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NSF OIG Audit of Tenn. State U. Questions \$155,432

National Science Foundation Office of Inspector General (OIG) auditors questioned approximately half of the costs of sampled expenditures claimed by Tennessee State University on NSF awards, but TSU believes most are appropriate. According to the July 20 report, OIG tested 80 transactions totaling \$305,526 among approximately \$5.9 million in costs TSU claimed on 11 awards from June 1, 2014, to July 25, 2019. Overall, OIG questioned \$155,432 of the tested expenditures; TSU agreed to make repayment of only \$28,859. OIG also found issues with TSU's effort certification process. The largest portion of the questioned costs, \$121,797, was related to four grants, and consisted of \$66,169 of stipend charges and \$55,628 of payroll charges OIG said were unallowable because "TSU did not provide documentation to establish the appropriate amount or nature of these stipends as participant support costs, employment payments, or scholarships." TSU "agreed that \$19,571 of indirect costs should not have been charged," but stated that "10 of the 11 payroll transactions are allowable, allocable, and reasonable. TSU believes that the time and effort reports were completed as required but due to staffing and personnel changes, the original reports could not be located. For the one remaining unsupported salary cost, TSU agreed to return the \$2,415 to NSF," OIG said.

Another \$16,885 was inappropriately allocated expenses for four awards, consisting of "\$11,371 related to charges for equipment and supply costs, \$2,797 related to payroll costs, and \$2,717 related to unallowable general ledger costs." OIG determined that some of the costs were incurred within days of the end of the award period of performance. "TSU agreed to return \$5,514 but disagreed with the remaining \$11,371 in questioned costs," according to the audit. Auditors also made 13 recommendations. NSF will make a final determination on what amounts, if any, TSU will need to repay and any changes it should make to its policies and procedures.

[Link to TSU audit](#)

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