

NSF PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Per the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, this chapter, together with the Overview, contains basic information about NSF’s mission and Strategic Plan, as well as NSF’s FY 2021 Annual Performance Plan (APP), Major Management Challenges, FY 2019 Annual Performance Report (APR), and Strategic Objective Progress Update. Information about NSF’s performance can also be found on the NSF website in the FY 2019 Performance and Financial Highlights Report.¹

Strategic Plan and Strategic Objectives

In FY 2018, NSF released its Strategic Plan for FYs 2018-2022: *Building the Future: Investing in Discovery and Innovation*.¹ This Plan lays out two strategic goals that embody the dual nature of NSF’s mission to advance the progress of science while benefitting the Nation: *Expand knowledge in science, engineering, and learning* and *Advance the capability of the Nation to meet current and future challenges*. A third goal, *Enhance NSF’s performance of its mission*, directs NSF to hold itself accountable for achieving excellence in carrying out its mission. Each goal has two Strategic Objectives which together encompass all areas of agency activity. This goal structure enables NSF to link its investments to longer-term outcomes.

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective
1 Expand knowledge in science, engineering, and learning.	1.1 Knowledge Advance knowledge through investments in ideas, people, and infrastructure.
	1.2 Practice Advance the practice of research.
2 Advance the capability of the Nation to meet current and future challenges.	2.1 Societal Impacts Support research and promote partnerships to accelerate innovation and to provide new capabilities to meet pressing societal needs.
	2.2 STEM Workforce Foster the growth of a more capable and diverse research workforce and advance the scientific and innovation skills of the Nation.
3 Enhance NSF’s performance of its mission.	3.1 Human Capital Attract, retain, and empower a talented and diverse workforce.
	3.2 Processes and Operations Continually improve agency operations.

Agency Priority Goal and Performance Plan

The most prominent goal in NSF’s FY 2021 APP is its Agency Priority Goal in the area of Partnerships. This is a continuation of the previous APG in this area, which expanded the number of public and private partnerships NSF entered into between FY 2017 and FY 2019. The current iteration of the Partnerships APG covers the time period of FY 2020-FY 2021 and is broader in scope, seeking to strengthen NSF’s capacity to strategically engage in partnerships.

The APP also includes two goals aimed at maintaining and improving customer service: NSF’s longstanding performance goal to make timely award decisions and a goal, which was new in FY 2018, that focuses on improving the quality of the reviews written by outside reviewers. The APP also continues two goals aimed at monitoring of key program and infrastructure investments. Monitoring of activities funded as Mid-scale Research Infrastructure supported by the MREFC account was added to the infrastructure investment monitoring goal in FY 2020.

¹ www.nsf.gov/about/performance

Renewing NSF

For the third year, NSF's APP supports the Renewing NSF effort, the agency-wide change initiative that arose from NSF's internal work over the summer of 2017 to implement agency reform per M-17-22. NSF wrote Renewing NSF into its annual performance plans beginning in FY 2019: the former and current APG in support of Partnerships supports one of the four pillars of Renewing NSF, and the existing goals in the Performance Plan that monitor inclusion, human resources, and information technology customer service were refocused to support Renewing NSF efforts in Workforce and IT.