



University
of Vermont

Leahy Institute
for Rural Partnerships

Sponsored Provisions & Business Meals for Leahy Institute Funded Projects

This document is meant to clarify allowances for food and meals that you might provide as part of your funded project. This guidance has been approved by UVM Sponsored Projects Administration and the Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships.

Food and meals expenses fall under two categories: sponsored provisions or business meals. The Leahy Institutes will support eligible sponsored provisions (see below for eligibility details).

Business meals, as a rule, cannot be supported through the Leahy Institute or through any sponsored project.

Sponsored Provisions

Sponsored Provisions, Research Study Subsistence and Travel Meals are generally allowable, but need to meet certain criteria for being necessary and reasonable for the benefit of the project scope of work. UVM is required to review each expenditure and document audit trail thoroughly.

Sponsored Provisions can be defined as **food/meals served during a UVM-hosted workshop, event, training, seminar, etc. with a published agenda that shows the timeframe of the event is of a long-enough duration that food/a meal needs to be served to the attendees.** A sponsored provision is for food served at an event *hosted by UVM* and does not include meals provided at external restaurants.

Ask yourself the following questions when determining if the meal/food will be covered by your Leahy Institute Grant:

1. Is the meal/food essential to the sponsor approved meeting/event?
2. Would **not** serving a meal impact the agenda due to the duration the attendees are being asked to participate?

You will be asked to provide the following information to determine cost eligibility:

- Agenda showing dates, time, location, etc.
- List of attendees (must include at least one external attendee to be eligible)

- Description of topic discussed and how it supports scope of the project.
- Justification of how the sponsored provision is an integral part of the advancement of the project.

Example of Allowable Sponsored Provision: An event with an agenda from 8 AM to 4:30 PM, where all attendees are expected to stay at the event for the duration. It is reasonable in this case that UVM would serve lunch and light snacks to encourage the attendees to attend the all-day event and still be provided with food and nourishment.

Business Meals and Refreshments

Business Meals and Refreshments are not allowable under any sponsored project due to federal regulations defining these activities as “entertainment” or “hospitality”.

Account 60553 Business Meals and 600551 Refreshments will generate budget checking errors for this reason.

Business meals may not be charged as project costs when individuals decide to go to breakfast, lunch, or dinner together when no need exists for the continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered an entertainment cost.

Note: Meals consumed while in official travel status do not fall in this category.

They are considered per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization’s established travel policies subject to statutory limitations.

Contact Us

We understand that determining cost eligibility can feel subjective. However, it is important for us to be thorough on these expenses to remain in compliance with our federal funder, USDA/NIFA.

If you have any questions on individual expenses, or if you would like to talk through planning an event related to your project, please contact Daria Jarani, Program Manager, at djarani@uvm.edu.