



Re: OMB-2026-0034, Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed revisions to the Uniform Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance, 2 CFR Part 200 (OMB-2026-0034; 91 FR 32198).

About Our Organization

The Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) is the leading association representing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) professionals. Our members include Transportation Management Associations (TMAs), major employers, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), state Departments of Transportation (DOTs), transit agencies, and private-sector providers. Together, ACT's members work to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and increase the efficiency of our transportation system. ACT members routinely interact with federal financial assistance—receiving awards, administering federally funded programs, and participating in industry associations whose work is integral to effective program delivery.

How the Proposal Would Affect Our Members and Our Organization

Many of ACT's members rely on federal financial assistance to carry out their TDM programs. They currently use federal award funds to support conference attendance, and professional association memberships, and, in some cases, allowable advocacy-related costs. The proposed revisions to 2 CFR Part 200 would significantly restrict these practices, imposing new administrative burdens and financial uncertainty on the very organizations delivering transportation efficiency outcomes for the federal government.

ACT itself would also be directly harmed as an organization. ACT is an association whose operating budget depends substantially on membership dues and conference registration revenue. If the proposed rules make it significantly harder or impossible for federally funded members to charge ACT dues and ACT conference attendance to their awards, ACT can expect a material reduction in both revenue streams. Members operating under tight grant budgets would face pressure to drop their memberships or forgo conference attendance rather than absorb those costs from non-federal funds. The resulting loss of revenue would threaten ACT's ability to provide the training, technical assistance, and policy resources on which the TDM field depends—resources that ultimately support the effective delivery of federally funded TDM programs across the country.

Specific Provisions of Concern

[200.454(a)] Membership Dues

ACT's members include organizations that charge ACT membership dues to their federal awards because participation in ACT directly supports performance of federally funded TDM work. ACT provides members with access to best practices, training, credentialing programs, technical resources, and a peer network of practitioners working to solve the same problems, that is otherwise unavailable. Membership dues are modest relative to the value they return—the professional development and technical assistance available through ACT membership directly improve program outcomes.

The proposed requirement that dues be approved in writing in advance by the awarding agency before they may be charged would impose an administrative burden disproportionate to the dollars at stake. Federal award terms are negotiated well in advance of annual membership renewal cycles and access to services may only become necessary once a project has begun. Requiring event-by-event or year-by-year prior written approval for routine membership dues would force repeated interactions with program officers, delay payments, and likely cause many members to forgo participation in the very organizations that will help them succeed, not because memberships are unnecessary, but because the approval process is prohibitively burdensome.

We urge OMB to retain the current standard, under which dues may be charged if they are allocable, allowable, and reasonable for award performance, without prior written approval.

[200.432(b)] Conference Attendance

Conferences such as ACT's annual International Conference are the primary venue where federally funded TDM professionals disseminate research results, receive technical training, and coordinate with counterparts from other programs. The current rule already requires that conference attendance be necessary and reasonable for award performance. The proposed revision would go significantly further by requiring that conference attendance be expressly approved by the agency and written into award terms and conditions.

This change would create serious logistical problems for ACT's members. Award terms are fixed before conference schedules exist. Requiring that specific events be written into award agreements would necessitate continuous award amendments, if agencies are willing to process them at all. Early-bird registration deadlines and hotel room blocks cannot wait for the award amendment process. Speakers and exhibitors who must commit months in advance would be unable to plan around an uncertain approval cycle. The practical effect would be to price many federally funded TDM professionals out of the professional development events they need to do their jobs well.

We urge OMB to retain the current rule and, if additional accountability is sought, to consider a workable alternative: approving a conference or professional development budget category—or a dollar threshold—at the time of award, rather than requiring event-by-event prior approval.

[200.450(c)(1)(iv); 200.454(d)] Issue Advocacy Costs and Membership Exclusion

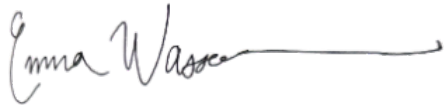
ACT is concerned that the proposed unallowable cost categories for "issue advocacy or public messaging" on social, political, or policy positions—and the proposed prohibition on membership in organizations whose "primary purpose" is lobbying or issue advocacy—are undefined in ways that will create significant compliance risk for ACT's members.

The terms "issue advocacy" and "public messaging" have no established regulatory meaning. Routine association communications—newsletters, policy briefs, legislative updates, technical comment letters—could plausibly be characterized by auditors as "issue advocacy" under an undefined standard. This ambiguity would put all ACT membership dues at risk of being questioned, regardless of whether a member's particular purpose in joining ACT has anything to do with lobbying. The chilling effect would extend well beyond any legitimate accountability interest.

Conclusion

ACT respectfully urges OMB to retain the current cost principles for membership dues and conference attendance, and to provide clear, administrable definitions for any new restrictions on advocacy-related costs before they are finalized. The proposed provisions, as drafted, would impose significant burdens on federally funded TDM programs without meaningfully improving accountability for taxpayer dollars. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emma Wasserman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emma Wasserman
Senior Manager of Government Affairs
Association for Commuter Transportation