

Promotional Items

A promotional item is an item purchased for advertising purposes to be given to an employee or non-employee. Normally, the item would have the name of a department or program printed on it with a message or telephone number. Promotional items paid from state funds should be of minimal value and should be charged to the advertising account (53700). In the case of office supplies which may have the name of a department printed on them at nominal cost, these items would be coded to the supplies account.

Examples of *appropriate purchases* of promotional items from state funds include:

- **Health/safety related:** i.e. purchases of small refrigerator type magnets or pencils with the university's emergency telephone number on them. It is in the best interest of the university and the state to ensure that the emergency number is readily available.
- **Mission and program related:** i.e. purchases of pencils with North Carolina State's name and admissions number on the pencils by the University's Admission's department.
- **Office supplies** such as binders with the name of a department or workshop printed on the materials so long as the cost of the printing is not excessive. It is expected that these binders would hold needed reference materials and belong to the university and not the employee.
- **Low cost items** that are intended to promote employee recognition, improve morale or appreciation, communicate contact information when compared to more expensive pay and salary adjustments, are permissible as long as they are infrequent, prudent and reasonable in their scope.

Examples of *inappropriate purchases* of promotional items from state funds include, as a general rule, items that are used for personal purposes, and serve no business purpose. These items are not allowed from state funds. For instance, the purchase of t-shirts, coffee cups, six-pack coolers, lunch bags, or other items which would primarily be used for personal purposes and/or would have more than a nominal value. Articles of clothing generally fall in this category unless they are part of a required uniform.

Reference: State Spending Guidelines, page 19