

**National Science Foundation
Office of the Director
Arlington, VA 22230**

March 18, 2009

Notice No. 131

**IMPORTANT NOTICE TO
PRESIDENTS OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES
AND HEADS OF OTHER NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
AWARDEE ORGANIZATIONS**

Subject: 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”.¹ 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."²

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. The key elements of NSF's implementation of the Recovery Act are highlighted below.

NSF Programs Receiving Recovery Act Funding

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.

¹ P.L. 111-5, Section 3 (a) (3). The full text of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is available electronically at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:h1enr.pdf

² The full text of President Obama's remarks at the signing ceremony is available at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-and-Vice-President-at-Signing-of-the-American-Recovery-and-Reinvestment-Act/

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); the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program (funded at \$60 million); the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction Account (funded at \$400 million); the Academic Research Infrastructure (ARI) program (funded at \$200 million); and the Science Masters program, (funded at \$15 million). Solicitations for these latter two programs will be posted this spring.

NSF will post a solicitation this spring for the Major Research Instrumentation Program (MRI) in order to make a sufficient number of awards to utilize the \$300 million provided in the legislation. The Foundation currently anticipates that no other solicitations will be posted that are solely in response to the Recovery Act.

Funding Prioritization

NSF will ensure that Recovery Act funds are awarded in a timely manner while maintaining its commitment to its established merit review processes.

In keeping with this, NSF's overall framework for Recovery Act investments emphasizes the following:

- All grants issued with Recovery Act funds will be standard grants with durations of up to 5 years. This approach will allow NSF to structure a sustainable portfolio.
- Funding of new Principal Investigators and high-risk, high-return research will be top priorities.

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 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. Specific procedural information regarding this new process is available on the NSF Recovery website.

Special Award Conditions

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 special award conditions identifying the funding as coming from the Recovery Act, and indicate the specific awardee reporting responsibilities mandated by Section 1512 of the Recovery Act.

Given the goals of the Recovery Act, awardees will be informed that they are expected to expend funds in a timely manner on allowable award costs and that NSF will be monitoring awards for expenditures. If, after 12 months, no allowable expenditures have taken place, NSF may consider reducing or terminating the award and reallocating the funds.

Working in Partnership

NSF is honored by the recognition of the Foundation's role in stimulating the American economy with its inclusion in the Recovery Act. The law and implementing guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) set clear expectations for accountability and transparency from both Federal agencies and from recipients of Recovery Act funding.

The high expectations embodied in the Recovery Act acknowledge the contributions that NSF and its partners in the research and education community have made to the economy and welfare of the nation over the past six decades. This partnership is one of the nation's greatest strengths, and we look forward to working with you as we continue to pursue the promise of science and engineering and meet the goals of the Recovery Act for securing the nation's future.

Arden L. Bement, Jr.
Director