May I include conference speaker fees in the participant support costs section of the budget?

No, the participant support category is for the support of participants or trainees only. Speakers and trainers are not considered participants and should not be included in this section of the budget.

We would like to rebudget our NSF award to move funds out of the participant support category. Do we need NSF approval to do this?

Yes. While NSF does provide rebudgeting authority for many categories, you must receive the approval of the cognizant NSF program officer to reallocate funds out of the participant support category. You may, however, rebudget funds into this category without prior NSF approval (unless you’re trying to move funds into the “other” category of participant).

Are costs such as room rental fees, catering, supplies, etc. related to an NSF-sponsored conference considered participant support costs?

No, the participant support cost line in the NSF budget should not be used for such costs.

Do participant support costs apply for all participants, or do they only apply for non-awardee organization participants?

Participants from the proposing organization and other organization(s) could be considered participants.

May human subjects that are being paid as survey takers be considered participants?

No, the participant support section of the budget may not be used to provide incentive payments to research subjects. Human subject payments should be included on line G6 of the NSF budget under “Other Direct Costs,” and indirect costs should be calculated on the payments in accordance with the organization’s federally negotiated indirect cost rate.

Is it acceptable to categorize students as both employees and participants in a REU proposal if we have made the appropriate determination?

No, the REU program is different. The goal of the program is to provide a practical educational experience for undergraduate students, rather than simply a job. The role of an REU student differs from the role of a student employee because the REU program is aimed at developing the students’ research skills and providing a high quality mentoring experience. Based on this role, an REU student is considered a participant in a training activity and funds for their support should be included as a stipend in the participant support cost section of the budget.