

Gift Card Best Practices Informational Sheet

Introduction

This informational sheet was designed to provide grantees with expectations and best practices surrounding the use and inclusion of gift cards on their MOVA budget.

Allowability

Gift cards for emergency client assistance may be provided to victims in situations where emergency food, clothing, and/or basic needs are needed to restore the victim's sense of security in the aftermath of a crime. Cash cannot be provided directly to victims.

Best Practices - General

- Any use of gift cards must be accompanied with written agency policies and internal controls regarding the purchase and use of gift cards.
 - Written policies should include information on approval, distribution, tracking, accounting, and distribution methods.
 - MOVA has a 'sample gift card policy' available on our [website](#).

Best Practices – Distribution

- Gift cards equate to “cash” which must be handled accordingly as well as being distributed within the respective grant award year (funds may not be retained from year to year).

Best Practices – Budget Amendment

- FY26 requirement as outlined in the Request for Grant Applications:
 - Gift cards must be requested in the original budget request and approved by MOVA during contracting or via a budget amendment before the final quarter of the fiscal year.
 - Gift cards (a new or increased line item) that are requested via a budget amendment that is submitted to MOVA on or after April 1, 2026 may not be approved.

Best Practices – Expenditure Reports

- At the time a gift card is purchased, the expenditure of funds should be recorded in the agency's financial management system and identified as a MOVA cost.
- Gift cards cannot be purchased with unrestricted or other funds in a prior fiscal year and then distributed and requested for reimbursement by MOVA in a subsequent year at the time they are distributed to clients supported with MOVA funding.

Best Practices - Monitoring

- During grant monitoring, MOVA will review how gift cards are managed as part of participant support costs. Agencies should be prepared to respond to the following questions included in the administrative worksheet:
 - **Are participant support costs (e.g., rental assistance, utility payments, travel vouchers, etc.) included in the award budget?**
 - **If yes**, describe the agency's process for requesting, approving, distributing, and tracking participant support costs.
 - **Are gift cards included in the award?**
 - **If yes**, the agency must submit its formal gift card policy.
- While agencies may not be asked to submit a gift card log during monitoring, the submitted policy must include a description of how the agency maintains a log to track gift card distribution, usage, and reconciliation. Strong internal controls and documentation practices are expected to ensure transparency and accountability.

