

Internal Control Policy: ARP/CSLFRF Award

Definitions

- **Management** refers to employees who have direct responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the entity, including the implementation of internal controls. For the purposes of this policy, “management” includes County Manager, Finance Director or Department Head.
- **Oversight Body**, as referenced in the Government Accountability Office’s Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government, refers to an appointed body designated to perform oversight at the direction of the governing board. The oversight body of a local government is, by default, the governing board (Board of County Commissioners).

Policy Overview and Purpose

Internal control is a process effected by an entity’s oversight body, management, and other personnel that provides reasonable assurance that the objectives of an entity will be achieved. This policy outlines the internal control process established by the Rutherford County to provide reasonable assurances that the unit will expend ARP/CSLFRF award funds in compliance with governing laws and regulations. This document is adopted in accordance with the following directive from U.S. Treasury’s Compliance and Reporting Guidance: “Per 2 CFR Part 200.303, your organization must develop and implement effective internal controls to ensure that funding decisions under the ARP/CSLFRF award constitute eligible uses of funds, and document determinations.”

Internal Control Framework:

The Rutherford County’s internal controls are modeled after the internal control framework set forth in the Government Accountability Office’s Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government (the “Green Book”). As described in the Green Book, Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining the internal control system in compliance with the duties outlined in this policy. The Oversight Body’s primary role is to ensure management performs its internal control responsibilities. However, every employee bears some responsibility for the internal control process.

The Green Book Recognizes Five Components of Internal Control: Control Environment, Risk Assessment, Control Activities, Information and Communication, and Monitoring

The Rutherford County understands that each component must be present and functioning for the internal control process to operate at the optimal level. The responsibilities tied to each of the components are discussed below.

1. Control Environment

The control environment is the foundation for all other components of internal control, providing discipline and structure. Management values integrity, ethics, and competence in all operations, including the administration of federal awards. Management communicates and reinforces its expectations throughout the organization. Examples of management’s commitment to internal controls over expenditures of ARP/CSLFRF funds include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Management demonstrates a commitment to integrity and ethical values through its leadership, communications, personnel practices, and daily actions.
- Management conducts ongoing risk assessments to identify internal control weaknesses that may negatively impact the proper administration of the ARP/CSLFRF award.

- Management is committed to educating itself and staff on the compliance requirements tied to the administration of the ARP/CSLFRF award.
- Management adopts policies necessary to ensure compliance with the Uniform Guidance and the ARP/CSLFRF award terms and conditions.

2. Risk Assessment

Management is committed to identifying and managing the risks that may arise during the administration of the ARP/CSLFRF award. The risk assessment component of internal control involves management evaluating the risks the entity faces that could negatively impact its ability to achieve its objectives. These objectives include:

- **Operational Objectives:** All assets are appropriately safeguarded against risks of fraud, theft, loss, or abuse.
- **Reporting Objectives:** Finance systems and processes produce accurate and reliable financial reporting for federal award expenditures. The Rutherford County's Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (SEFA) is complete and accurate.
- **Compliance Objectives:** Ensure ARP/CSLFRF awards funds are expended in compliance with the award terms and conditions, federal and state law, and U.S. Treasury guidance.

Risk Identification

Management shall identify risks that may impair the Rutherford County's ability to achieve its objectives. Management shall focus its risk assessment on areas of opportunity for employees to commit fraud. Specific areas and types of risk include:

- rapid growth in operations,
- changes in personnel,
- organizational restructuring, such as centralizing or decentralizing,
- new activities or service areas,
- new or revised information systems,
- new technologies in service delivery or information systems,
- changes in the operating or regulatory environment, and
- new or updated accounting and/or financial reporting practices.

Uniform Guidance Compliance & Risk Identification

There are specific risks that arise in the administration of a grant award. Management will identify areas of risk that may impair the Rutherford County's ability to comply with the ARP/CSLFRF award's terms and conditions and/or applicable state and federal law and regulations.

Specifically, the Rutherford County will evaluate risks of non-compliance in the following compliance areas:

- Eligibility,
- Allowable Costs/Cost Principles,
- Period of Performance,
- Financial Management,
- Property Management,
- Procurement,
- Subrecipient Monitoring, and
- Program Income.

Risk Analysis

Management shall determine the potential severity of liabilities associated with the risks identified by weighing the likelihood of occurrence against the degree of impact.

Likelihood × Impact = Risk Priority

After rating each risk for likelihood & impact, multiply to identify which risks are highest priority to control for.

Likelihood	Risk Priority					
	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
Impact						

Priority Rank Scale	
Low	1 to 4
Moderate	5 to 9
High	10 to 19
Very High	20+

Risk Response

Management shall review the results of the risk analysis and determine whether to implement control activities to mitigate risks. Management will respond to identified risks in one of three ways:

- accept the risk,
- reduce the risk by implementing control activities to help prevent or detect issues, or
- avoid the risk by not pursuing certain activities.

Management shall consider the relative cost of implementing controls versus the benefit(s) offered in deciding whether to mitigate risk(s) through the implementation of control activities. When possible, control activities will be implemented to mitigate risks that rate “High” or “Very High” on the Likelihood/Impact scale.

3. Control Activities

Control activities are the actions taken by management to respond to risks that may prevent the entity from achieving its objectives. The internal control activities are either preventative or detective. The Rutherford County uses a variety of control activities that support strong internal controls, including, but not limited to the following:

- written policies and procedures,
- segregation of duties: separating authorization, custody, record-keeping, and reconciliation functions,
- authorizations to undertake projects/programs/expenditure,
- reconciliation of accounts and records,
- documentation and record-keeping,
- physical controls, including locks, physical barriers, and security systems to protect physical assets,
- IT controls, including passwords, access logs, and firewalls to protect sensitive data and restrict access to electronic data and files,
- staff training, or
- a combination of the above.

4. Information and Communication

The Rutherford County communicates accurate and quality information to internal staff and personnel and to external stakeholders and community members. Communication plays an integral role in the internal control system by helping to promote transparency regarding the use of public funds. Management shall be responsible for communicating internal control processes to those employees directly involved in finance and/or grant administration. Management will communicate its policies, procedures, and internal controls through various handbooks, programs, training, and electronic communication.

Information regarding pertinent policies, processes, and control activities will flow down, across, and up the organizational structure. Internal control deficiencies should be reported upstream, with serious matters reported immediately to top-level management and/or to the governing board. Employees are required to report any critical issues within the internal control

system to management as soon as possible after the discovery.

To ensure transparency regarding the use of ARP/CSLFRF funds, the Rutherford County shall communicate quality information to community members and external stakeholders. The communication channels may include:

- Governing board members and management are willing to engage directly with community members and answer questions via email and/or provide updates during regularly scheduled meetings.

5. Monitoring

The Rutherford County shall conduct ongoing monitoring of the internal control system to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Internal and external audits will be conducted pursuant to federal and state law. These audit processes will test the effectiveness of internal controls over federal and state awards.

Internal Controls & Uniform Guidance Compliance

Financial Management, 2 CFR § 200.302

Overview:

Each unit must have a financial management system in place to satisfy the requirements set forth in 2 CFR 200.302. A unit may rely on existing accounting processes and procedures, provided such processes adequately track the obligations and expenditures of ARP/CSLFRF funds.

Objectives:

Ensure compliance with the following requirements set forth in 2 CFR 200.302, as follows:

1. Track all federal awards received and related expenditures separately for each federal program.
2. Provide accurate, current, and complete financial data to enable the disclosure of the results of each federal award.
3. Identify the source and application of funds (i.e., the system must be able to track authorizations, obligations, and disbursements, and tie any expenditures to eligible uses of ARP/CSLFRF funds.
4. Maintain control over, and accountability for, all funds, property, and other assets.
5. Compare budgeted amounts with actual expenditures.
6. Expenditures must be supported by the Rutherford County's written procedures for determining the allowability, reasonableness, and allocability of costs. (A written Allowable Cost/Cost Principles Policy is required.)

Control Activities:

- A recommended practice is to set up a grant project ordinance to separately account for and track expenditures of ARP/CSLFRF funds.
- Utilize a financial management system that meets the standards outlined in 2 CFR 200.302.

Segregation of Duties:

Duties and functions related to financial reporting are segregated to ensure no one person has control over all parts of a financial transaction.

Documentation:

Documentation of financial transactions is complete and accurate and facilitates tracing the transaction from authorization and initiation through disbursement.

- Finance Director shall ensure that, at a minimum, accounting records evidencing authorizations, obligations, and expenditures of ARP/CSLFRF funds are created and retained according to record retention requirements.

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- Source documentation is retained, including paid invoices, payrolls, time and attendance records, contracts, and subaward documents.

Reporting:

Finance Director shall prepare periodic reports for the governing board that includes updates for grant project expenditures and a comparison of budget to actuals.

Reconciliation:

General ledger and subsidiary ledgers used to account for the receipt and disbursements of ARP/CSLFRF funds are reconciled monthly against account balances by someone who does not have record-keeping/bookkeeping functions.

Communication & Monitoring:

The Finance Director is responsible for communicating the financial management requirements and associated control activities to the appropriate personnel. All employees within the finance and accounting office have responsibility for internal controls, including the ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of internal control activities over the financial management system.

Eligibility (See Award Terms & Conditions for ARP/CSLFRF Eligibility Requirements)

Overview:

The unit is responsible for ensuring ARP/CSLFRF funds are expended on eligible projects and programs. The process for making eligibility determinations is described in the Rutherford County's Eligible Use Policy. (The control activities for Eligibility and Allowable Cost review are often combined.)

Objectives:

1. Ensure that supported projects and programs under the ARP/CSLFRF are eligible under one of the expenditure categories. (Eligible uses include projects identified in the Final Rule that fit within one of the four eligible use categories: COVID-19/Negative Economic Impacts, Revenue Replacement, Premium Pay, Investment in Necessary Broadband and Water/Sewer Infrastructure.)
2. Document eligibility review and project determinations.
3. Establish processes to ensure funds are not expended on ineligible uses. (Prohibited uses include bulk deposits into pension funds, debt services, replenishing financial reserves, the satisfaction of settlements and judgments, support for programs that undermine the effort to stop the spread of COVID-19, and any use that would violate state or local law.)

Control Activities:

- **Eligible Use Policy:** The Rutherford County has adopted an ARP/CSLFRF Eligible Use Policy that explains the eligible uses of ARP/CSLFRF award funds and includes the Rutherford County's process for reviewing and documenting eligibility determinations.
- **Authorization:** Finance Director has reviewed applicable Treasury guidance, including the Final Rule, and has trained staff to conduct initial eligibility reviews for all project or program requests.
- **Documentation:** Each department is encouraged to use the SOG's Sample Eligibility Worksheet to document the review process. This documentation is retained for the five-year record retention period. Finance Director is responsible for overseeing compliance with documentation and record retention requirements.

Communication & Monitoring:

Management will communicate eligibility requirements and project determinations internally to staff and externally to community members and stakeholders. Management will periodically review a sample of eligibility determinations to ensure that documentation is being maintained and that the supported projects are eligible.

Allowable Costs/Cost Principles, 2 CFR §§ 200.400 to 200.476

Overview:

The Uniform Guidance Cost Principles provide guidance on how to charge specific items of cost to a federal award. A written Allowable Cost/Cost Principles policy is required for compliance with 2 CFR 200 § 202.

Cost items charged using Revenue Replacement ARP/CSLFRF funds are subject to an allowable cost review. Cost items charged under the COVID-19/Negative Economic Impacts and Infrastructure Investment categories are subject to additional compliance requirements, including the Selected Item of Cost review. See Final Rule FAQ 13.15.

Objectives:

1. Ensure all costs charged to the federal award are allowable as defined in the Uniform Guidance, Subpart E—Cost Principles.
2. Consistently apply local policies to both federally financed and non-federally financed activities.
3. Treat costs consistently as direct or indirect costs.
4. Adequately document evidence of allowable cost review and other compliance requirements as necessary.
5. When applicable, appropriately charge indirect costs using either the Negotiated Independent Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or the de minimis rate of 10 percent.

Control Activities:

- **Policy:** The Rutherford County has adopted an Allowable Cost/Cost Principles Policy, as required by 2 CFR 200.302.
- **Segregation of duties:** When possible, duties are segregated between those who initiate, approve, and record financial transactions.
- **Training:** Management trains staff to conduct an allowable cost review in compliance with the UG Cost Principles. (See Cost Principles Policy for specific compliance requirements.)
- **Documentation:** Finance Director shall ensure that documentation evidencing compliance with the Cost Principles is created and maintained through December 31, 2031. At a minimum, cost items will be reviewed for allowability prior to being charged to the federal award.

Communication & Monitoring:

Management shall ensure that staff is adequately trained to recognize allowable costs and associated compliance requirements for each eligibility category. Management shall periodically test the control activities by reviewing a sample of cost items charged to the ARP/CSLFRF award for allowability. Management will also test whether costs are charged to the proper project codes within the grant project ordinance.

Period of Performance (See Award Terms and Conditions)

Overview:

The Period of Performance covers the period of time the Rutherford County may obligate and expend ARP/ CSLFRF funds. ARP/CSLFRF funds must be used for costs incurred between March 3, 2021, and December 31, 2024. For a cost to be incurred, the funds must be obligated (e.g., contract executed/pre-audit stage). All obligated funds must be expended by December 31, 2026. Any unspent award funds must be returned to the Treasury.

Objective:

Ensure that all obligations and expenditures are incurred during the ARP/CSLFRF award's period of performance.

Control Activities:

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- Management reviews obligation dates to ensure that all obligations are made for costs incurred between March 3, 2021, and December 31, 2024.
- Management trains staff to review obligation and expenditure dates on contracts, or when performing eligibility and allowable cost reviews.

Communication & Monitoring:

Management shall communicate pertinent dates, including the period of performance, to any staff responsible for obligating or expending federal award funds. Periodic testing by management will ensure that all obligations are incurred between March 3, 2021, and December 31, 2024.

Procurement, Suspension & Debarment, 2 CFR §§ 200.317 to 200.327

Overview:

Expenditures of ARP/CSLFRF funds under the revenue replacement category are exempt from federal procurement. When expending ARP/CSLFRF funds in other expenditure categories, the unit is required to adopt *written* procurement procedures and follow all federal procurement rules outlined in the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR §§ 200.318–200.327) as well as its own internal policies. Where established local or state rules are more strict than federal rules, the recipient must follow the most restrictive rule.

Objectives:

The Finance Department recognizes it must satisfy the minimum federal procurement requirements, as follows:

1. Adopt a written procurement policy that considers the procurement standards in § 200.318, which includes bidding contracts in compliance with federal bidding thresholds, oversight of contractors' performance, and maintaining records to document the history of procurements.
2. Provide full and open competition in conducting procurements, consistent with the standards outlined in § 200.319 and § 200.320, which allow for non-competitive procurements only in limited circumstances.
3. Comply with the requirements of § 200.320(a) when using the micro-purchase and small purchase methods of procurement.
4. Use the sealed bids method for procurement contracts exceeding the simplified threshold. Utilize the competitive proposals method when sealed bidding is not possible.
5. Ensure noncompetitive procurement methods meet the conditions set forth under § 200.320(c).
6. Verify that a contractor is eligible by reviewing the suspended and debarred list on SAM.gov.
7. Restrict access to sensitive contractor information, such as Social Security numbers or federal tax ID numbers.

General Procurement Control Activities:

- Procurement Policy: The Rutherford County maintains documented procurement procedures that are consistent with the standards outlined in §§ 200.317 through 200.327. This policy contains detailed processes and control activities for procurements made with federal funds.
- The Board must approve the following types of contracts that exceed \$50,000.
- Finance Director is responsible for monitoring and documenting the performance of a contract for compliance with contract terms, conditions, and other specifications.
- Prenumbered purchase orders are used.
- A pre-audit certificate that is signed by the [finance officer or designated deputy] is attached to all purchase orders, invoices, or other contract obligations.
- Ensure purchasing forms have multiple copies so other departments, such as receiving and accounts payable, can be notified of the authorization.

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- Micro-purchases may be awarded without soliciting competitive quotes if a determination is made that the price is reasonable.
- Cost items shall be reviewed for allowability pursuant to the review process set forth in the Allowable Cost Policy.
- Finance Office is responsible for identifying qualified vendors and rotating purchases made under the micro-purchase threshold among different suppliers. Management shall periodically check compliance with this control activity.
- Finance Office shall verify that contractors are not on the suspended or debarred list. A screenshot of the record check shall be maintained.
- Access to sensitive contractor information, such as Social Security numbers or federal tax ID numbers, is restricted.

Segregation of Duties:

- Duties are segregated between authorization, custody, record-keeping, and reconciliation.
- The person who sets up new contractors in the accounting system or edits information on existing vendors (record-keeping) is not the same as the person writing the checks (authorization).
- Reconciliations are performed by an employee who does not have record-keeping duties.
- Invoices and other supporting documentation are thoroughly reviewed prior to the invoice being approved (e.g., compare the receiving or packaging slip against the authorization).

Documentation:

Documenting the history of procurements is a top internal control priority for the Rutherford County. All request personnel shall be trained on documentation and record retention policies.

Bid documents shall reflect all steps in the procurement process, including:

1. bid specifications and proof of advertisement (if required),
 2. rationale for the selected method of procurement,
 3. bid submissions,
 4. valuation criteria,
 5. basis for contractor selection or rejection,
 6. justification for lack of competition, when applicable,
 7. basis for award cost or price, and
 8. contract agreement, including required UG contract clauses.
- Source documentation relating to procurements must be retained and should include sufficient details to support the transaction, including:
 1. cost and quantity of items purchased,
 2. model numbers,
 3. purchase orders with and pre-audit certificates, and
 4. personnel who authorized the sale, if applicable.
 - All records shall be maintained for a period of five (5) years after the ARP/CSLFRF period of performance (through December 31, 2031).

Communication & Monitoring:

Management shall ensure purchasing and finance staff understand federal procurement laws. Additional training shall be provided as necessary. Management will periodically review purchase orders and contracts to ensure that all charges are accounted for in the period in which the cost occurred and fall within the period of performance.

Overview:

Except for property, supplies, or equipment acquired using revenue loss funds, the unit must follow the applicable provisions of the Uniform Guidance regarding property standards (2 CFR 200.310–316), subject to the requirements set out in FAQ 13.16.

Per FAQ 13.16, during the period of performance, the Rutherford County may use property, supplies, or equipment purchased with ARP/CSLFRF funds for a purpose other than the purpose for which the initial purchase was made, provided the new use is consistent with another eligible use. After the period of performance, the Rutherford County is more limited in how it may use the property purchased with ARP/CSLFRF funds.

Objectives:

1. Ensure real property, personal property, supplies, and equipment are used in compliance with the UG property standards (2 CFR 200.310–316), and subject to the requirements set out in FAQ 13.16.
2. Ensure documentation is maintained to substantiate any determination on whether the use of an asset is authorized for a particular purpose during and after the award period of performance.
3. Establish adequate safeguards to prevent loss, damage, or theft of property.
4. Follow adequate maintenance procedures to keep equipment in good condition.
5. Ensure proper disposition of real property and equipment in accordance with § 200.311(c) and § 200.313 (e).

Control Activities:

- **Insurance Coverage:** Purchase equivalent insurance coverage for real property and equipment as is provided to other property owned by the Rutherford County. 2 CFR § 200.310.
- **Property Management Policy:** Rutherford County has adopted a Property Management Policy that sets forth property management processes, including procedures for record-keeping, reporting, and disposition responsibilities for real and personal property.
- **Real Property Reporting:** Finance Office shall oversee the annual reporting requirements for any real property or personal property acquired with federal awards funds. Standard Form 429 shall be used to report real property and the Standard Form 428 shall be used to report tangible personal property, including equipment.
- **Equipment Management:** The Rutherford County has procedures for managing equipment, whether acquired in whole or in part under a federal award, until disposition takes place. The Rutherford County will, at a minimum, meet the following requirements:
 1. maintain equipment records that include a description of equipment, serial number/ model number, source of funding, acquisition date, location and condition of equipment, unit acquisition cost, and final data, including date of disposal, sales price, and method used to determine fair market value. § 200.313(d).
 2. Ensure adequate safeguards to prevent loss, damage, or theft of property. Such safeguards may include attaching property tags to federally owned equipment that includes the FAIN. Any loss, damage, or theft will be investigated. § 200.313(d).
 3. Regular maintenance will be performed to keep the property in good condition.
 4. A physical inventory of equipment will be performed, and the results reconciled with the property records, at least once every two years.
 5. If the Rutherford County is authorized or required to sell equipment, proper sales procedures will be used to ensure the highest possible return.

Communication & Monitoring:

Management will train employees to understand the various compliance requirements set forth in the Uniform Guidance property management standards. Periodic testing of established controls shall be performed to ensure that all reporting and property management requirements

Subrecipient Risk Assessment & Monitoring, 2 CFR §§ 200.331 to 200.333

Overview:

Expenditures of revenue loss funds are exempt from compliance with this section. See [Final Rule FAQ 13.15](#). Each unit must design its own system of internal controls over subrecipient selection and monitoring that meet the requirements set forth in 2 CFR 200.331-.333.

Objective:

- Ensure compliance with requirements set forth in the Subaward Policy, which sets forth the UG compliance requirements in 2 CFR 200.331-.333.

Control Activities:

- The Rutherford County has adopted a Subaward Policy. The policy outlines processes and control activities for the selection and oversight of subrecipients.
- Subrecipient agreements are reviewed and approved by knowledgeable staff to ensure all compliance requirements are captured and that all required elements set forth in 2 CFR § 200.332 are included.
- Management tracks subaward notifications and maintains copies of executed subaward agreements.
- Management conducts subrecipient risk assessments and approves individual subrecipient monitoring plans.
- Management requires a standard template to document all subrecipient agreements that includes the required elements outlined in the UG.
- Supervisors periodically reconcile subrecipient monitoring plans with actual monitoring activities that have been undertaken to ensure monitoring occurs as scheduled.
- Segregation of duties exists between those monitoring a subrecipient and those approving the conclusions regarding the subrecipient's compliance.

Communication & Monitoring:

Management shall be responsible for communicating the compliance requirements and specific award terms and conditions to subrecipients. Management will ensure that external stakeholders are apprised of any subaward agreements executed using ARP/CSLFRF funds and the intended purpose of the supported program. Management shall conduct ongoing monitoring to ensure staff is selecting eligible subrecipients and is adequately monitoring each subrecipient's compliance with the terms set forth in the subaward agreement.

Program Income, 2 CFR § 200.307

Overview:

Program income relates to gross income earned from expenditures of federal awards, such as income from fees for services performed, the use or rental of property acquired with program funds, and for the sale of items fabricated under the program. Program income is only triggered when income will be earned under the COVID-19/Economic Impacts Category or for income earned on a water/wastewater infrastructure project. When program income is earned, it is added back to the total ARP/CSLFRF award allocation.

Objectives:

1. Separately track and account for program income during the ARP/CSLFRF award's period of performance.
2. Expend program income on eligible projects and programs during the period of performance (program income is added to the total ARP/CSLFRF award).

Control Activities:

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- On a quarterly basis, recorded program income is reconciled with supporting documentation, such as loan ledgers and other accounting records.
- Program income is separately tracked and accounted for within the grant project ordinance.
- Management ensures program income is added to the total ARP/CSLFRF award and used to support eligible projects and programs.
- Individuals who collect cash or other receipts are different from those who deposit receipts, generate invoices, record general ledger activity, and reconcile bank statements.

Communication & Monitoring:

Management shall identify program income requirements and communicate compliance requirements to staff. Management shall periodically review accounting records to ensure program income is separately accounted for during the award period of performance.

Policy Checklist

Required UG Policies:

The following policies are required to ensure compliance with the Uniform Guidance:

- Eligible Use Policy (details the allowable activities under the ARP/CSLFRF award),
- Cost Principles/Allowable Cost Policy, and
- Conflict-of-Interest Policy.

Optional UG Policies:

These policies should be adopted if the programs or activities undertaken by the unit trigger compliance with any of the following UG compliance requirements:

- Subaward Policy,
- Property Management Policy, and
- Program Income Policy.

Required Policies Under the ARP/CSLFRF Award Terms & Conditions:

- Procurement Policy,
- Records Retention Policy (ARP/CSLFRF records shall be maintained for five years after the period of performance),
- Civil Rights Compliance Policy, and
- Nondiscrimination Policy.