

HIGHLIGHTS

1. During FY 2000 NSF took action on 29,407 competitively reviewed proposals, and provided funding to 9,762 of them. This resulted in an overall funding rate of 33 percent. These numbers have changed very little during the past five years. In FY 2000, Directorate funding rates ranged from 25 to 39 percent.
2. In FY 2000, the number of awards to minority Principal Investigators (PIs) increased from 422 to 482, a 14 percent increase over FY 1999. Still, this is only about five percent of the total number of NSF awards. The funding rate for minority PIs is 32 percent, very close to NSF's overall rate of 33 percent.
3. During FY 2000, female PIs received 1,932 awards, a 16 percent increase over FY 1999. The funding rate was 35 percent. Since 1993 the number of proposals received from female PIs has increased by 18 percent and the number of awards has increased by 32 percent.
4. There continues to be a wide disparity in the funding rates of "new PIs" and "prior PIs" (24 percent and 40 percent, respectively in FY 2000). In FY 2000 new PIs submitted 12,320 proposals, up slightly from FY 1999 but down by 15 percent from FY 1993-94 levels.
5. The average annualized award amount in FY 2000 was \$105,839, an increase of 13 percent over FY 1999. The average amount for female PIs was \$95,987, compared to \$108,825 for male PIs. The average amount for minority PIs was \$88,743. In NSF's FY 2001 GPRA Performance Plan, a specific goal is to increase the average award size for research projects to \$109,000.
6. Since 1991 the percentage of NSF proposals reviewed by panel-only has increased from 40 to 46 percent of all proposals. During the same period, there has been a steady decline in the use of mail-only review from 30 to 17 percent. The use of mail-plus-panel review increased from 31 to 38 percent during the past ten years.
7. For proposal decisions in FY 2000, 46,897 external reviewers were sent one or more proposals for mail review and 8,708 reviewers served as panelists. In FY 2000, 60 percent of requests for mail reviews produced responses, an increase from the 59 percent response rate in FY 1999, although below the 64 percent response rate that prevailed in the 1990s.
8. There is considerable overlap among the average reviewer ratings of successful and unsuccessful proposals, most notably in the range of "very good" average ratings. This is true for all three proposal review methods (panel-only, mail-only, and mail plus panel). Almost \$2 billion of declined proposals are rated very good or better and almost \$1 billion are rated as high as the average NSF award.
9. The use of preliminary proposals has increased in frequency over the past several years in NSF programs. In FY 2000, NSF acted on 1,281 official preliminary proposals that were logged into the proposal processing system. (Almost all through FastLane.) Of these, NSF encouraged the submission of full proposals in 236 cases and discouraged submission in 1,045 cases.
10. Although NSF did not fully meet its FY 2000 GPRA goal of getting reviewers and program officers to address both merit review criteria, NSF is taking steps to assure that significant progress will be made.
11. In FY 2000, 54% of proposals were processed within six months, falling short of NSF's GPRA Goal of 70%. In FY 2001, NSF staff will work cooperatively to reduce overloads and bottlenecks.