About NSF

NSF is an independent Federal agency that supports fundamental research and education across the fields of science and engineering. NSF strives to advance the frontiers of knowledge by encouraging cross-disciplinary research and creating strong international partnerships.

Did You Know

• Today, NSF receives more than 45,000 competitive funding requests and makes over 11,000 new awards each year.
• NSF has an annual budget of approximately $7 billion and funds the work of principal investigators at nearly 2,000 universities and institutions across the United States.
• A total of 180 NSF researchers have gone on to win Nobel Prizes.
• Rotators comprise 15 percent of NSF’s total workforce.

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Visit the rotator home page at:
http://www.nsf.gov/about/career_opps/rotators/index.jsp

NSF Program Directors: Share in the Discovery
Join the NSF Team

“The rotator experience made me think about the challenges and opportunities in analyzing large sets of data across different data types and from different perspectives, giving me a more holistic view of my field.”

—Dr. Robert Last, Former NSF Program Director in the Plant Genome Research Program
What is an NSF rotator?
NSF offers the rare opportunity for scientists, engineers, and educators to work as temporary program directors—called rotators. As a rotator, you will be in a prime position to collaborate with others and increase your visibility as you survey the entire breadth of U.S. and international science, engineering, and education in real-time. In addition, as a rotator, you can retain your ties to your current institution and return to it with new insights and experience.

What are my main responsibilities as a temporary program director (rotator)?
As an NSF temporary program director, you will have a variety of different responsibilities. Rotators:

- Oversee NSF’s “gold standard” merit review process and help define new funding opportunities;
- Make recommendations about which proposals to fund;
- Influence new directions in the fields of science, engineering, and education;
- Interact with potential principal investigators; and
- Support cutting-edge interdisciplinary research.

How long is my temporary assignment as a rotator?
You can become a rotator either as a Visiting Scientist, Engineer, and Educator (VSEE) or as an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignee and while rotators can come on temporary assignment under the IPA program for up to four years, most rotating assignments last one to two years.

What are some of the opportunities I can take advantage of while I am at NSF as a rotator?
Serving as an NSF rotator provides the opportunity to:

- Increase understanding of the NSF proposal development and review process;
- Gain a more multi-disciplinary lens;
- Develop leadership skills;
- Interface with your research community at the global and international levels;
- Mentor the next generation of science and engineering leaders;
- Continue your own research at your home institution through the Independent Research/Development (IR/D) program; and
- Live and work in the Washington, DC metro region, which offers a host of both professional and personal development opportunities.

How do I become an NSF rotator?
To find out more on how you can share in the discoveries at NSF, speak with an NSF Ambassador or visit: http://www.nsf.gov/about/career_opps/rotators/

“As an NSF rotator, I got to read about science and engineering that will change my field over the next ten years. Now that I have returned to my home institution, I have a better sense of where the field is going and what I need to input into my research and understand to stay on the cutting-edge of my field.”
—Dr. Ajit Subramaniam, Former NSF Associate Program Director in the Biological Oceanography Program

“As a Program Director, I had the opportunity to draft a response to a Senator who raised questions about work that was being conducted and supported in the social sciences at NSF. I crafted the response to the Senator and was able to see the words I had written circulating among Social Science Advocacy Groups. Having the opportunity to see my words in print was very exciting and encouraging.”
—Dr. Kellina M. Craig-Henderson, Ph.D., Former NSF Program Director in the Social Psychology Program, Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate

“Through my temporary assignment, I was able to interact with our principal investigators and learn about their research in a way that I hadn’t before. This gave me a better understanding of the field and how it is changing over time.”
—Dr. Susan L. Reed, Former NSF Rotator in the Geosciences Program

“Being a rotator was a unique opportunity to gain a new perspective on science and engineering. I was able to interact with researchers and learn about their work in a way that I hadn’t before.”
—Dr. Jane R. Kay, Former NSF Rotator in the Chemistry Program

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