

# Pandemic-Related GPSAFC Funding Policies for the 2021-2022 Academic Year Only

**Updated: February 25, 2022**

All line number references are to the current GPSAFC Funding Guidelines and indicate a part of the existing guidelines that will be superseded by the Pandemic-Related Funding Policies during the 2021-2022 academic year. Justifications are provided to explain why policies are necessary and/or beneficial; however, the justifications do not constitute official GPSAFC policy.

1. In-person events must adhere to the most recent Cornell University COVID-19 Guidelines for Meetings and Events (<https://scl.cornell.edu/get-involved/campus-events/covid-19-guidelinesmeetings-events>) regarding number of attendees, food, drink, mask policies, etc. These guidelines are subject to change throughout the academic year and student orgs must be aware of them before hosting events.

2. Groups should follow the University guidelines for food and alcohol distribution at events: <https://covid.cornell.edu/events/>.

3. All in-person events must occur on campus or on auxiliary Cornell properties. GPSAFC-funded virtual events are allowed and encouraged, and students may participate from anywhere in the world. However, off campus in-person events are still not allowed (line 71).

Justification: Virtual events allow participation from the whole Cornell community, even those who are learning remotely this semester or quarantining at the time of the event. Offcampus in-person events are not allowed for legal reasons and to prevent COVID spread.

4. Groups will be allowed to send, mail, or deliver “kits” of supplies for virtual activities (e.g., yarn for a craft night) that will be allowed to remain permanently with members (line 203), unlike groups’ durable goods (line 163). Individually packaged “kits” can also be made available for pickup at a central location on campus.

Justification: “Kits” will allow groups to host a wide range of hands-on events virtually.

5. Groups will be allowed to pay for postage (line 197), as well as office supplies related to sending mail (line 192).

Justification: This will allow groups to set up pen pals at other universities, nursing homes, etc.; and keep up with group members who are located in another US state or internationally. It will also allow for the sending of “kits” by mail if necessary.

6. The honorarium cap will increase to 1000 USD per speaker per group, from 500 USD (line 224).

Justification: As groups will be somewhat more limited this year in terms of what events are feasible, this will allow groups to spend more of their money on speaker honoraria. Groups will also be encouraged to co-sponsor speakers, and a central forum (likely a Google Doc) will be set up for groups who are seeking co-sponsorship for virtual speakers.

7. Groups will be permitted to send “kits” with non-perishable food ingredients or non-perishable food to event participants via delivery; individually packaged non-perishable food can also be made available for pickup on campus. The food must be a part of an organization’s virtual event, i.e. a group cannot buy food simply for the sake of giving its members free food; there must be an associated virtual event that participants attend that is open to the entire Cornell graduate and professional community. Event registration can be capped if necessary. (line 513). The food must be purchased online.

Justification: Food is an integral part of many graduate and professional groups’ activities. It contributes to cultural and regional identities, promotes social bonding, and can create a sense of a “special occasion”. Due to Cornell Risk Management guidelines and other regulations, food must be non-perishable, must be purchased online, and can only be purchased for virtual (i.e. not in-person) events.

8. Tier increases during Fall 2021 (line 315): To be considered for a tier increase, an organization must provide proof that they spent at least 90% of funds allocated for events scheduled during the Fall 2019 semester, an explanation of how the organization would have spent 90% of its Tier cap during the full 2019-2020 academic year, plus one of the following additional criteria:

1. Proof of utilization of at least 90% of tier cap and allocated funds during the 2018-2019 academic year.
2. Proof of at least a 35% increase in membership in 2019-2020 compared with 2018-2019.
3. Current status as a Tier 1 organization.

The application should also include a statement on why the organization needs a tier increase (e.g. plans for future events, growth in membership, etc.) and a financial plan for how the organization would utilize the funds in the upcoming academic year.

In summary: The whole application should include 1. proof of 90% of Fall 2019 event allocations spent; 2. an explanation of how funds would have been spent in the 2021-2022 academic year; 3. an explanation of the additional criterion that qualifies the group for a tier increase ('18-19 records, member increase, or Tier 1 status); 4. a statement on why a tier increase is needed; and 5. a financial plan for 2021-2022. The full application should be emailed to the FC Chair, Caroline Steingard, at [chs233@cornell.edu](mailto:chs233@cornell.edu).

Justification: Many groups were unable to spend 90% of their tier cap in 2020-2021 due to the pandemic interrupting the spring semester, but groups should still get a chance to move up a tier if they have a need for additional funding.