

COST PRINCIPLE DEFINITIONS

Please Note: The definitions below are intended to ensure compliance with the standards set forth in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E. Please review this information alongside the specific instructions from the funding agency.

2 CFR Subpart E - Cost Principles: Subpart E of this part establishes principles for determining the allowable costs incurred by non-Federal entities (UAB for the purpose of this document) under Federal awards. The principles are for the purpose of cost determination and are not intended to identify the circumstances or dictate the extent of Federal Government participation in the financing of a particular program or project. The principles are designed to provide that Federal awards bear their fair share of cost recognized under these principles except where restricted or prohibited by statute.

Total Cost: As defined by 2 CFR Part 200.402, the total cost of a Federal award is the sum of the **allowable** direct and **allocable** indirect costs less any **applicable credits**.

Allowability: As defined by 2 CFR Part 200.403, except where otherwise authorized by statute, in order to be allowable under Federal awards costs must:

- Be necessary and reasonable for the performance of the Federal award and be allocable thereto under these principles.
- Conform to any limitations or exclusions set forth in these principles or in the Federal award as to types or amount of cost items.
- Be consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally-financed and other activities of the non-Federal entity.
- Be accorded consistent treatment. A cost may not be assigned to a Federal award as a direct cost if any other cost incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances has been allocated to the Federal award as an indirect cost.
- Be determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), except, for state and local governments and Indian tribes only, as otherwise provided for in this part.
- Not be included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other federally-financed program in either the current or a prior period.
- Be adequately documented.
- Cost must be incurred during the approved budget period. The Federal awarding agency is authorized, at its discretion, to waive prior written approvals to carry forward unobligated balances to subsequent budget periods pursuant to 2 CFR Part 200.308(e)(3).

Reasonable Cost: As defined by 2 CFR Part 200.404, a cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. In determining reasonableness of a given cost, consideration must be given to:

- Whether the cost is of a type generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the operation of the non-Federal entity or the proper and efficient performance of the Federal awards.
- The restraints or requirements imposed by such factors as: sound business practices; arm's-length bargaining; Federal, state, local, tribal, and other laws and regulations; and terms and conditions of the Federal award.
- Market prices for comparable goods or services for the geographic area.
- Whether the individuals concerned acted with prudence in the circumstances considering their responsibilities to the non-Federal entity, its employees, where applicable its students or membership, the public at large, and the Federal government.
- Whether the non-Federal entity significantly deviates from its established practices and policies regarding the incurrence of costs, which may unjustifiably increase the Federal award's cost.

Allocable Cost: As defined by 2 CFR Part 200.405, a cost is allocable to a particular Federal award or other cost objective if the goods or services involved are chargeable or assignable to that Federal award or cost objective in accordance with relative benefits received. This standard is met if the cost:

- Is incurred specifically for the Federal award
- Benefits both the Federal award and other work of the non-Federal entity and can be distributed in proportions that may be approximated using reasonable methods
- Is necessary to the overall operation of the non-Federal entity and is assignable in part to the Federal award in accordance with the principles in this subpart

All activities which benefit from the non-Federal entity's indirect (F&A) cost, including unallowable activities and donated services by the non-Federal entity or third parties, will receive an appropriate allocation of indirect costs.

Any cost allocable to a particular Federal award under the principles provided for in this part may not be charged to other Federal awards to overcome fund deficiencies, to avoid restrictions imposed by Federal statutes, regulations, or terms and conditions of the Federal awards, or for other reasons.

Applicable credits: As defined by 2 CFR Part 200.406, applicable credits refer to those receipts or reduction-of-expenditure-type transactions that offset or reduce expense items allocable to the Federal award as direct or indirect (F&A) costs. Examples of such transactions are: purchase discounts, rebates or allowances, recoveries or indemnities on losses, insurance refunds or rebates, and adjustments of overpayments or erroneous charges. To the extent that such credits accruing to or received by the non-Federal entity relate to allowable costs, they must be credited to the Federal award either as a cost reduction or cash refund, as appropriate.

Direct Costs: As defined by 2 CFR Part 200.413, direct costs are those costs that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective, such as a Federal award, or other internally or externally funded activity, or that can be directly assigned to such activities with relative ease and a high degree of accuracy. Costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances must be treated consistently as either direct or indirect (F&A) costs.

Facilities and Administrative Costs (F&A or Indirect Costs): As defined by 2 CFR Part 200.56, Indirect (F&A) costs means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective. Not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted. Indirect (F&A) cost pools must be distributed to benefitted cost objectives on bases that will produce an equitable result in consideration of relative benefits derived.

Classification of costs: 2 CFR Part 200.412 states, there is no universal rule for classifying certain costs as either direct or indirect (F&A) under every accounting system. A cost may be direct with respect to some specific service or function, but indirect with respect to the Federal award or other final cost objective. Therefore, it is essential that each item of cost incurred for the same purpose be treated consistently in like circumstances either as a direct or an indirect (F&A) cost in order to avoid possible double-charging of Federal awards.

Cost objective: 2 CFR Part 200.28 means a program, function, activity, award, organizational subdivision, contract, or work unit for which cost data are desired and for which provision is made to accumulate and measure the cost of processes, products, jobs, capital projects, etc. A cost objective may be a major function of the non-Federal entity, a particular service or project, a Federal award, or an indirect (Facilities & Administrative (F&A)) cost activity.

Intermediate cost objective: 2 CFR Part 200.60 means a cost objective that is used to accumulate indirect costs or service center costs that are subsequently allocated to one or more indirect cost pools or final cost objectives.

Final cost objective: 2 CFR Part 200.44 means a cost objective which has allocated to it both direct and indirect costs and, in the non-Federal entity's accumulation system, is one of the final accumulation points, such as a particular award, internal project, or other direct activity of a non-Federal entity.
