



NSF and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009



On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) into law. One of the principal purposes of the law is to “provide investments needed to increase economic efficiency by spurring technological advances in science and health.” During the signing ceremony, President Obama stated,

“Even beyond energy, from the National Institutes of Health to the National Science Foundation, this recovery act represents the biggest increase in basic research funding in the long history of America’s noble endeavor to better understand our world. Just as President Kennedy sparked an explosion of innovation when he set America’s sights on the moon, I hope this investment will ignite our imagination once more, spurring new discoveries and breakthroughs that will make our economy stronger, our nation more secure, and our planet safer for our children.”

The Recovery Act supplements NSF fiscal year 2009 funding by \$3.0 billion. NSF currently has many highly rated proposals that it has not been able to fund. For this reason, NSF is planning to use the majority of the \$2 billion available in Research and Related Activities for proposals that are already in house and will be reviewed and/or awarded prior to September 30, 2009.

The Foundation also expects to expeditiously award funds as specified in the Recovery Act for the:

- Math and Science Partnership program (funded at \$25 million);
- Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program (funded at \$60 million);
- Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction Account (funded at \$400 million);
- Academic Research Infrastructure (ARI) program (funded at \$200 million);
- Science Masters program, (funded at \$15 million).

The [Academic Research Infrastructure Program](#) was launched to fund repairs and renovations at the nation’s academic research facilities. In addition, the ARRA legislation provided \$300 million for the [Major Research Instrumentation Program \(MRI\)](#) which enhances the nation’s research infrastructure by providing researchers and students access to state-of-the-art scientific and engineering equipment and instrumentation in environments that integrate research with education.

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With the exception of the MRI, ARI and Science Masters programs, the majority of proposals eligible for Recovery Act funding include those that are already in house and will be reviewed and/or awarded prior to September 30, 2009.

NSF also will consider proposals declined on or after October 1, 2008. The reversal of the decision to decline a proposal must be based on both the high quality of the reviews received on the initial submission and the lack of available funding at the time the original decision was made. The cognizant program officer will contact the institution when a reversal is being considered by NSF.

The Recovery Act mandates a significant level of transparency and accountability. The law and implementing guidance identify specific award conditions for awards made with Recovery Act funding. Therefore, award notices will include [Terms and Conditions](#) that:

- Identifies the funding as coming from the Recovery Act;
- Provides specific awardee reporting and registration responsibilities mandated by Section 1512 of the Recovery Act;
- Provides information for reporting of expenditures for recipients and sub-recipients;
- Protects state and local government and contractor whistleblowers under Section 1553 of the Recovery Act;
- Specifies that “None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act may be used by any State or local government, or any private entity, for any casino or other gambling establishment, aquarium, zoo, golf course, or swimming pool”; and
- Requires recipients to report misconduct of use of funds to the NSF Office of the Inspector General.

The complete [NSF ARRA Terms and Conditions](#) are now available online.

In response to this landmark legislation, NSF has developed policies, procedures, and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for use by the awardee community. These documents provide up-to-date information regarding NSF’s implementation of the Recovery Act, and are available at www.nsf.gov/recovery. Questions not addressed in the FAQs should be directed to the Policy Office at NSF at policy@nsf.gov; or at 703.292.8243.

America COMPETES Act (ACA) – Recent and Pending Updates

The America COMPETES Act (Pub. L. No. 110-69, Aug. 9, 2007) mandated a number of requirements that NSF has begun to implement through changes and updates to the appropriate NSF policy documents. A status of ongoing ACA requirements follows:

Postdoctoral Research Fellows (Section 7008): *All grant applications to NSF that include funding to support postdoctoral researchers are to describe mentoring activities provided for these individuals, which will be evaluated under the Foundation’s broader impacts merit review criterion. In addition, annual and the final reports for research grants that include funding to support postdoctoral researchers should include a description of the mentoring activities provided to them.*

Currently, each proposal that contains postdoctoral researchers must include, as a supplementary document, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. The mentoring

Important Links:

[National Science Foundation](#)

[Office of Budget, Finance & Award Management](#)

- [Budget Division](#)
- [Division of Acquisition & Cooperative Support](#)
- [Division of Financial Management](#)
- [Division of Grants & Agreements](#)
- [Division of Institution & Award Support](#)
- [Policy Office](#)

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plan must not exceed one page. See the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) for additional guidance on inclusion of mentoring plans for collaborative proposals.

Responsible Conduct of Research (Section 7009): *Institutions that apply for financial assistance from NSF for science and engineering research or education should include a plan in their grant proposals for appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who will participate in the proposed research project.*

NSF anticipates that beginning in fall 2009, at the time of proposal submission to NSF, a proposing institution's Authorized Organizational Representative will have to certify that the institution has a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research as specified in the Act. While training plans will not be required for inclusion in proposals submitted, institutions are advised that they are subject to review upon request. NSF will modify its standard award conditions to clearly stipulate that institutions are responsible for verifying that undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF to conduct research have received RCR training.

In addition, NSF will support the development of an on-line digital library containing research findings, pedagogical materials, and promising practices regarding the ethical and responsible conduct of research in science and engineering. The development and evolution of the digital library will be informed by the research communities that NSF supports, and it will serve as a living resource of multimedia materials that may be used to train current and future generations of scientists and engineers in the responsible and ethical conduct of research.

A Federal Register notice soliciting comments on the NSF implementation plan closed on March 31, 2009. NSF staff is currently reviewing comments received in order to make any necessary changes to the plan.

Reporting of Research Results (Section 7010): *All final project reports and citations of published research documents resulting from research funded, in whole or in part, by NSF, should be made available to the public in a timely manner and in electronic form through NSF's website.*

NSF anticipates that beginning in fall 2009, PIs will be required to prepare a brief summary – specifically for the public – on the nature and outcomes of the award which will be posted on the Foundation's website. The FastLane Project Reports system will be modified to incorporate this requirement.

Cost Sharing (Section 7013): *The National Science Board (NSB) should evaluate the impact of its policy to eliminate cost sharing for research grants and cooperative agreements for existing programs that were developed around industry partnerships and historically required industry cost sharing. In addition the NSB should report its findings to Congress.*

The NSB prepared a second draft report for public comment on cost sharing which is available at <http://www.nsf.gov/nsb/committees/cs/index.jsp>. The NSB recommendations have two primary objectives.



1) To allow, but narrowly circumscribe, the application of mandatory cost sharing requirements in NSF Programs; and 2) To prohibit voluntary committed cost sharing in NSF proposals and eliminate post-award tracking and reporting requirements.

Stay tuned for further updates to the [Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) as these sections of the America COMPETES Act are implemented.

Now available: Check the status of your proposals and submit grant financial reports through Research.gov

For the first time, Principal Investigators and Sponsored Projects Office staff can check status information in one online location for grant applications submitted to:

- The National Science Foundation (NSF)
- The Department of Defense's Army Research Office (DoD/ARO), and
- USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (USDA/CSREES)

The Research.gov Grants Application Status service provides a fast, easy electronic way to check the status of proposals for multiple agencies one place.

Users are already commenting on the benefits of using these business services, as one user remarked, "I love the ability to track the progress of the proposal."

Additionally, NSF awardees can prepare and submit grant financial reports using the new government-wide standard. NSF encourages its awardees to begin using the Research.gov Federal Financial Report (FFR) service because it will soon become the standard mechanism for submitting financial reports to NSF.

Both of these services are available now through the common Research.gov web portal (www.research.gov). All you need to get started is a FastLane account. Users can log into Research.gov with their NSF ID and password (same as FastLane log in).

Research.gov plans to continue to increase the value it offers the research community by adding additional services and information for other federal research agencies in the future.

Check out Research.gov today and tell us what you think.



NSF Regional Grants Conference – Fall 2009 in Jackson, Mississippi

The first National Science Foundation Regional Grants Conference of fiscal year 2010 will be held in Jackson, MS, and

hosted by Jackson State University on October 5-6, 2009.

Key representatives from the National Science Foundation as well as your



colleagues - faculty, researchers and grant administrators - representing colleges and universities from around the US will participate.

This two-day conference is a must, especially for new faculty, researchers and administrators who want to gain key insight into a wide range of current issues at NSF including the state of current funding; new and current policies and procedures; and pertinent administrative issues. NSF program officers representing each NSF directorate will be on hand to provide up-to-date information about specific funding opportunities and answer your questions.

Highlights include:

- New programs and initiatives;
- Future directions and strategies for national science policy;
- Proposal preparation;
- NSF's merit review process;
- Cross-disciplinary and special interest programs;
- Conflict of interest policies; and
- Breakout sessions by discipline.

For additional information regarding program content, contact the Policy Office, Division of Institution and Award Support at (703) 292-8243, or via e-mail at policy@nsf.gov.