support costs.

- **Who is a participant?**

A participant may be:

- Students
- Scholars
- Scientists
- Teachers
- Private sector representatives

- **Who is NOT a participant?**

A participant cannot be:

- An employee of the grantee institution
- Advisory board members
- Interns who have paid appointments
- Anyone who has a deliverable or is primarily providing a service to the project.

- **What costs can be included in participant support costs?**

- **Stipend:** A stipend is a set amount of money to be paid by Smith College directly to the participant.

- **Subsistence Allowance:** The cost of a participant's housing and per diem expenses necessary for the individual to participate in the project are generally allowed, provided these costs are reasonable and limited to the days of attendance. Participants who live in the local area are not entitled to subsistence payments, although they may participate in meals and breaks provided at the meeting or conference.
 - **Travel:** Travel includes the costs of transportation and associated travel-related expenses and must follow sponsor guidelines as well as Smith College policies. The sole purpose of the trip must be to participate in the project activity.
 - **Fees:** The fees paid by or on behalf of a participant in connection with meetings, conferences, symposia, or training projects are generally allowable costs. Additionally, these fees may include laboratory fees, passport or visa fees for foreign participants, and registration fees.
 - **Other:** Certain other costs in support of the participant's involvement may be allowable, including training materials or laboratory supplies. Check the funding solicitation for guidance and contact Grants Administration with questions.
- **What costs cannot be included as participant support costs? Participant support costs do NOT include the following types of payments:**
 - Travel for project PI or staff.
 - Travel for a consultant providing services to the University, project, or program.
 - Honoraria paid to a guest speaker or lecturer.
 - Conference support costs such as facility rental or media equipment rental.
 - Agreement with a provider for multiple training events (i.e., an ongoing contract with specific terms and conditions).
 - Travel to bring collaborators together to meet and discuss the project.
 - Incentive payments to an individual who agrees to participate as a human subject in a research project.

Rebudgeting Participant Support Costs:

Any rebudgeting of Participant Supports Costs to another budget category requires the approval of the Federal agency.

For further information, contact Grants Administration at (413) 585-2218 or grants@smith.edu