

Government may require personnel activity reports, including prescribed certifications, or equivalent documentation that support the records as required in this section.

[78 FR 78608, Dec. 26, 2013, as amended at 79 FR 75886, Dec. 19, 2014; 85 FR 49565, Aug. 13, 2020]

**§ 200.431 Compensation—fringe benefits.**

(a) *General.* Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to, the costs of leave (vacation, family-related, sick or military), employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. Except as provided elsewhere in these principles, the costs of fringe benefits are allowable provided that the benefits are reasonable and are required by law, non-Federal entity-employee agreement, or an established policy of the non-Federal entity.

(b) *Leave.* The cost of fringe benefits in the form of regular compensation paid to employees during periods of authorized absences from the job, such as for annual leave, family-related leave, sick leave, holidays, court leave, military leave, administrative leave, and other similar benefits, are allowable if all of the following criteria are met:

(1) They are provided under established written leave policies;

(2) The costs are equitably allocated to all related activities, including Federal awards; and,

(3) The accounting basis (cash or accrual) selected for costing each type of leave is consistently followed by the non-Federal entity or specified grouping of employees.

(i) When a non-Federal entity uses the cash basis of accounting, the cost of leave is recognized in the period that the leave is taken and paid for. Payments for unused leave when an employee retires or terminates employment are allowable in the year of payment.

(ii) The accrual basis may be only used for those types of leave for which a liability as defined by GAAP exists when the leave is earned. When a non-Federal entity uses the accrual basis of

accounting, allowable leave costs are the lesser of the amount accrued or funded.

(c) *Fringe benefits.* The cost of fringe benefits in the form of employer contributions or expenses for social security; employee life, health, unemployment, and worker's compensation insurance (except as indicated in § 200.447); pension plan costs (see paragraph (i) of this section); and other similar benefits are allowable, provided such benefits are granted under established written policies. Such benefits, must be allocated to Federal awards and all other activities in a manner consistent with the pattern of benefits attributable to the individuals or group(s) of employees whose salaries and wages are chargeable to such Federal awards and other activities, and charged as direct or indirect costs in accordance with the non-Federal entity's accounting practices.

(d) *Cost objectives.* Fringe benefits may be assigned to cost objectives by identifying specific benefits to specific individual employees or by allocating on the basis of entity-wide salaries and wages of the employees receiving the benefits. When the allocation method is used, separate allocations must be made to selective groupings of employees, unless the non-Federal entity demonstrates that costs in relationship to salaries and wages do not differ significantly for different groups of employees.

(e) *Insurance.* See also § 200.447(d)(1) and (2).

(1) Provisions for a reserve under a self-insurance program for unemployment compensation or workers' compensation are allowable to the extent that the provisions represent reasonable estimates of the liabilities for such compensation, and the types of coverage, extent of coverage, and rates and premiums would have been allowable had insurance been purchased to cover the risks. However, provisions for self-insured liabilities which do not become payable for more than one year after the provision is made must not exceed the present value of the liability.

(2) Costs of insurance on the lives of trustees, officers, or other employees

holding positions of similar responsibility are allowable only to the extent that the insurance represents additional compensation. The costs of such insurance when the non-Federal entity is named as beneficiary are unallowable.

(3) Actual claims paid to or on behalf of employees or former employees for workers' compensation, unemployment compensation, severance pay, and similar employee benefits (*e.g.*, post-retirement health benefits), are allowable in the year of payment provided that the non-Federal entity follows a consistent costing policy.

(f) *Automobiles.* That portion of automobile costs furnished by the non-Federal entity that relates to personal use by employees (including transportation to and from work) is unallowable as fringe benefit or indirect (F&A) costs regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.

(g) *Pension plan costs.* Pension plan costs which are incurred in accordance with the established policies of the non-Federal entity are allowable, provided that:

(1) Such policies meet the test of reasonableness.

(2) The methods of cost allocation are not discriminatory.

(3) Except for State and Local Governments, the cost assigned to each fiscal year should be determined in accordance with GAAP.

(4) The costs assigned to a given fiscal year are funded for all plan participants within six months after the end of that year. However, increases to normal and past service pension costs caused by a delay in funding the actuarial liability beyond 30 calendar days after each quarter of the year to which such costs are assignable are unallowable. Non-Federal entity may elect to follow the "Cost Accounting Standard for Composition and Measurement of Pension Costs" (48 CFR 9904.412).

(5) Pension plan termination insurance premiums paid pursuant to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1301–1461) are allowable. Late payment charges on such premiums are unallowable. Excise taxes on accumulated funding defi-

ciencies and other penalties imposed under ERISA are unallowable.

(6) Pension plan costs may be computed using a pay-as-you-go method or an acceptable actuarial cost method in accordance with established written policies of the non-Federal entity.

(i) For pension plans financed on a pay-as-you-go method, allowable costs will be limited to those representing actual payments to retirees or their beneficiaries.

(ii) Pension costs calculated using an actuarial cost-based method recognized by GAAP are allowable for a given fiscal year if they are funded for that year within six months after the end of that year. Costs funded after the six-month period (or a later period agreed to by the cognizant agency for indirect costs) are allowable in the year funded. The cognizant agency for indirect costs may agree to an extension of the six-month period if an appropriate adjustment is made to compensate for the timing of the charges to the Federal Government and related Federal reimbursement and the non-Federal entity's contribution to the pension fund. Adjustments may be made by cash refund or other equitable procedures to compensate the Federal Government for the time value of Federal reimbursements in excess of contributions to the pension fund.

(iii) Amounts funded by the non-Federal entity in excess of the actuarially determined amount for a fiscal year may be used as the non-Federal entity's contribution in future periods.

(iv) When a non-Federal entity converts to an acceptable actuarial cost method, as defined by GAAP, and funds pension costs in accordance with this method, the unfunded liability at the time of conversion is allowable if amortized over a period of years in accordance with GAAP.

(v) The Federal Government must receive an equitable share of any previously allowed pension costs (including earnings thereon) which revert or inure to the non-Federal entity in the form of a refund, withdrawal, or other credit.

(h) *Post-retirement health.* Post-retirement health plans (PRHP) refers to costs of health insurance or health services not included in a pension plan

covered by paragraph (g) of this section for retirees and their spouses, dependents, and survivors. PRHP costs may be computed using a pay-as-you-go method or an acceptable actuarial cost method in accordance with established written policies of the non-Federal entity.

(1) For PRHP financed on a pay-as-you-go method, allowable costs will be limited to those representing actual payments to retirees or their beneficiaries.

(2) PRHP costs calculated using an actuarial cost method recognized by GAAP are allowable if they are funded for that year within six months after the end of that year. Costs funded after the six-month period (or a later period agreed to by the cognizant agency) are allowable in the year funded. The Federal cognizant agency for indirect costs may agree to an extension of the six-month period if an appropriate adjustment is made to compensate for the timing of the charges to the Federal Government and related Federal reimbursements and the non-Federal entity's contributions to the PRHP fund. Adjustments may be made by cash refund, reduction in current year's PRHP costs, or other equitable procedures to compensate the Federal Government for the time value of Federal reimbursements in excess of contributions to the PRHP fund.

(3) Amounts funded in excess of the actuarially determined amount for a fiscal year may be used as the non-Federal entity contribution in a future period.

(4) When a non-Federal entity converts to an acceptable actuarial cost method and funds PRHP costs in accordance with this method, the initial unfunded liability attributable to prior years is allowable if amortized over a period of years in accordance with GAAP, or, if no such GAAP period exists, over a period negotiated with the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

(5) To be allowable in the current year, the PRHP costs must be paid either to:

(i) An insurer or other benefit provider as current year costs or premiums, or

(ii) An insurer or trustee to maintain a trust fund or reserve for the sole pur-

pose of providing post-retirement benefits to retirees and other beneficiaries.

(6) The Federal Government must receive an equitable share of any amounts of previously allowed post-retirement benefit costs (including earnings thereon) which revert or inure to the non-Federal entity in the form of a refund, withdrawal, or other credit.

(i) *Severance pay.* (1) Severance pay, also commonly referred to as dismissal wages, is a payment in addition to regular salaries and wages, by non-Federal entities to workers whose employment is being terminated. Costs of severance pay are allowable only to the extent that in each case, it is required by

(i) Law;

(ii) Employer-employee agreement;

(iii) Established policy that constitutes, in effect, an implied agreement on the non-Federal entity's part; or

(iv) Circumstances of the particular employment.

(2) Costs of severance payments are divided into two categories as follows:

(i) Actual normal turnover severance payments must be allocated to all activities; or, where the non-Federal entity provides for a reserve for normal severances, such method will be acceptable if the charge to current operations is reasonable in light of payments actually made for normal severances over a representative past period, and if amounts charged are allocated to all activities of the non-Federal entity.

(ii) Measurement of costs of abnormal or mass severance pay by means of an accrual will not achieve equity to both parties. Thus, accruals for this purpose are not allowable. However, the Federal Government recognizes its responsibility to participate, to the extent of its fair share, in any specific payment. Prior approval by the Federal awarding agency or cognizant agency for indirect cost, as appropriate, is required.

(3) Costs incurred in certain severance pay packages which are in an amount in excess of the normal severance pay paid by the non-Federal entity to an employee upon termination of employment and are paid to the employee contingent upon a change in

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management control over, or ownership of, the non-Federal entity's assets, are unallowable.

(4) Severance payments to foreign nationals employed by the non-Federal entity outside the United States, to the extent that the amount exceeds the customary or prevailing practices for the non-Federal entity in the United States, are unallowable, unless they are necessary for the performance of Federal programs and approved by the Federal awarding agency.

(5) Severance payments to foreign nationals employed by the non-Federal entity outside the United States due to the termination of the foreign national as a result of the closing of, or curtailment of activities by, the non-Federal entity in that country, are unallowable, unless they are necessary for the performance of Federal programs and approved by the Federal awarding agency.

(j) *For IHEs only.* (1) Fringe benefits in the form of undergraduate and graduate tuition or remission of tuition for individual employees are allowable, provided such benefits are granted in accordance with established non-Federal entity policies, and are distributed to all non-Federal entity activities on an equitable basis. Tuition benefits for family members other than the employee are unallowable.

(2) Fringe benefits in the form of tuition or remission of tuition for individual employees not employed by IHEs are limited to the tax-free amount allowed per section 127 of the Internal Revenue Code as amended.

(3) IHEs may offer employees tuition waivers or tuition reductions, provided that the benefit does not discriminate in favor of highly compensated employees. Employees can exercise these benefits at other institutions according to institutional policy. See § 200.466, for treatment of tuition remission provided to students.

(k) *Fringe benefit programs and other benefit costs.* For IHEs whose costs are paid by state or local governments, fringe benefit programs (such as pension costs and FICA) and any other benefits costs specifically incurred on behalf of, and in direct benefit to, the non-Federal entity, are allowable costs of such non-Federal entities whether or

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not these costs are recorded in the accounting records of the non-Federal entities, subject to the following:

(1) The costs meet the requirements of Basic Considerations in §§ 200.402 through 200.411;

(2) The costs are properly supported by approved cost allocation plans in accordance with applicable Federal cost accounting principles; and

(3) The costs are not otherwise borne directly or indirectly by the Federal Government.

[85 FR 49565, Aug. 13, 2020]

### § 200.432 Conferences.

A conference is defined as a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, workshop or event whose primary purpose is the dissemination of technical information beyond the non-Federal entity and is necessary and reasonable for successful performance under the Federal award. Allowable conference costs paid by the non-Federal entity as a sponsor or host of the conference may include rental of facilities, speakers' fees, costs of meals and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences unless further restricted by the terms and conditions of the Federal award. As needed, the costs of identifying, but not providing, locally available dependent-care resources are allowable. Conference hosts/sponsors must exercise discretion and judgment in ensuring that conference costs are appropriate, necessary and managed in a manner that minimizes costs to the Federal award. The Federal awarding agency may authorize exceptions where appropriate for programs including Indian tribes, children, and the elderly. See also §§ 200.438, 200.456, and 200.475.

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### § 200.433 Contingency provisions.

(a) Contingency is that part of a budget estimate of future costs (typically of large construction projects, IT systems, or other items as approved by the Federal awarding agency) which is associated with possible events or conditions arising from causes the precise outcome of which is indeterminable at