

Participant Compensation

Good Practices for Compensating Participants

Determining appropriate compensation

- ✓ Develop an accurate estimate of the time and effort required of each participant
- ✓ Use what you pay an expert consultant doing similar work as a benchmark
- ✓ Monitor the time and effort participants are spending and make adjustments if needed
- ✓ Be aware of power dynamics; participants are likely not to feel empowered to negotiate
- ✓ Err on the side of providing too much compensation rather than too little

For paying participants

- ✓ Provide participants with options for how they can be paid and when
- ✓ Offer information about how and when payments will be administered in advance
- ✓ Avoid unnecessarily burdensome administrative practices, especially for small payments
- ✓ If the process to receive payment is time-consuming, compensate participants for the additional time
- ✓ Offer alternative forms of compensation (see examples below) up front, in case participants deem the cash payment process too burdensome

For communicating with participants

- ✓ Recognize that conversations about compensation may be uncomfortable for some
- ✓ Do not set false expectations for future payments
- ✓ Provide as much information as you can in advance about how your process will work
- ✓ Commit to making timely payments and keeping participants informed
- ✓ Make the purpose of the compensation and your expectations clear in writing
- ✓ Notify participants whenever they will need to report compensation as income

Determining who should be paid

- ✓ Offer to compensate individuals or organizations based on their preference
- ✓ Compensate participants who spend time on your work
- ✓ Compensate participants who are offering their expertise
- ✓ Consider any legal restrictions, such as your conflict of interest policy

For monitoring

- ✓ Trust that participants are doing their part
- ✓ Avoid making compensation contingent on meeting certain milestones
- ✓ Observe the time and effort of participants and increase compensation if needed
- ✓ Request feedback from participants about how compensation works for them

For budgeting

- ✓ Fully secure the funding before you contact any participants
- ✓ Recognize that compensation is a necessary cost of doing business, not an extra
- ✓ Recognize that compensation is yet another tool for supporting communities and achieving your mission