# City / county memo (example)

## To establish protocol on paying research participants

**What this is:** An example policy memo from a local government agency on allowing compensation for research participants.

**How to use this:** Read this carefully before you try to use it to adopt a research compensation practice. Work with your attorneys on what will work in your organization.

[Letterhead / seal]

# [Department / office] Gift Card Policy

[Department / office] does research to ensure the public has a voice in projects we undertake and decisions we make. Our team partners with City Departments to collect feedback from the public. [Department / office] provides gift cards to incentivize and compensate individuals involved in research activities including but not limited to participation in focus groups, workshops, interviews, surveys, and prototyping and pilot testing.

## Eligibility

Individuals who live or work in [city / county] and are over the age of 18 and are eligible to receive gift cards for participating in [Department / office] research activities.

City / county employees and contractors are not eligible to receive gift cards.

Under no circumstances may a City / county employee involved in any stage of handling or transferring gift cards issue or use a gift card for themselves, a family member, other City / county employee, or City / county vendor/contractor.

## Recruitment

* Individuals can sign up on the City’s website to participate in research. [website URL]
* Individuals may be recruited directly by Digital and Data Services staff and/or in partnership with staff from other City departments.
* Individuals may be recruited in partnership with local non-profit agencies.
* Staff of nonprofit agencies that are not directly contracted by the City are also eligible.

## Purchasing

Gift cards must be purchased through the department’s contracts and accounting units in coordination with the Office of Contract Administration (OCA). Employees may not purchase gift cards as a reimbursable expense.

Gift cards must be purchased from City-approved vendors.

The value of each gift card purchased may not exceed $50 per card. The purchase of cards is limited to less than $10,000 at a time.

## 

## Approver

The purchasing of gift cards must be approved by the [deputy head of department / office] and the Chief XX Officer.

## Funding Source

Gift cards must be purchased with designated funds from the department.

Account:

Fund:

Department ID:

Authority:

Project:

Activity:

Location:

## Ordering/Receiving Process

1. When there is a need to purchase gift cards, the initial request to order gift cards for [Department / office] research activities must be approved by [deputy head of department / office] and the Chief XX Officer.
2. The Project Coordinator will prepare the “Gift Card Purchase Request Form” with the authorized approvals. The Card Request shall contain Number of Cards, Date/Name of Research Event, Card amount.
3. The project coordinator will confirm that the funds are available and approved.
4. If the funds are available and approved, the Project Coordinator will submit a requisition request to colleagues in Accounting, include a copy of the Department’s Gift Card Policy, and the approved “Gift Card Purchase Request Form”.
5. Accounting will submit a requisition in [system] to the Office of Contract Administration (OCA). Note: regardless of amount, this needs to be submitted as a requisition.
6. Accounting and/or OCA will review the requisition. After OCA’s review, OCA will prepare a purchase order. OCA will forward requisition to the appropriate team for approval.
7. A copy of the Purchase Order will be distributed to the department and the supplier.
8. The gift card order will be received by the Project Coordinator, and/or [deputy head of department / office] . Details of receipt of gift cards below. The [deputy head of department / office] will sign off on the delivery note/packing slip.
9. The signed delivery packing slip will be forwarded to the accounting team along with the invoice for payment processing.

## Inventory

The Operations Team will track the inventory of gift cards.

### Physical Gift Cards

#### Receipt of Gift Cards

Upon receipt of purchased gift cards, the Project Coordinator will count the gift cards to ensure the department has received the correct number of gift cards and verify amounts to the packing slip/ order request. This will be recorded in a gift card inventory tracking sheet. [(Refer to Appendix A)](#_nxvwoyvn1gkt)

#### Quarterly Physical Inventory

[Department / office] Operations team will perform the following inventorying tasks quarterly:

1. Verify the physical inventory count matched with the inventory records.
2. Update inventory log with confirmation of number and date after the physical inventory count is completed. [(Refer to Appendix A for sample physical inventory tracker.)](#_nxvwoyvn1gkt)
3. Report to management any discrepancies in the quantities and amounts between the physical inventory counts and inventory records.
4. Investigate any discrepancies between the physical inventory counts and inventory records and document the reasons for discrepancies.
5. Management to review and approve any adjustments to inventory records.
6. Accounting will conduct an annual physical inventory on both the physical and electronic gift cards.

### Electronic Gift Cards

Electronic gift cards will be sent to the shared Operations team mailbox [central email address inbox]. The Project Coordinator will confirm the correct number of gift cards has been received.

The Project Coordinator will input the serial numbers for electronic gift cards in the gift card inventory tracking sheet. [(Refer to Appendix A)](#_nxvwoyvn1gkt)

## 

## Record Retention

All gift card serial numbers and recipient names will be documented in the [system] along with the date of distribution. [(Refer to Appendix B)](#_881vqtebyuqz)

## Storage

### Physical Gift Cards

The gift cards will be stored in a locked box with a combination in the office of the Chief XX Officer. The combination will be known to the Project Coordinator, Chief XX Officer and the [deputy head of department / office]. The combination will also be stored in a secure location within the department’s electronic records, only accessible to departmental managers.

Whenever the box is unlocked the action will be documented to reflect how many cards were taken out. A tracking sheet will be included in the box, for the person taking the gift cards out to update and sign. [( Refer to Appendix D.)](#_rg9zc0cz7qo3) When the sheet is full, it will be scanned and uploaded to electronic records, and a new sheet will be printed.

### Electronic Gift Cards

Electronic gift cards will be sent to [central email address inbox]. There is no physical item to be stored with electronic cards. The Project Coordinator will input the serial numbers for electronic gift cards in the gift card inventory tracking sheet.

## Distribution

The research team will track teamwide research projects and work with the Project Coordinator to distribute gift cards.

All gift cards distributed to participants will be recorded. A record will exist with the gift card serial number, date of distribution, and participant name.

### Distribution for Remote Research Participation

When a research activity has been completed remotely, the research team will notify the Project Coordinator. They will share the name and address of research participants, and the Project Coordinator will send the gift cards to the participants by mail.

The Project Coordinator will serve as the primary contact to communicate with participants informing them the gift cards have been sent, and to address any questions or concerns if gift cards are not received by participants. The Project Coordinator will update the Gift Card Distribution form and save it in the department's electronic records. [(Refer to Appendix C)](#_c986tzm743ur)

### Distribution for In-Person Research Participation

When the research team is planning to do in-person research, they will collect the anticipated number of physical gift cards needed for the research from the Project Coordinator beforehand. The team will take a gift card distribution form to the research session and all participants who receive a gift card in person will be required to sign the form confirming receipt of their gift card. The form will be scanned and saved in the department's electronic records. [(Refer to Appendix C)](#_c986tzm743ur)

## Separation of Duties

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Responsible Staff Member** |
| Approving the purchase of gift cards | Chief XX Officer and Deputy Chief XX Officer |
| Ordering the gift cards | Project Coordinator |
| Issuing the purchase order | CAO Accounting or OCA |
| Tracking Inventory and gift card recipients | Operations Team |
| Tracking gift card recipients | Project Coordinator and Discovery Manager |
| Determining eligibility and arranging research | Discovery Manager |
| Storing gift cards in secure location | Chief XX Officer and Operations Team |

## Internal controls documents

### Appendix A: Gift Card Purchase Request Form

[Department / Office]

Attach any supporting documentation to this form.

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Justification and Intended Use of Requested Cards (please describe):   
*\*Request must be submitted 30 days prior to delivery date*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Delivery Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Requester/Project Manager: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Funding Budget Source: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Project Name/Event & Date** | **Vendor** | **Number of Cards** | **Amount per Card** | **Card Fee** | **Extended Cost** |
| 1 |  |  |  |  | % | $ |
| 2 |  |  |  |  | % | $ |
| 3 |  |  |  |  | % | $ |
| 4 |  |  |  |  | % | $ |
| 5 |  |  |  |  | % | $ |
|  |  | Total |  |  |  | $ |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **\_\_\_\_\_\_** | Initial here to certify gift cards are not issued to City Employees, contractors, and vendors and are not intended for payment of service fees/goods |

Requestor: Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature (print name & title)

Division Director: Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature (print name & title)

Dir. of Administration: Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature (print name & title)

#### Gift Card Inventory Tracker

**Note:** [Department / office] currently will use [system] to track research and gift cards. [system] provides a robust database system to track this information and allows information to tie into fields on various sheets/tabs more easily. This example below shows the fields that will be collected for the inventory tracker.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gift card serial number** | **Amount / value** | **Type** | **Date distributed** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

### Appendix B: Gift Card Distribution Tracker

**Note:** [Department / office] currently will use [system] to track research and gift cards. [system] provides a robust database system to track this information and allows information to tie into fields on various sheets/tabs more easily. This example below shows the fields that will be collected for the distribution tracker.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Participant name** | **Gift card serial number** | **Date distributed** | **Distribution method** | **Staff distributor** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

### Appendix C: Gift Card Distribution/Participant Receipt Form

This example below shows the information that will be collected in the Gift Card Receipt Form.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Gift Card Receipt** | |
| Research session |  |
| Date |  |
| Location |  |

### Appendix D: Gift Card Storage Box Tracking Sheet

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gift Card Storage Box Tracking Sheet** | | | | | |
| Use this form to log when the box has been opened and gift cards have been removed or added. When this sheet is full, scan it and save it electronically. Print a new sheet. | | | | | |
| Date | Staff name | # of gift cards removed | # of gift cards added | Total cards in box | Staff signature |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |