

**National Science Foundation Plans for Stimulus Funding  
(as of February 23, 2009)**

Since the last Lewis-Burke update on stimulus spending plans at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and other agencies—provided on the morning of February 20—further plans have been made at NSF. An update on the status is provided below.

Research Funding

- **Increasing Success Rates:** This funding will primarily go to increasing success rates in planned fiscal year (FY) 2009 competitions. Many of those competitions are already underway, with due dates past, although some core programs have upcoming due dates.
- **Focus on the Pipeline:** As part of the effort to raise success rates, NSF will be focusing particularly on early career researchers. They are also concerned about support for undergraduates, graduate students, and post-docs. This emphasis reflects Congressional concern about the STEM pipeline, as well as jobs in general.
- **No Supplements with Stimulus Funding:** NSF will not be using the stimulus money to make supplemental awards to current grants. This decision reflects the intensive tracking and reporting requirements that agencies and stimulus funding recipients will have to meet (quarterly reports on progress, spend rate, jobs created, etc.). However, the stimulus funding will take some of the pressure off of the anticipated FY 2009 funds, and program officers will be able to use those funds for supplements, if they so desire.
  - **Explanation:** Recent Office of Management and Budget guidance discouraged, but did not forbid, agencies from using supplements, and NSF has enough new proposals coming in FY 2009 (which they can use FY 2009 funding to support over multiple years) and other activities (i.e. infrastructure spending) that they don't need to use supplements to get the \$2.0 billion in research money out the door quickly. (For comparison, NIH is still planning to use supplements, despite the tracking and reporting difficulties, because of the quantity of funds they have to allocate which they cannot use to forward fund grants.)
- **Distribution of Funds Among Programs:** The distribution of NSF's \$2 billion among NSF's research directorates, divisions, and programs is being set internally, with Program Officers hopefully getting information about their allocations this week. The additional funding may be distributed proportionally to the FY 2009 request levels, but that has not been confirmed.

### Instrumentation Funding

- **New MRI Solicitation Likely:** NSF plans to do a new solicitation for the Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) program (the current solicitation closed in January). The new solicitation is likely to reflect increased flexibility on NSF's part to raise the maximum award (from \$4 million to \$6 million) and potentially waive some cost sharing requirements (currently 30 percent). The stimulus bill includes \$300 million for MRI; how much of this funding will go to the current competition and how much to the new one is not yet known.
- **Other Infrastructure Funding:** In addition to formal funding for the MRI program, the stimulus money provided to individual programs can be used to fund infrastructure projects and the infrastructure and instrumentation programs in individual disciplines.

### Professional Science Masters

- As previously reported, NSF has been working on the solicitation to distribute the \$15 million provided in the stimulus to establish the Professional Science Masters grant program. The solicitation will be based on the authorization language in the America COMPETES Act and should be released soon.

### Research Facilities Modernization

- As previously reported, NSF is working on and will issue a solicitation to distribute the \$200 million provided in the stimulus bill for a Research Facilities Modernization program.