

Researchers sometimes offer subjects incentives for study participation. While incentives most often take the form of checks or gift certificates, a researcher may also choose to reward subjects by entering their names in a lottery operated by the study team. If a study's incentive budget is small, a lottery allows one subject, drawn at random from the pool, to receive the full amount of the incentive budget. Subjects may find the chance to win this larger amount more attractive than the certainty of receiving a smaller amount.

Lotteries in research are distinct from sweepstakes, whose entrants are not required to take part in a study. Researchers most often use sweepstakes to identify potential subjects during the recruitment period.

Lottery regulations are governed by the state in which the research takes place. In most cases, Michigan law requires anyone operating a lottery to obtain a raffle license from the state. The law allows an exception, however, for qualified organizations to operate lotteries without a raffle license, provided that they meet certain criteria. For example,

1. there may be no presale of tickets;
2. there may be only one drawing per day, and the daily prize may not exceed \$100;
and
3. there may be no second-chance drawings for those who do not win. In the context of a research lottery, this means that a researcher who wishes to offer multiple prizes must organize subjects in separate pools, to ensure that each subject has the opportunity to win only one drawing.

As a qualified organization, the University of Michigan is authorized to conduct lotteries without a raffle license, as long as the lotteries meet all of the criteria. Keep in mind that the statutory exception applies at the University level. The study team itself is not eligible for qualified organization status.

IRB regulatory staff will guide researchers on how to conduct the lottery, to be sure that it complies with Michigan law. Researchers are responsible for knowing the regulatory requirements for lotteries conducted outside of Michigan.

The University of Michigan study team is responsible for

- operating the lottery
- maintaining the pool (or pools) of potential winners
- drawing the winners
and
- awarding prizes

Contact the IRB for more information about lotteries as incentives for research participation.

U-MIC TRANSCRIPT

Lotteries as Incentives

Posted: 4/3/2013