

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

PARTICIPANT SUPPORT

While participant support is provided by a number of federal agencies and other sponsors, NSF has the most comprehensive policies governing the budgeting, spending and reporting of these funds.

Definition

Participant support costs (PSC) are defined by the National Science Foundation (NSF) as “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.” These funds cannot be used to pay for costs of the project staff to travel to a conference, costs of bringing collaborators together for a meeting or for the Principal Investigator (PI) to attend a seminar, workshop or training event.

Who is a Participant?

Participants may be students, private sector representatives, agency personnel, teachers, and others who attend and participate in the conference, workshop, or training activity supported by a particular award. UAH employees cannot be paid participants. Participants perform no work or services for the project or program other than for their own benefit. A participant is not involved in providing any deliverable to the University or a third party.

Budgeting and Award Management

A detailed justification is required that describes the purpose for the costs along with the benefit to the scope of the project. Amounts must be reasonable, based on the nature and duration of the activity, and outlined in the program solicitation and or the grant proposal.

Participant support costs (PSC) are direct costs for items such as participant allowance, supplies, per diem, travel expenses, and/or registration fees paid to or on behalf of a participant in connection with a meeting, workshop, conference, symposium or training project conducted under the award.

- PSC should be identified within the award
- PSC must be accounted for separately from the remainder of the award budget
- Rebudgeting from the PSC category into other categories must have prior sponsor approval
- Any unexpended PSC are returned at award close-out – they cannot be used to offset a deficit in the parent account.