



FEB - 1 2005

TO: Executive Officers and Chief Contracting Officers

FROM: Head of the Contracting Activity and Director, Office of Acquisition  
Management and Policy  
Director and Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Office of Financial  
Management

SUBJECT: Use of Appropriated Funds to Purchase Kitchen Appliances

## 1. BACKGROUND

On June 25, 2004, the General Accounting Office, (since renamed the Government Accountability Office - GAO), issued a decision on the subject "Use of Appropriated Funds to Purchase Kitchen Appliances." This decision establishes that appropriations are available to pay for items ordinarily considered to be personal in nature, such as kitchen appliances, when the primary benefit of their use accrues to the agency, notwithstanding a collateral benefit to the individual. This decision is a departure from prior decisions where GAO "generally viewed kitchen equipment, such as refrigerators, microwaves, and coffee makers, as a personal expense that an employee was expected to bear from his or her own salary."

GAO now recognizes that the availability of kitchen equipment can contribute to the efficient operation of an agency and the health of personnel, and is one of many small but important factors that can assist federal agencies in recruiting and retaining the best work force and supporting valuable human capital policies. Further, having centralized appliances may allow agencies to better manage the safety of the buildings by limiting individual use of extension cords for personal appliances. GAO concluded that providing such equipment for employee use benefits the agency in a number of ways, including increased employee productivity, health, and morale, that when viewed together, justify the use of appropriate funds to acquire the equipment.

## 2. POLICY

NIH Institutes, Centers and other components may use appropriated funds to purchase kitchen equipment, including refrigerators, microwaves, and commercial

coffee makers for central kitchen areas when they determine that these appliances reasonably relate to efficient performance of activities and provides other benefits, including the assurance of a safer workplace.

It is important that the equipment purchased with appropriated funds not be reserved for the sole use of an individual, and must be located only in common areas where they are available for use by all personnel.

NOTE: Use of appropriated funds to furnish goods, such as the coffee itself or microwavable foods, is not authorized. These remain costs each employee is expected to bear.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES/PROCEDURES

The acquisition file must justify the purchase of the equipment by identifying the benefit to the Government. Further, it must document that the requested equipment meets the minimum necessary to support the intended users. The requesting IC's Executive Officer (delegable to no more than one level below) must concur with the justification.

The individual responsible for ordering the equipment cannot begin the acquisition process without written evidence of the requesting IC's Executive Officer (or designee) concurrence.


### 4. INQUIRIES

Please contact Rosemary M. Hamill on (301) 496-6014 or email at [rh26v@nih.gov](mailto:rh26v@nih.gov) if you have questions or comments regarding this memorandum

This memorandum supersedes all previous guidance.



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