

October 28, 2009

NIH Foreign Travel Policy (for Budget)

I am the grants management specialist assigned to your project, and am responding to your inquiry. I have copied your business official so they understand the NIH policy on these matters.

The NIH Grants Policy Statement requires that NIH prior approval be obtained for any foreign involvement in the grant, as defined in the following excerpt.

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps_2003/NIHGPS_Part7.htm#_Toc54600129

Foreign Component Added to a Grant to a Domestic Organization. Adding a foreign component under a grant to a domestic organization requires NIH prior approval.

Current NIH policy does not consider foreign travel to be a foreign component, and does not require the prior approval of NIH staff; however, the NIH Grants Policy Statement includes the following guidance relative to foreign travel:

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps_2003/NIHGPS_Part6.htm

Grantees are strongly encouraged to take advantage of discount fares for airline travel through advance purchase of tickets if travel schedules can be planned in advance (such as for national meetings and other scheduled events).

Grantees must comply with the requirement that U.S. flag air carriers be used by domestic grantees to the maximum extent possible when commercial air transportation is the means of travel between the United States and a foreign country or between foreign countries. This requirement must not be influenced by factors of cost, convenience, or personal travel preference. The cost of travel under a ticket issued by a U.S. flag air carrier that leases space on a foreign air carrier under a code-sharing agreement is allowable if the purchase is in accordance with GSA regulations on U.S. flag air carriers and code shares (http://www.gsa.gov/gsa/cm_attachments/GSA_DOCUMENT/110304_FTR_R2QA53_0Z5RDZ-i34K-pR.pdf). (A code-sharing agreement is an arrangement between a U.S. flag carrier and a foreign air carrier in which the U.S. flag carrier provides passenger service on the foreign air carrier's regularly scheduled commercial flights.)

In reference to the research nurse, travel is an allowable cost, as long as the travel will provide a direct benefit to the project. There is no restriction on whose travel may be charged to the grant, as long as the travel is justified and necessary for the conduct of the project. Please let me know if you have further questions.

Sincerely,
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