WNP Direct Annual Aid FY27

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use direct annual aid to support internships in park units?

Yes, if it is a paid internship and if the intern is paid through a third-party organization or by the NPS directly. All internship hours worked must be completed within the current fiscal year, October 1 through September 30.

- For example, Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve partners with Southwest Conservation Corps to utilize a seasonal intern. WNP pays Southwest Conservation Corps with direct annual aid after proper documentation and official invoices are submitted.
- If NPS pays the intern directly, WNP can reimburse the NPS unit after proper documentation is submitted.
- Discuss with and gain approval from WNP prior to hiring an intern.

No, if it is an unpaid internship. Direct annual aid cannot be used to provide stipends for unpaid interns.

How do I order a large quantity of product (for example, one thousand postcards) using direct annual aid?

1. Work directly with your park's WNP Operations Manager to request large orders of product.
2. The **Payment Request Form** must be received and approved prior to creating the order.

Can I pay for something this fiscal year if I'm planning on using it next fiscal year?

No. Current WNP policy does not allow for prepaid expenses or for carryover aid. Funds must be spent on or before September 30 in the fiscal year in which they are allocated. There are various factors and a number of reasons why direct annual aid cannot be used to prepay expenses or be carried over. See Appendices E and F in the **Aid to Parks Handbook** for policies and information regarding carryover aid and prepaid expenses.

Can I use direct annual aid to purchase inventory from park stores?

Yes. Direct annual aid can be used to purchase saleable items from the park store to support interpretive or educational programs. Items purchased from the park store are charged at cost to the park's direct annual aid budget and may be subject to limitations based on current inventory on hand. The **Payment Request Form** must be submitted and approved prior to taking inventory from the park store.

Can I use direct annual aid for infrastructure and maintenance needs?

In general, direct annual aid is meant to directly support and add value to interpretation, research, education, and outreach efforts. WNP will review all requests and evaluate them based on **RM-32** guidelines, the NPS mission, park interpretive themes, and the request's effect on interpretation, research, education, outreach, and WNP's mission.

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Why do the funds need to be used for things that happen in the fiscal year when the funds are allocated (for example, why does FY27 direct annual aid have to be used in FY27)?

As a nonprofit organization that is accountable to the public it serves, WNP must be able to report how funds are used to support its mission. WNP typically reports on the use of aid annually, and the reports are tied to the financial statement. Providing the public with accurate reporting on fund usage and its effects becomes a challenge if funds are not used in the same year they are allocated. See Appendices E and F in the **Aid to Parks Handbook** for policies and information regarding carryover aid and prepaid expenses.

When is paying for food an appropriate use of funds?

- Direct annual aid may be used for light refreshments (food and beverage) at VIP recognition events (guidelines may be found in **DO-7**), Tribal consultations, and other community engagement activities.
- When submitting a request for consideration, write a detailed proposal including how the event supports the WNP mission, a list of all costs, and the estimated number of attendees broken down by VIPs, NPS staff, members of the public, and visitors.
- Funds may only be used when NPS staff represents 25 percent or less of total attendees. NPS employees may attend but NPS guidelines, policies, and procedures must be followed, including the submission of a Widely Attended Gathering (WAG) form. WNP does not need a copy of the WAG form or its approval.
- NPS should consult with regional ethics officials for complete guidance.

What is the purpose of the Direct Annual Aid Planning Document? What if I don't know all of my plans for the year?

WNP will provide a planning document at the beginning of each fiscal year to help WNP and NPS plan, track, monitor, and report activities related to the direct annual aid program.

It is the responsibility of NPS to fill out this planning document to the best of their ability by the requested deadline and use it as a working document throughout the year.

The planning document does not replace the **Payment Request Form** and does NOT guarantee an approval of funds. It is a tool to help with planning and communication. The planning document helps ensure the annual aid process is compliant with **DO-32** and addresses the issues identified in the recent Office of Inspector General report.