

Participant Support Costs Guidance

What are Participant Support Costs?

Participant support costs (as defined in 2 CFR 200.75) 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. The Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) requires prior approval of the Federal Agency in order to incur Participant Support Costs under federally sponsored awards. The Participant Support Costs must be incurred within the period of performance of the project and be specifically allowed by the sponsoring agency.

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

- Registration fees
- Travel allowances
- Manuals and supplies
- Tuition
- Stipends
- Costs associated with supporting the cost of attendance at such events.

Expenses not considered Participant support costs:

- Honoraria paid to speakers or presenters.
- An incentive payment to encourage an individual to participate as a human subject in a research study is not a participant support cost and should be budgeted as an 'other direct costs'.
- Conference venue expenses such as room rentals, video services, and supplies.
- Conference meals and catering.
- Expenses of an employee of Mississippi State University.
- Per diem or subsistence payments to local participants.

Who is a participant?

A participant is defined as a non-MSU employee who is the recipient, not the provider, of a service or training associated with a workshop, conference, seminar, symposium or other short-term instructional or information sharing activity. Participants do not perform work or services for the project or program unless it is for their own benefit. Participants may include students, scholars, and scientists from other

institutions, representatives from the private sector, teachers, and state or local government agency personnel.

Budgets and Participant Support Costs

Participant Support Costs are listed as a separate category on the budget at proposal stage and award stage.

When deemed necessary, a separate fund specifically for Participant Support Cost will be established by Sponsored Programs Accounting upon receipt of an award including Participant Support Cost. The Administering Department is responsible for reviewing these funds for accuracy and completeness and is strongly encouraged to use the following account codes for all Participant Support Costs when applicable.

- Reportable Participating Cost 405796
- Non-Reportable Participating Cost 405797

F&A and Participant Support Costs

The Uniform Guidance states that Participant Support Costs are exempt from F&A in federally sponsored projects

- **Federally-funded Projects with Full F&A:** F&A is **not** assessed on participant support costs expensed on federal projects.
- **Non-Federal Awards with an MTDC F&A Rate Base:** F&A on participant support costs is not normally charged to nonfederal sponsors employing a Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) base.
- **Sponsor Limited F&A Rate:** F&A on participant support expenses is charged to prime sponsors and nonfederal sponsors (e.g., non-profit, for profit, industry, foreign entities) that stipulate a limited F&A rate based on Total Direct Costs (TDC) or Total Costs (TC).

Rebudgeting Participant Support Costs

Any rebudgeting of Participant Supports Costs to another budget category requires the approval of the Federal agency. For non-Federal sponsors, award specific guidelines should be consulted before rebudgeting Participant Support Costs.