



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A03110062

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In the course of reviewing conference/workshop awards for compliance with grant conditions and federal regulations, we identified three issues with an awardee's¹ administration of a conference grant.² Specifically, the awardee appeared to have used participant support funds to pay other direct costs without program officer approval; collected a registration fee (i.e., program income); and failed to meet its cost-sharing obligation.

We found that the awardee had used funds for meeting room rental [REDACTED] and refreshments for the conference. Light refreshments are generally permitted as participant support costs. Meeting room rental is also permitted under NSF policy; however, such costs are properly treated as other direct costs, not as participant support costs.³ For reasons discussed below, we do not need to pursue this misapplication of participant support funds.

With regard to program income, we found that the conference website advertised a [REDACTED] registration fee for the conference. The awardee explained to us that the department hosting the conference did not collect the fee from attendees. Because we have no other evidence that a fee was collected, we accepted the awardee's explanation.

When asked to provide records of its cost-sharing commitment, the awardee stated that it had no records because it had not met its cost-sharing obligation. The awardee reimbursed NSF the cost-sharing obligation by crediting the grant account for the participant support charges [REDACTED] for five attendees. We have confirmed that the credit has been submitted through FastLane. The total amount credited is in excess of the awardee's obligation under the terms of the award letter; however, the excess amount covers the meeting room rental identified above. Thus, all issues raised by the review have been resolved.

Accordingly, this case is closed.

1 [REDACTED]

2 [REDACTED]

³ GPM 625.a (Rental of facilities) and GPM 625.g. (Meals and coffee breaks integral to conference)