

Allowable Costs for IDEA



Bureau of Indian Education

Division of Performance and Accountability

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Allowable Costs for IDEA Entitlement Grants

For a particular cost to be allowed, it must be an excess cost of providing special education and related services.

When determining whether a cost is an excess cost, ask the following guiding questions:

In the absence of special education needs, would this cost exist?

If the answer is...

- No, then the cost is an excess cost and may be eligible.
- Yes, then the cost is not an excess cost and is not allowed.

Is this cost also generated by students without disabilities?

If the answer is...

- No, then the cost is an excess cost and may be eligible.
- Yes, then the cost is not an excess cost and is not allowed.

If it is a child specific service, is the service documented in the student's IEP?

If the answer is...

- Yes, then the cost is an excess cost and may be eligible.
- No, then the cost is not an excess cost and is not allowed.

For a particular cost to be allowed, it also must be *necessary* and *reasonable* for proper and efficient performance and administration of the grant. A cost is reasonable if it does not exceed what a district would normally incur in the absence of federal funds. Additional guidance about standards for determining costs for federal grants is available from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87 (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a087_2004/).

Any individual charged to a federal grant must keep time and effort reporting whether or not it is a semi-annual certification or monthly personnel activity reports (PAR). Semi-annual certification is completed by those individuals who have a single cost object; monthly personnel activity reports are completed by individuals who have multiple cost objectives. Under IDEA, any individual who is not 100% special education would need to complete monthly PARs. Time and effort reporting are a part of the allowable costs as defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

The chart beginning on page 2 lists budget items for IDEA Part B grants. The list includes only items that have prompted additional discussion or guidance. If an item is not listed, it still may be allowed. **The items that are allowed under IDEA may not be charged to funds budgeted for coordinated early intervening services (CEIS).**

Allowable Costs for IDEA Entitlement and IDEA Recovery Grants

Symbol Key:



Always allowed



Allowed, but special requirements or additional information required



Never allowed

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		ADAPTIVE EDUCATION: Salary and fringe benefits.	The salary and fringe benefits of a teacher holding a current certification for Adaptive Education are allowed for the time the teacher provides instruction to a class of special education students.
		ADVERTISING: Costs associated with advertising in media such as newspapers, radio and television, direct mail, exhibits, electronic or computer transmittals.	Allowed for IDEA-related recruitment of personnel, procurement of goods and services, and other specific purposes necessary to meet the requirements of the IDEA grant.
		AIDES: Salaries and fringe benefits.	Aides must be employees of the LEA. Aides must work under the supervision of an appropriately licensed special education teacher and perform duties consistent with the role of an aide, while not assuming the role of a teacher.
		ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS or EDUCATION PROGRAMS: Alternative or adaptive school structures and teaching techniques.	Alternative schools/education programs are generally regular education schools or programs for students at risk of school failure. Therefore, the costs associated with them are not allowed. However, the costs of special education services for students participating in such programs are allowable costs. IDEA funding may ONLY be used for the special education related costs.
		ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES: Used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability.	
		ATTORNEY'S FEES-PARTY TO AN ACTION: Attorney fees for IDEA state complaints, due process hearings, representation at IEP team meetings, facilitated IEP team meetings, mediation sessions, or any student-specific consultation.	Fund may not be used to pay attorney's fees for a party or related costs for depositions, expert witnesses, settlements, or other related costs. Funds may be used to pay costs of conducting a due process hearing, e.g., paying a hearing officer and providing a place for the hearing.
		ATTORNEY'S FEES – DOCUMENT PROCESSING	
		ATTORNEY'S FEES - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / POLICY DEVELOPMENT: Contracted staff training, in-service, or policy development and review.	

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		AUDIT COSTS: Audits required by the Single Audit Act.	The costs of auditing the IDEA required by, and performed in accordance with, the Single Audit Act, as implemented by OMB Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations" are allowable Only the costs for the IDEA portion of the Single Audit may be charged to IDEA.
		AUTOMATIC DOOR OPENERS: Purchase and installation.	Purchase and installation of automatic door openers is allowed if needed to provide access for a child with a disability.
		BUILDING CONSULTATION TEAMS: Salaries and fringe of team members, costs associated with meeting expenses, stipends, travel.	These meeting are not devoted to the identification, evaluation, or placement of children with disabilities, or the provision of special education services; therefore, meeting costs are not allowed.
		BUS PURCHASE, LEASE or RENTAL: Vehicle purchase or lease, insurance, repair, and maintenance. See also "Transportation Costs – Special Education"	Vehicles must be used ONLY to transport children with disabilities who require special assistance in transportation (special transportation or additional transportation), including children with disabilities attending regular classes.
		BUS DRIVER: Salaries and fringe benefits.	The salary and fringe benefits of a bus driver are allowed ONLY for the time the driver transports children with disabilities who require special assistance in transportation (special transportation or additional transportation), including children with disabilities attending regular classes.
		CHILD FIND ACTIVITIES: Costs associated with public awareness, notices, screening.	Child find activities are allowed for identification of children with disabilities.
		CLASSROOM SPACE RENTAL: Costs associated with renting extra classroom space for special education students due to overcrowding.	LEAs may not use federal funds to rent extra classroom space to alleviate overcrowding, e.g., paying rent for a trailer used as a portable special education classroom.
		CLERICAL SUPPORT: Salaries and fringe benefits.	Only the actual time spent supporting special education is allowed. If the position is not dedicated 100% to special education, clerical work must be documented by personnel activity reports as required by OMB Circular A-87.
		COLLEGE CREDITS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF	Tuition is allowed as a fringe benefit for special education instructional staff.

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		COMPUTERS FOR STUDENTS	Acquisition of computers are NOT an excess cost, and therefore not allowed, if the LEA has decided to equip classrooms in a school and simply charges the IDEA grant a prorated amount based upon the number of children with disabilities in the school. The equipment is an excess cost when related to the unique needs of a child with a disability. It may be provided in a regular education class or other education-related setting, even if one or more nondisabled children benefit. When the equipment is no longer needed to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, it must be managed or disposed of in accordance with 34 CFR 80.32, Education Department General Administrative Regulations. http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2004/julqtr/pdf/34cfr80.32.pdf
		COMPUTERS FOR STAFF	Computer equipment for special education staff is allowed if the individual works solely in special education. When the equipment is no longer needed to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, it must be managed or disposed of in accordance with 34 CFR 80.32, Education Department General Administrative Regulations. http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2004/julqtr/pdf/34cfr80.32.pdf
		COMMUNICATION DEVICES FOR STAFF: Costs associated with lease or purchase and charges for use of desk phones, cell phones, pagers and radios.	Communication devices are allowed ONLY for special education activities. If a device also is used for other non-special education activities, documentation is required of the extent to which it is used for special education and the other activities. Costs for personal use are not allowed.
		COMPUTER NETWORKS: Costs associated with a LEA's computer networks.	LEAs' computer networking costs are provided district-wide and are not excess costs of special education.
		CONSULTANT SERVICES: Costs associated with contracted services from a consultant.	LEAs may contract with consultants to provide information about methods, techniques, and strategies to use for children with disabilities or advice to staff for a particular student.
		CONTRACTED SERVICES FOR RELATED SERVICES	
		CONTRACTED SERVICES - PARENTALLY-PLACED PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS	Federal law specifically authorizes provision of services for parentally-placed private school students through contract with an individual, agency, organization, or other entity.

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: Costs associated with substitutes, release time, or extended contract.	Costs related to substitute teachers, release time, and extended contract for development of curriculum for special education students is allowed for both regular and special education staff.
		DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS: Salaries and fringe benefits.	The salary and fringe benefits of a district administrator cannot be charged to federal grants even if the administrator is providing special education support and is appropriately licensed. (OMB Circular A-87, Attachment B, #19)
		EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETERS: Salaries and fringe benefits.	Educational interpreters must be employees of the LEA.
		EQUIPMENT: Equipment to support special education and related services.	
		EQUIPMENT - SECURITY: Cameras and other devices.	Acquisition of cameras and other security devices are NOT an excess cost, and therefore not allowed, if the LEA has decided to equip classrooms in a school or its buses and simply charges the IDEA grant a prorated amount based upon the number of children with disabilities in the school. The equipment is an excess cost when related to the needs of a child with a disability in accordance with the IEP of the child. It may be provided in a regular education environment or other education-related setting, even if one or more nondisabled children benefit. When the equipment is no longer needed to meet the IEP needs of a child with a disability, it must be managed or disposed of in accordance with 34 CFR 80.32, Education Department General Administrative Regulations. http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2004/julqtr/pdf/34cfr80.32.pdf
		EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY): Personnel, supplies, equipment, transportation, and any other services identified in the student's IEP.	The need for ESY must be documented in the student's IEP.
		EVALUATIONS: Personnel, supplies, or contracted services.	

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		FURNITURE: Desks, tables, chairs, file cabinets.	LEAs may purchase student or staff desks, tables, and chairs, file cabinets, and other furniture for use in spaces dedicated to special education programs, such as resource rooms. LEAs may only purchase student furniture for use in a regular education classroom if the furniture is adapted to the specific needs of a child with disability. Examples of such furniture are wheelchair accessible desks and adjustable tables or workstations. When furniture purchased with IDEA funds is no longer needed for the special education program or for a child with a disability, it must be managed or disposed of in accordance with 34 CFR 80.32, Education Department General Administrative Regulations. http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2004/julqtr/pdf/34cfr80.32.pdf
		GUIDANCE COUNSELORS: Salaries and fringe benefits.	Costs must be IEP-driven or related to the evaluation of a child. Day-to-day costs of services provided to all students are not allowed. Only the actual time spent supporting special education is allowed. If the position is not dedicated 100% to special education, guidance counselors must document their work with personnel activity reports as required by OMB Circular A-87.
		IEP TEAM COORDINATORS: Salaries and fringe benefits.	Salaries and fringe benefits of staff who coordinate a LEA's IEP system, train staff, and review IEPs are allowed. Only the actual time spent coordinating IEPs is allowed. If the position is not dedicated 100% to special education, IEP coordinators must document their work with personnel activity reports as required by OMB Circular A-87.
		INTERNS: Costs associated with interns working in the school district.	Only the cost of special education services provided by licensed special education teachers or providers is allowed.
		JOB COACHES: A job coach works directly with a student with a disability in a work site to help the student learn the specific requirements of the job; learn work-related activities and requirements; and learn appropriate work-related behaviors.	Students who have an IEP may participate in vocational experiences if it is determined appropriate for them at their IEP meeting. A job coach must work under the direction and supervision of the LEA special education staff. Job coaches may be provided through contract with an individual, agency, organization, or other entity.
		MAINTENANCE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION EQUIPMENT: Assistive technology devices; copying machines, printers, elevators, etc.	If the equipment is used for special education only, the cost of maintaining the equipment may be charged to the IDEA grant.

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		MEDICAID SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES PROGRAM: Costs for claiming Medicaid funds, including third-party administrators.	The costs for administering the Medicaid school-based services (SBS) program, including fixed fees charged by third-party administrators, are eligible costs under the SBS program, either as direct costs or through the non-restricted indirect cost rate. Costs for administering the Medicaid SBS program may not be charged to the IDEA grant, because they are not necessary for the performance of the IDEA grant. [OMB Circular A-87, Appendix items C.1.a., C.2.a., and F.3.b.]
		NURSE – SCHOOL-BASED: Salaries and fringe benefits for LEA employees or costs for contracted nursing services.	Costs must be IEP-driven or related to the evaluation of a child. Day-to-day costs of nursing services provided to all students are not allowed. Only the actual time providing related services required by IEPs or performing evaluations is allowed. If the position is not dedicated 100% to special education, school nurses must document their work with personnel activity reports as required by OMB Circular A-87.
		OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS (OT) and OT ASSISTANTS: Salaries and fringe benefits for LEA employees or costs for contracted OT services.	
		OFFICE EQUIPMENT: Equipment used by special education staff.	Allowed if the equipment is exclusively used by special education staff.
		OFF-SITE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS: Costs associated with renting off-site locations for special education programs. Costs are allowed under limited circumstances.	LEAs may rent space for alternative special education programs under the following limited circumstances: the special education program must be housed off district property; it must serve only students with disabilities; and it must be required as part of the child's placement. A detailed description is required in the grant budget.
		PARAPROFESSIONALS: Salaries and fringe benefits.	Paraprofessionals must be employees of the LEA. Paraprofessionals must work under the supervision of an appropriately licensed special education teacher and perform duties consistent with the role of paraprofessional, while not assuming the role of a teacher.
		PARENT LIAISONS: Salaries and fringe benefits or contracted services.	Salary and fringe benefits are allowed ONLY to the extent the parent liaison provides support to parents of children with disabilities. If the position is not dedicated 100% to special education, parent liaisons must document their work with personnel activity reports required by OMB Circular A-87.
		PHYSICAL THERAPISTS (PT) and PT ASSISTANTS: Salaries and fringe benefits for LEA employees or costs for contracted PT services.	

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		POLICE LIAISON: Salaries and fringe benefits for LEA employees or costs for contracted police liaison services.	<p>Costs must be unique services provided only to students receiving special education services. The day-to-day cost of services to the entire student population or a portion of the cost of services provided to the entire student population is not an allowable cost.</p> <p>Only the actual time spent supporting special education is allowed. If the position is not dedicated 100% to special education, LEA-employed police liaisons must document their work with personnel activity reports as required by OMB Circular A-87.</p>
		PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT: Accessible playground equipment.	The additional costs of making a playground accessible to children with disabilities are allowed. Additional equipment or the additional cost of acquiring accessible equipment may be funded. The equipment may be used in a regular education setting, even if one or more nondisabled children benefit.
		PRINCIPALS OR ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS: Salaries and fringe benefits.	Salaries for principals and assistant principals may not be charged to the IDEA grant. If an individual is employed as a part-time principal and also as a part-time special education teacher or provider, the salary and fringe benefits for teaching special education or providing other special education services may be charged to the IDEA grant. The individual must document the work with personnel activity reports as required by OMB Circular A-87.
		PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Costs associated with registration fees, travel, conference expenses, and providers.	Registration fees, travel, and conference expenses associated with special education in-service training of regular education and special education staff are allowed.
		PSYCHOLOGISTS - SCHOOL-BASED: Salaries and fringe benefits.	<p>Costs must be IEP-driven or related to the evaluation of a child. Day-to-day costs of services provided to all students are not allowed.</p> <p>Only the actual time spent supporting special education is allowed. If the position is not dedicated 100% to special education, school psychologists must document their work with personnel activity reports as required by OMB Circular A-87.</p>
		PSYCHOLOGISTS - STUDENT EVALUATIONS: Contractual costs.	Allowed only for a psychologist to provide evaluation services.
		REMODELING: Costs associated with remodeling due to the unique needs of a student or students with a disability.	Remodeling costs must be excess costs of special education. Remodeling must meet the needs of one or more children with disabilities. Remodeling costs for the general purpose of bringing facilities into compliance with Section 504 and ADA requirements are not allowed.

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		RENT - FACILITIES: Costs associated with renting off-site locations for special education programs. Costs are allowed under limited circumstances.	LEAs may rent space for alternative special education programs under the following limited circumstances: the special education program must be housed off district property; it must serve only students with disabilities; and it must be required as part of the child's placement.
		SECRETARIAL STAFF: Salaries and fringe benefits.	Only the actual time spent supporting special education is allowed. If the position is not dedicated 100% to special education, secretarial work must be documented by personnel activity reports required by OMB Circular A-87.
		SECURITY CAMERAS or OTHER SECURITY MEASURES See also "Equipment – Security"	Generally, security cameras are not an excess cost of special education. However, when the camera or other device is purchased for a vehicle used only to provide special transportation to children with disabilities, it is allowed.
		SMART BOARDS	Acquisition of SMART boards are NOT an excess cost, and therefore not allowed, if the LEA has decided to equip classrooms in a school and simply charges the IDEA grant a prorated amount based upon the number of children with disabilities in the school. The equipment is an excess cost when related to the needs of a child with a disability in accordance with the IEP of the child. It may be provided in a regular education class or other education-related setting, even if one or more nondisabled children benefit. When the equipment is no longer needed to meet the IEP needs of a child with a disability, it must be managed or disposed of in accordance with 34 CFR 80.32, Education Department General Administrative Regulations. http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2004/julqtr/pdf/34cfr80.32.pdf
		SOCIAL WORKERS - SCHOOL BASED: Salaries and fringe benefits.	Costs must be IEP-driven or related to the evaluation of a child. Day-to-day costs of services provided to all students are not allowed. Social workers must be appropriately licensed to deliver services they are assigned. Only the actual time spent supporting special education is allowed. If the position is not dedicated 100% to special education, social workers must document their work with personnel activity reports as required by OMB Circular A-87.
		SOCIAL WORKERS – STUDENT EVALUATIONS: Contractual costs.	Allowed only for a social worker to provide evaluation services.

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		STAFF DEVELOPMENT: Costs associated with registration fees, travel, conference expenses, and providers.	Registration fees, travel, and conference expenses associated with special education in-service training of regular education and special education staff are allowed. In addition, LEAs may coordinate IDEA funds with funds from other sources (e.g., Title I ESEA) in school-wide staff development activities to improve outcomes for all students. In school-wide staff development activities, IDEA funds may be used for the total cost of professional development in the same proportion as the number of special education and related service personnel receiving professional development is to the total school personnel participating.
		STIPENDS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Costs associated with student workers charged under salaries or purchased services.	A student must receive the minimum wage if she/he is in an employment relationship. In an employment relationship, the student provides services of immediate benefit to the employer - services that would otherwise be provided by a paid employee. As a result of the student's activities, paid positions may remain unfilled and regular employees may be relieved of their normal duties. A student may receive less than the minimum wage if she/he is not in an employment relationship. A student is not in such a relationship if the student works as part of an educational activity for the benefit of the student, the student does not displace a regular employee, and the student works under close supervision.
		STUDENT CONSULTATION TEAMS: Salaries and fringe of team members, meeting expenses, stipends, travel.	These meeting are not devoted to the identification, evaluation, or placement of children with disabilities, or the provision of special education services students or issues; therefore, meeting costs are not allowed.
		STUDENT EVALUATIONS: Personnel, supplies, or contracted services.	

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS: Salaries and fringe benefits.	<p>Substitute teacher costs are allowed for special education teachers.</p> <p>Substitute teacher costs are allowed for regular education teachers performing duties such as attending special education inservice training, attending IEP team meetings, or engaging in planning meetings or consulting with special education teachers to benefit children with disabilities.</p> <p>A short-term substitute may be employed to teach any subject at any grade level, but for no more than 20 consecutive days in the same teaching assignment.</p> <p>A long-term substitute must be a licensed teacher or a licensed substitute teacher and employed only in the subject and grade level in which the teacher is licensed.</p> <p>An emergency license or permit may be granted to a long-term substitute.</p>
		<p>SUMMER SCHOOL: Salaries and fringe of instructors, aides, paraprofessionals, adaptive equipment, transportation, supplies or any other costs related to a student with disabilities attending summer school.</p> <p>See also “Extended School Year (ESY)”</p>	<p>Summer school classes are not special education, because they are not required; they are not based upon the child's individual needs, and they do not require an IEP. Thus, they are not excess costs of providing special education.</p>
		SUPERINTENDENTS (DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS): Salaries and fringe benefits.	<p>The salary and fringe benefits of superintendents cannot be charged to federal grants, even if the superintendent is providing special education support and is appropriately licensed. (OMB Circular A-87, Attachment B, #19)</p>
		TEACHERS – SPECIAL EDUCATION: Salaries and fringe benefits.	<p>Special education teachers must be employees of the LEA.</p>
		<p>TEACHERS – REGULAR EDUCATION: Salaries and fringe benefits.</p> <p>See also “Substitute Teachers”</p>	<p>Regular education teachers may be paid to attend special education in-service activities and IEP meetings.</p> <p>Instructional costs of regular education teachers are not allowed.</p>
		TECHNOLOGY STAFF: Salaries and fringe benefits for LEA employees or costs for contracted IT services.	<p>LEA technology staff expenses for programming or maintaining special education and related services databases and applications are allowed and may include coordination or administration of technology services.</p> <p>Private contracts for special education database maintenance or programming also are allowed.</p> <p>If the position is not dedicated 100% to special education, then the individual must document his/her work with personnel activity reports as required by OMB Circular A-87.</p>

Allowed	Not Allowed	Budget Item	Special Requirements or Additional Information
		TIMEOUT ROOMS: Construction or alteration of facilities.	
		TRANSITION – EMPLOYMENT SKILLS: Costs associated with work experiences, job coaches, acquisition of employment skills.	LEAs may contract with agencies to facilitate the acquisition of employment skills for students with disabilities typically ages 18-21. The transition services must be identified in students’ IEPs. The costs also may be incurred when school is not in session. Contracted transition services must be provided under the supervision of appropriately licensed special education teachers. Transition agency staff may not assume the role of special education teachers, who must prescribe instruction and evaluate the results of instruction.
		TRANSITION – INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS: Rental of property used for developing independent living skills.	LEAs may lease property from individuals or agencies for teaching independent living skills required by students’ IEPs.
		TRANSPORTATION COSTS - SPECIAL EDUCATION: Costs incurred by the LEA for transporting children with disabilities.	Allowable special education transportation costs include repair or servicing of special education vehicles, insurance, mileage, and bus driver and bus aide costs.
		TRANSPORTATION COSTS – CONTRACTED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION: Costs associated with private agencies, other LEAs, or parents.	A contract with parents is allowed if the transportation is to transport a child with a disability who requires special assistance in transportation (special transportation or additional transportation), including a child with a disability attending regular classes.
		TUITION – TECHNICAL COLLEGE CLASSES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Tuition to a local technical college for a special education program for a student with a disability.	These expenses are allowed if the program is required by the IEP and the student receives high school credit.
		TUTORING: Salaries and fringe benefits or stipends related to special education instructional service for children with disabilities only.	Instruction must be provided by a licensed special education teacher who is an employee of the LEA (an aide may provide services under the direction of a licensed special education teacher, but may not assume the role of a teacher).
		VEHICLE PURCHASE, LEASE or RENTAL: Vehicle purchase or lease, insurance, repair, and maintenance. See also “Transportation Costs – Special Education”	Vehicles must be used ONLY to transport children with disabilities who require special assistance in transportation (special transportation or additional transportation), including children with disabilities attending regular classes. A detailed description is required in the grant budget.

ADDITIONAL OMB CIRCULAR A-87 COSTING PRINCIPLES:

Not Allowed: **Entertainment.** Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are unallowable.

Not Allowed: **Contributions and donations.** Contributions and donations, including cash, property, and services, by governmental units to others, regardless of the recipient, are unallowable.