

**Subpart B—Cost Standards and Prior Approval**

**§ 1630.5 Standards governing allowability of costs under LSC grants or contracts.**

(a) *General criteria.* Expenditures are allowable under an LSC grant or contract only if the recipient can demonstrate that the cost was:

(1) Actually incurred in the performance of the grant or contract and the recipient was liable for payment;

(2) Reasonable and necessary for the performance of the grant or contract as approved by LSC;

(3) Allocable to the grant or contract;

(4) In compliance with the Act, applicable appropriations law, LSC rules, regulations, guidelines, and instructions, the Accounting Guide for LSC Recipients, the terms and conditions of the grant or contract, and other applicable law;

(5) Consistent with accounting policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both LSC-funded and non-LSC-funded activities;

(6) Accorded consistent treatment over time;

(7) Determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles; and

(8) Adequately and contemporaneously documented in business records accessible during normal business hours to LSC management, the Office of Inspector General, the General Accounting Office, and independent auditors or other audit organizations authorized to conduct audits of recipients.

(b) *Reasonable costs.* A cost is reasonable if, in its nature or amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the same or similar circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. In determining the reasonableness of a given cost, consideration shall be given to:

(1) Whether the cost is of a type generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the operation of the recipient or the performance of the grant or contract;

(2) The restraints or requirements imposed by such factors as generally accepted sound business practices,

arms-length bargaining, Federal and State laws and regulations, and the terms and conditions of the grant or contract;

(3) Whether the recipient acted with prudence under the circumstances, considering its responsibilities to its clients and employees, the public at large, the Corporation, and the Federal government; and

(4) Significant deviations from the recipient's established practices, which may unjustifiably increase the grant or contract costs.

(c) *Allocable costs.* (1) A cost is allocable to a particular cost objective, such as a grant, project, service, or other activity, in accordance with the relative benefits received. Costs may be allocated to LSC funds either as direct or indirect costs according to the provisions of this section.

(2) A cost is allocable to an LSC grant or contract if it is treated consistently with other costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances and if it:

(i) Is incurred specifically for the grant or contract;

(ii) Benefits both the grant or contract and other work and can be distributed in reasonable proportion to the benefits received; or

(iii) Is necessary to the recipient's overall operation, although a direct relationship to any particular cost objective cannot be shown.

(3) Recipients must maintain accounting systems sufficient to demonstrate the proper allocation of costs to each of their funding sources.

(d) *Direct costs.* Direct costs are those that can be identified specifically with a particular grant award, project, service, or other direct activity of an organization. Costs identified specifically with grant awards are direct costs of the awards and are to be assigned directly thereto. Direct costs include, but are not limited to, the salaries and wages of recipient staff who are working on cases or matters that are identified with specific grants or contracts. Salary and wages charged directly to LSC grants and contracts must be supported by personnel activity reports.

(e) *Indirect costs.* Indirect costs are those that have been incurred for common or joint objectives and cannot be

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readily identified with a particular final cost objective. A recipient may treat any direct cost of a minor amount as an indirect cost for reasons of practicality where the accounting treatment for such cost is consistently applied to all final cost objectives. Indirect costs include, but are not limited to, the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, and the costs of general program administration, such as the salaries and wages of program staff whose time is not directly attributable to a particular grant or contract. Such staff may include, but are not limited to, executive officers and personnel, accounting, secretarial and clerical staff.

(f) *Allocation of indirect costs.* Where a recipient has only one major function, *i.e.*, the delivery of legal services to low-income clients, allocation of indirect costs may be by a simplified allocation method, whereby total allowable indirect costs (net of applicable credits) are divided by an equitable distribution base and distributed to individual grant awards accordingly. The distribution base may be total direct costs, direct salaries and wages, attorney hours, numbers of cases, numbers of employees, or another base which results in an equitable distribution of indirect costs among funding sources.

(g) *Exception for certain indirect costs.* Some funding sources may refuse to allow the allocation of certain indirect costs to an award. In such instances, a recipient may allocate a proportional share of another funding source's share of an indirect cost to LSC funds, provided that the activity associated with the indirect cost is permissible under the LSC Act, LSC appropriations statutes, and regulations.

(h) *Applicable credits.* Applicable credits are those receipts or reductions of expenditures which operate to offset or reduce expense items that are allocable to grant awards as direct or indirect costs. Applicable credits include, but are not limited to, purchase discounts, rebates or allowances, recoveries or indemnities on losses, insurance refunds, and adjustments of overpayments or erroneous charges. To the extent that such credits relate to allowable costs, they shall be credited as a cost reduc-

tion or cash refund in the same fund to which the related costs are charged.

(i) *Fundraising.* Costs associated with fundraising for the purpose of increasing recipient funds available to carry out the purposes of the LSC grant are allowable and allocable to the LSC grant if they meet the requirements of this section.

(j) *Guidance.* The regulations of the Office of Management and Budget shall provide guidance for all allowable cost questions arising under this part when relevant policies or criteria therein are not inconsistent with the provisions of the Act, applicable appropriations law, this part, the Accounting Guide for LSC Recipients, LSC rules, regulations, guidelines, instructions, and other applicable law.

### § 1630.6 Prior approval.

(a) *Advance understandings.* Under any given grant award, the reasonableness and allocability of certain cost items may be difficult to determine. To avoid subsequent disallowance or dispute based on unreasonableness or nonallocability, a recipient may seek a written understanding from LSC in advance of incurring special or unusual costs. If a recipient elects not to seek an advance understanding from LSC, the absence of an advance understanding on any element of a cost will not affect the reasonableness or allocability of the cost.

(b) *Costs requiring prior approval.* (1) Without LSC's prior written approval, a recipient may not expend \$25,000 or more of LSC funds on any of the following:

(i) A single purchase or single lease of personal property;

(ii) A single contract for services;

(iii) A single combined purchase or lease of personal property and contract for services; and

(iv) Capital improvements.

(2) Without LSC's prior written approval, a recipient may not expend LSC funds on a purchase of real estate.

(3) For costs apportioned between LSC funds and one or more other funding sources, this requirement applies when the cost allocable to LSC funds is \$25,000 or greater.