

Session 1

The Funding Opportunity in Survey Research

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In FY1999, NSF's Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics (MMS) Program, in collaboration with a consortium of federal statistical agencies represented by the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy (ICSP), conducted the first of three planned competitions for research on the development of new and innovative approaches to surveys. A total of \$600,000 was set aside for successful proposals, \$300,000 from the MMS Program and \$300,000 from participating federal statistical agencies.¹ Priority was given to research proposals that were interdisciplinary in nature, had broad implications for the field in general, and had the greatest potential for creating fundamental knowledge of value to the Federal Statistical System.

NSF received twenty-eight proposals in response to its announcement. Proposals underwent a multi-tier review process that included both an outside experts panel and a panel of representatives from the participating federal statistical agencies. Of the twenty-eight proposals, six proposals (four projects) were selected for funding. The portfolio included work in small-area estimation, seam effects in panel surveys, the design of web surveys, and a computer tool that critiques survey questions. A more detailed list of the projects supported is available on the NSF home page at <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/ses/mms/survey99.htm>.

Representatives of the participating agencies generally were pleased with the results of the first year's competition. The funded projects nicely blend fundamental research with some of the practical needs and concerns of the federal statistical agencies. One measure of the success of the FY1999 competition was the total amount contributed by the agencies. Collectively, the agencies exceeded their expected contribution by providing a total of \$674,036 for the support of the four projects.

Another measure of success was the decision to continue the competition into its planned second and third years. NSF issued the announcement for Research on Survey and Statistical Methodology in FY2001. The announcement was similar to the FY1999 solicitation, except that the focus was expanded to include the development of methods for the analysis of survey data. As of late August 2001, the second year of the competition is near completion. NSF received sixteen proposals in response to the announcement and again anticipates funding four projects. All awards will be made by 1 October 2001. Total contributions from the agencies are expected to exceed the \$600,000 originally pledged by NSF and the participating statistical agencies.

¹ In FY1999, participating federal statistical agencies included the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Department of Transportation, the Division of Science Resource Statistics, the Economic Research Service, the Energy Information Administration, the National Agriculture Statistics Service, the National Center for Education Statistics, the National Center for Health Statistics, the Social Security Administration, and the U.S. Census Bureau.

The planned FY2002 competition will continue the second year's focus on survey and statistical methodology. The announcement, which is available on the NSF home page at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2000/nsf00147/nsf00147.htm>, has a deadline for submission of proposals of 30 November 2001.