

## Food Policy for State Grants

Grantees may include food for program participants as a line in their budget if it is allowed within the grant program, if it is necessary for the program and if the cost is reasonable. Examples of the food being necessary for a program include, but are not limited to:

- Grantees may provide a meal as an incentive to participate in a grant program where participants, especially youth, may not otherwise attend. These grant programs can include, but are not limited to, focus groups, workshops, trainings, and violence prevention events.
- Food may be an allowable cost when the event itself is based on a prosocial, relationship-building programmatic purpose within a community or between program participants. For example, a grantee for a violence prevention program may hold a block party to build community and provide food as part of the event, or a re-entry program may host a barbecue to re-introduce people to the neighborhood. Food may also be allowed at a capstone social activity marking the conclusion of a training or program. Employees may participate and eat at these events; however, grantees may not purchase food for events that are solely for employees.
- Programs that provide therapy and other one-on-one counseling may also keep snacks on hand, like granola bars, if necessary for participants to focus on the program, rather than on their hunger.
- Programs that address emergency needs, like re-entry programs, may provide temporary, emergency food for program participants as a bridge to other programs like TANF or SNAP when other sources of emergency food are not available. Grantees may not use ICJIA funds as a substitute for other food programs and allowances that are already available, such as TANF or SNAP.

Alcohol cannot be served at the same event where food is paid for with ICJIA funds, even if the alcohol is paid from another source of funds.

In the budget narrative, the applicant should describe how the per-person cost was calculated, why food is necessary for the program, and why the costs are reasonable. As a guideline for reasonable costs for program participants, snacks may be provided at \$3 per person and meals for \$10 per person. Reasonableness may be more or less than these amounts depending on the type or size of the event, location, or other factors, including the need to purchase pre-packaged food during the COVID-19 crisis.

Grantees may use grant funds to pay for their employees' meals if they are traveling in support of the grant program. The requirements for food related to travel for work are the same as the State of Illinois' policy for meals during work travel unless grantees have a food travel policy with lower rates of pay per meal, then that more restrictive policy applies.

Grantees must maintain records of the actual food costs and how the food supported its program. For events, grantees must maintain records of the event, including receipts for food and other costs and the number of program participants. For emergency food provision, grantees must maintain records of both the cost of the food provided and the program participant who received it.