

National Institutes of Health

Food Policy for NIH-FNIH Partnerships

Any expenditure of National Institutes of Health (NIH) funds must be consistent with applicable statutes, regulations and policy related to the expenditure of government funds for food. Similarly, any expenditure of Foundation for the NIH (FNIH) funds for food must be consistent with applicable statutes, regulations and policy related to how FNIH expends funds. If FNIH is hosting dinners, lunches, receptions, or otherwise expending funds for food, it must do so directly and all logistics should be handled such that it is clear and unambiguous that these are FNIH events, FNIH-hosted tables, or otherwise FNIH expenditures.

Expenditures of FNIH funds for food to be served at, in connection with, or related to an NIH event or joint NIH-FNIH event must be consistent with the following principles:

- 1) The primary purpose of the event must be science, public health, training, or other core NIH mission activity. Events cannot be primarily food events that include mission-related activities incidental to the meal (e.g., luncheon at a restaurant with a featured speaker). Similarly, events cannot be primarily celebrations of NIH, its ICs, or its programs.
- 2) The food should be modest and avoid the appearance of luxury or extravagance.
- 3) FNIH must be substantively involved in the program and the provision of food cannot be the sole FNIH activity.
- 4) The proposal for food at an event must demonstrate the need for food relative to promoting the success or efficiency of the event. For example, a lack of time or ready availability of food during an all-day event, working sessions that span usual mealtimes, or other similar circumstances generally lend support to the concept that food is important to the success of the event.
- 5) Federal employees attending such events should be informed in advance that acceptance of the meals or other food without personal payment may constitute a gift to the employee, unless the event is designated as a Widely Attended Gathering (WAG) or the food is valued at under \$20.