



RESEARCH OFFICE RESOURCES

# INCENTIVES

## PAYING HUMAN SUBJECTS WITH GIFT CARDS OR CASH

This one-sheeter is meant to serve as a quick reference for PIs. For full policies, please visit:

- University Policy: [Office of Sponsored Programs](#)

**Talk to the Research Office early about your incentives to avoid delays in data collection!**

### GIFT CARDS

Gift cards—physical or electronic—can be used for payments **of up to \$100** per subject, per project, per calendar year. Exceptions may be approved if requested in advance for up to \$500 per year.

- **Virtual Incentives** is a gift card management service our college uses for electronic gift card distribution. VI offers us gift cards at cost and returns all unused money at the end of the project. That means we only pay for exactly what we use (no fees). A great benefit of using VI is that all required documentation is kept within their reporting system. Requesting a new program with VI follows the same process as physical gift cards (see pg. 2).

### CASH

Cash can be used for payments **of up to \$500** per subject, per project, per calendar year. If more than \$500 will be given to a subject, they will need to be setup and paid through the vendor system.

#### IMPORTANT IRB INFO FOR ALL INCENTIVES (CASH OR GIFT CARD)

- IRB approves your proposed incentive based on what is fair compensation to the participant, but does not review for compliance with University policy or IRS/Homeland Security laws.
- **It is your responsibility to know what is allowable or to ask beforehand to avoid having to make IRB modifications.**

#### PAYMENTS TO NONRESIDENT ALIENS

- The university must comply with IRS and the Department of Homeland Security regulations. The rules are complex and penalties are harsh and can include deportation.
- For total payments to nonresident aliens **greater than \$100**, the university needs to obtain critical information on the nonresident alien's visa status before the individual participates in the project.

#### ANONYMOUS PARTICIPANTS

- Anonymous participation should be used rarely.
- If the study requires anonymous participation, by default this will limit incentives to:
  - under \$500 (cash or gift card) for residents
  - under \$100 (cash or gift card) for nonresident aliens
- Incentives must still be tracked and documented, and the Research Office can help determine the best documentation for your study.

# PROCESS FOR GETTING INCENTIVES

Every effort should be made to purchase incentives **in advance** through the university. Plan on two weeks from the time you order the incentives until they are available.

## ORDERING GIFT CARD & CASH INCENTIVES

1. **Receive IRB approval *before* ordering incentives.**
2. **Determine your project's custodian and where incentives will be safely stored.**
3. **Fill out the CSW Incentives Request Form ([click here](#)).** The CSW Research Office will start the process by entering your request in Workday. An email will be sent to you with details on next steps.
  - a. **For gift cards:** gift cards will be delivered directly to the custodian listed on the request.
  - b. **For cash:** The custodian is listed on the eRequest and will be required to pick up the check and cash it. Plan on two weeks from the time you order to the time the check is ready for pick up.

#### 4. **Use incentives.**

The custodian is responsible for maintaining incentive balances, ensuring unused incentives are accounted for, and all required documentation.

#### 5. **Return unused incentives and submit documentation.**

As you complete your study, work with the Research Office to return unused incentives and submit all documentation within 2 weeks of project's end.

## DOCUMENTATION

1. **Participant Summary:** The PI must keep a detailed summary sheet of all payments.
2. **Participant Payment Receipt:** A completed and signed receipt is required for each participant. This acknowledgement is kept by the PI.

Document files **must** be kept for 5 years by the PI after the project ends.