Guidelines for the Use of Federal Funds

Awards, Incentives, and Field Trips

Awards for Recognition and Incentives for Participation

When determining the use of federal educational grant funds for specific costs, minimal-cost certificates, plaques, ribbons, small trophies, or instructionally related items to be used in the classroom (such as pens and pencils) are acceptable incentives for participation in program activities or awards for recognition. These items should be tied to instructional strategies and activities.

The following items may be donated by others but may not be purchased with grant funds:

- Gifts or items that appear to be gifts 34C.F.R.200.425
- Souvenirs, memorabilia, or promotional items, such as T-shirts, caps, tote bags, imprinted pens, and key chains 34C.F.R.200.421(3)
- "Door prizes," movie tickets, gift certificates, passes to amusement parks, and so on.34C.F.R.200.425
- Food of any kind (snacks, beverages, refreshments, meals, and so on).

Field Trips

Educational field trips are allowable under certain circumstances if the field trip meets the purpose of the grant and is specified in the grant application. Educational field trips should involve students in learning experiences that are difficult to duplicate in a classroom situation. Field trips should provide hands-on activities that encourage students to experiment and ask questions.

The field trip must support academic programs. Evidence would be the teacher's lesson plans, which should include activities that prepare students for the trip and follow-up activities that allow students to summarize, apply, and evaluate what they learned from the trip. *See* 34C.F.R 200.300 through 200.309, 200.469.

Costs for the field trip must be reasonable. Any entrance fees and transportation costs must be reasonable in comparison to the intended objectives of the trip.

For audit purposes, your organization must maintain documentation of the field trip and must provide clear evidence of how the expense ties back to an instructional objective. Documentation should include the following:

- Destination of each field trip
- Costs associated with each field trip
- Objectives to be accomplished from conducting the field trip
- Teacher's lesson plan and follow-up activities

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Examples of appropriate educational field trips:

- Curricular academic activities focused on math, science, and technology, such as service learning, internships, academic UIL competitions (such as robotics or math), or science and technology fairs
- Laboratory and field investigation instruction, used to improve students' understanding of science
- Trips to a river, archaeological site, or nature preserve that might include contracting with local science centers, museums, zoos, and horticultural centers for visits and programs
- Trips to the local library to increase access to high interest reading materials
- Visits to colleges and universities to encourage interest in the pursuit of higher education.

Unallowable Field Trips: 34C.F.R.200.403, 200.405, 200.438

• Field trips for social, entertainment, or recreational purposes
• Field trips that supplant and do not supplement local or state expenditures or activities
• Field trips that are not part of a teacher's lesson plan or that do not meet the instructional objectives of the grant program
• Field trips that are not reasonable in cost or are not necessary to accomplish the objectives of the grant program
• Field trips that are not properly documented (as described above)
• Field trips to entertainment or recreational locations that have legitimate educational programs when more than 25% of the time spent at the location is used for entertainment or recreation of field trip participants.