Information Booklet for NSF Minority Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences

This information outlines the terms and conditions of your National Science Foundation Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowship for FY 2009 and provides general information for use during your tenure. Read it carefully and refer to it whenever you have a question about your fellowship. The Foundation and your fellowship institution will thus be able to serve you more quickly and efficiently, and unnecessary correspondence will be avoided.

The NSF contact persons for your fellowship are:
(1) Dr. Fahmida Chowdhury, Program Director, fchowdhu@nsf.gov, 703 292-4672, and
(2) Ms. Monique Moore, Program Specialist, mmoore@nsf.gov, 703 292-4951.

You can fax us at 703 292-9068 or at 703 292-9069 and here is our mailing address:

Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences,
National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Blvd, Arlington VA 22230

As a recipient of NSF funds, you are expected to demonstrate responsibility for fulfilling the academic and fiscal obligations of your award. Failure on your part to observe all the terms and conditions of a fellowship award constitutes sufficient grounds for its revocation by NSF.

1. INTRODUCTION

Your National Science Foundation Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowship has been awarded by the National Science Foundation in recognition of your accomplishments to date, and with the expectation that the experience you obtain during the tenure of your fellowship will increase your scientific competence and the scientific potential of the United States.

2. FELLOWSHIP INSTITUTION

By law, as a Fellow, you must affiliate with an appropriate nonprofit institution during the entire fellowship tenure. You are responsible for making all arrangements for such affiliation with the host institution. A clear relationship should be established with the chosen institution before beginning tenure, to assure both you and the Foundation that it will be possible to carry out the program of research and training for which the fellowship was awarded. Therefore, you should share information about your fellowship (e.g., a copy of the award letter and this instruction booklet) with both your sponsoring scientist and administrative personnel at your host institution. They may have no experience with NSF fellowships and may not be familiar with the special conditions of fellowships versus research grants and cooperative agreements.

If it becomes necessary or desirable to affiliate with an institution other than the one listed in the application, you must request permission in writing from the NSF Program Director prior to making the change. The request must state the reasons for the proposed change and explain the appropriateness of the new institution for the proposed plan of study. The request must contain a new sponsoring scientist's statement using the format of the original application. This must be done before final arrangements with the new institution are completed. You may not begin tenure at the new institution until the Foundation approves all changes.

3. SPONSORING SCIENTIST

In your application, you arranged for a staff member at the host institution to serve as sponsoring scientist. This sponsor will be the institutional representative responsible for your activities during the fellowship tenure.

Governmental accounting regulations require that your **Starting and Termination Certificates** used in connection with the fellowship must be signed by the sponsor, or if absent, by an appropriate official of the institution.

4. ENTRANCE UPON TENURE

NSF expects that you will begin fellowship activities no later than January 01, 2010. If you are not able to begin tenure by that date, you must contact NSF for a special permission, or you may decline the fellowship. This declination will not prejudice any future application.

Before you may enter upon tenure of a Minority Postdoctoral Fellowship, the Foundation must have on record a certification of receipt of the doctoral degree and the date of receipt. If the degree is not received prior to the starting date of tenure, you must submit evidence that all requirements for the degree have been completed before beginning fellowship tenure. This evidence can be a letter from your Ph.D. graduate committee chair, stating that you have successfully defended your dissertation.

Stipend and allowance payments will not be authorized until a starting certificate has been received by the Foundation. The Starting Certificate may not be submitted before the effective date of the fellowship as stated in the grant letter and before fellowship activities have begun. Do not predate the starting certificate; fax it to us on the day that tenure begins.

Fellowship tenure starts on the date you begin fellowship activities (by filing the starting certificate) and terminates on the expiration date as stated in the grant letter. If you interrupt tenure or affiliate with more than one institution, Starting and Termination Certificates are required for each portion of tenure.

If you are unable to start your fellowship on the effective date stated in the grant letter, you must request permission to start it later from the NSF Program Manager. If the delay is not approved, the fellowship will be terminated. If the delay is approved, once you begin the fellowship you must request a no-cost extension through FastLane to cover the delayed start. NSF will issue you a new grant letter with a revised expiration date. Otherwise, payments will not be made to you beyond the original expiration date.

5. TRAVEL REGULATIONS

There is no allowance for travel and moving expenses to the fellowship institution. You can use your special allowance to pay these costs once the fellowship begins. Travel during the fellowship must meet Federal and institutional policies.

Foreign Travel. If you and your sponsoring scientist judge it appropriate for you to travel abroad, you must seek NSF approval before you travel. You can request prior approval with an email to the Program Officer. The only fellowship funds available for such travel are within the Special Allowance. In your e-mail, please include the purpose of the trip and an itinerary. If you are attending a scientific meeting, it is expected that you will be giving a presentation; therefore please give the title of your presentation and the name,

place, and time of the meeting in the request for approval.

All travel paid from your fellowship funds must be by U.S. flag carriers unless such service is unavailable, even though other carriers may be more convenient or less expensive.

Each fellow is responsible for making all arrangements for securing a passport and visa. Visa regulations vary greatly by country, and to avoid the possibility of lengthy delay, Fellows should make the necessary applications well before departure.

Foreign Tenure: All arrangements for affiliation with a fellowship institution abroad and provision for housing are the responsibility of the Fellow. Some Fellows, particularly those with families, have experienced difficulty in finding suitable housing in foreign countries. Fellows should be aware that housing shortages exist in many foreign cities, and that living costs may exceed those in comparable cities in the United States. Early correspondence with the host institution regarding housing needs is recommended.

For Fellows going abroad, travel time from the United States to a fellowship institution and from that institution to the United States, up to a maximum of one week each way may be considered as part of tenure. Thus, the actual tenure at the fellowship institution, as shown on the Starting and Termination Certificates, may be up to two weeks less than the total authorized tenure for which stipends are to be paid.

6. PROGRAM CHANGES

You must request prior approval from the Program Officer for any major change in the study or research program from that proposed at the time of application, any changes in tenure, or in the institution(s) with which you are associated. Although it is expected that you will carry out the program as approved at the time of application, minor changes may be made at your discretion and with concurrence of your sponsoring scientist. However, any major changes must be outlined and justified in full so that a determination may be made by the Foundation as to whether the revised program falls within the intent of the award.

7. STIPENDS

A. Amount. The fellowship stipend is $45,000 per year and will be paid at the rate of $3,750 per month for the 24-month duration of the fellowship. Stipend payments are processed by NSF around the 20th of the month for the following month and are paid by the US Treasury into your account at a US financial institution normally within 3 to 5 business days. If you haven't received payment by the first week of the month, please contact Ms. Moore (703-292-4951).

B. Payment. **ALL** Fellows are required to use electronic funds transfer (EFT) to an account at a US bank or other financial institution. You will be provided an ACH form for setting up the EFT. If your financial institution does not have someone to sign the ACH form, you may sign it. Your home address is required on the ACH form. Regular stipend payments will be authorized after NSF receives a properly completed ***Starting Certificate NSF Form 349*** and ***ACH Payment Form 3881***. Stipend payments will be electronically transferred each month to your account indicated on the ACH form; stipend payments cannot be made without this form. Payments cannot be deposited directly into the institution's bank account.

Since the Starting Certificate cannot be submitted before tenure begins, you should fax your starting certificate to Ms. Moore at 703-292-4951 (or send a scanned file as an email attachment) immediately upon beginning tenure to ensure prompt payment of the first

month's stipend and the special allowance. If you submit your starting certificate promptly, payment is usually made within 2 weeks.

8. OTHER ALLOWANCES

A. Special Allowance. The special allowance is paid at the rate of $10,000 per year. It is paid as a lump sum with your first stipend payment of the year. The special allowance is intended to aid in defraying costs of your research including special travel, such as short-term visits to other institutions or laboratories or attendance at scientific meetings and training, special equipment, supplies, publication costs, and other research expenses. It is expendable at your discretion, except for foreign travel (section 5). You may use your special allowance to purchase health insurance for yourself and family.

If a fellowship is terminated early, a prorated portion of the special allowance must be returned to the National Science Foundation. No funds may be spent after the expiration date of the fellowship.

B. Institutional Allowance. On behalf of the Fellow, the National Science Foundation will, upon request, provide the fellowship institution with an allowance of $5,000 per year for partial reimbursement for expenses incurred in support of the research such as space, supplies, equipment, necessary services, etc. This allowance may be used for your health insurance. If you plan to stay at the same institution for the entire tenure, the host institution should request a lump sum payment. If you plan to divide your tenure between institutions, the primary host institution and the other institution(s) may request appropriately prorated institutional allowances or an arrangement for reimbursement to the other institutions may be made through the primary host institution. If you are going abroad, the institutional allowance for a foreign host institution is paid directly to you and you pay it to the foreign institution. It is your responsibility to make an appropriate arrangement prior to starting the fellowship.

The fellowship institution is responsible for the disbursement of these funds, and such disbursements are at the discretion of the institution.

The Foundation is not responsible for any charges incurred by or on behalf of the Fellow by the institution. If a fellowship is terminated early the unused portion of the institution allowance must be returned on a pro rata basis and by mailing a check made out to the National Science Foundation to Ms. Moore at the address above. No funds may be spent after the expiration date of the fellowship.

9. LENGTH OF TENURE AND DELAYS IN STARTING YOUR FELLOWSHIP

Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are awarded as a continuing grant for 24 months with the possibility of extending for an additional 12 months (see below). The grant letter from NSF will tell you the duration of your fellowship. The maximum tenure of your fellowship is normally 36 months but, under special circumstances, may be extended through a no-cost extension.

If you need to start your fellowship later than the effective date stated in the grant letter and have received NSF approval for the delay, you will need to request a no-cost extension to cover the delay. You (as an individual registered in FastLane) must request the extension through FastLane. The sponsored research office at your host institution cannot grant a no-cost extension to your fellowship.

9. CHANGE OF ADDRESS and BANKING INFORMATION

Please report any changes in contact information and addresses promptly to Ms. Moore. If

your banking information changes, you need to submit a revised ACH form by the 15th of the month preceding the payment month that will be changed. No changes to ACH information can be made without a new ACH form.

10. SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

During the tenure of the fellowship, Fellows are expected to devote full time to the scientific research and training outlined in the application for which the award was granted. A Fellow may not engage in activities for compensation (except for brief military obligations) or receive another fellowship or research award, or payment for teaching/research, without the prior approval of the Foundation. Such approval is granted only under exceptional circumstances.

11. REQUIRED REPORTS

Annual progress report: NSF requires annual progress reports for all multi-year grants. Therefore, you must submit an annual report no later than the 12th month of your fellowship. Failure to file the annual report may be grounds to cancel the fellowship (at worst) and result in difficulties in filing later reports (at best). FastLane will accept your annual report beginning in month 9 of your fellowship. The annual report should describe your scientific progress, progress toward achieving your training goals, and your educational activities.

Interim reports: These are not required but may also be submitted in FastLane when there is significant progress in the research that you wish to report to NSF. Interim reports are a good way to notify NSF of findings that should be the subject of an NSF press release. .

Final report: NSF requires a final report for all grants. This report must also be submitted via FastLane and must be filed no later than 90 days following the expiration of the fellowship. Failure to file a final report will prevent NSF from making grants to you in the future.

12. INTERRUPTIONS. You may interrupt the tenure of your fellowship only with the prior approval of the Foundation or in an emergency. Interruptions of tenure are granted on a case-by-case basis under extenuating circumstances, normally for health reasons or situations not under the Fellow's control. When an interruption of tenure is granted, the fellowship may be extended without additional funds for a similar time period through a no-cost extension.

12. EXTENSION OF TIME, INCLUDING THIRD YEAR EXTENSION. If your fellowship was granted as a continuing grant and you need additional time beyond the original 24 months to complete your research and training activities, you may request an additional 12 months of support. To be eligible, you must have filed annual reports in Fastlane for the first 2 years of the fellowship. To allow adequate processing time and to avoid a lapse in funding between months 24 and 25 of your fellowship, it is advisable to file your second annual report in FastLane no later than month 21 of your fellowship. In this annual report, in addition to reporting your progress, you must outline your plans and justify the need for the third year extension. It is advisable to include a schedule for the additional time period. Additional guidance will be provided in a reminder email from NSF. The NSF Program Director may request additional information from your sponsoring scientist(s). Please be aware that the third year extension is very rare, and will be reviewed through the NSF merit review process and pending availability of funds.

13. VACATIONS. NSF fellowships do not provide a vacation period, as such, during fellowship tenure. Fellows are entitled to the short holiday periods observed by their

fellowship institutions, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and spring holidays. These holiday periods cannot be accumulated for use at a later date as a vacation period. If an institution should "close" for a period in excess of two weeks, each Fellow attending such an institution will be expected to have made prior arrangements for the use of necessary facilities to carry out the approved program. If it is not possible for the Fellow to make these arrangements at the host institution, other arrangements must be made, with prior Foundation approval, to carry on the work; or suspension of the fellowship for that period of time should be requested from the Foundation.

13. HEALTH INSURANCE. Health insurance is not available through NSF but you are strongly encouraged to secure health insurance. You should discuss with your host institution whether or not you can participate in a group plan or if you need an individual policy. The institutional allowance may be used to purchase your health insurance. Be sure that your insurance is applicable to destinations abroad if you have chosen an institution outside the United States.

14. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS. The National Science Foundation claims no rights to any inventions or writings that might result from its fellowship awards. However, you should be aware that the NSF, another Federal agency, or some private party may acquire such rights through other support for particular research. Also, you must include an Acknowledgment and Disclaimer in any publication.

An acknowledgment of NSF support and a disclaimer must appear in any publication of any material, whether copyrighted or not, based on or developed under this award, as follows:

> "This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under a grant awarded in (Fellows should enter the year of award)."

All materials, except scientific articles or papers published in scientific journals, must also contain the following:

> "Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation."

15. INCOME TAXES.

As a Fellow, you are not an NSF employee and NSF will not withhold any income or other taxes from your stipend or allowances. NSF will not issue you a W-2 or Form 1099. You are responsible for filing any necessary estimates of taxes due and for payment of all income and other taxes, US or foreign, which may become due. NSF's Division of Financial Management will issue you a statement of funds received (including special allowance) upon written request; but specific tax questions should be referred to the Internal Revenue Service, a tax professional, or an appropriate office at your host institution. IRS Publication 970 and Tax Topic 421 address tax issues on fellowships.

Fellows going abroad may find it helpful to consult IRS Publication No. 54, Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad. These publications are available at all IRS district offices or the IRS homepage at www.irs.gov.

NSF is unable to supply information concerning the income tax or other tax provisions of any foreign country. Inquiries should be directed to the authorities in the appropriate countries.

16. FUTURE EMPLOYMENT. The award and acceptance of a Minority Postdoctoral

Fellowship does not obligate you, the National Science Foundation, or the United States Government with regard to future employment or future service of any kind.

17. MILITARY STATUS. Brief interruption of a fellowship for duly authorized military service or training will be permitted with prior Foundation approval. In the case of a longer interruption resulting from active military service or from certain activities in lieu of service with the regular U.S. Armed Forces, provision can be made for reservation of a fellowship (or the balance of it) and reinstatement of the unused portion at a later date. In such cases Fellows should notify the Foundation immediately in writing of their plans and request further instructions.

18. VETERAN'S BENEFITS. As a result of the enactment of P.L. 91-219, effective March 26, 1970, educational benefit payments from the Veterans Administration may be received concurrently with and supplementary to fellowship payments from the National Science Foundation.

19. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS. A number of situations frequently encountered in the conduct of research require special information and supporting documentation before initiation. Among these are the following, some mandated by Federal law:

1. research which has an actual and/or potential impact on the environment;
2. research at a registered historic or cultural property;
3. research involving the use of human subjects, hazardous materials, vertebrate animals, or endangered species.

Fellows must provide information on the status of any permits, special permissions, clearances or provisions related to the above items before beginning tenure. Assessment of environmental impact will be required where appropriate. Specific guidance on the need of such additional documentation may be obtained from the fellowship institution's sponsored research office or the NSF Grant Policy Manual at www.nsf.gov.

20. TERMINATION OF FELLOWSHIP

A. The Termination Certificate. You must complete a termination certificate, have it signed prior to departure from the fellowship institution, and submit it to Ms. Davis. This certificate must be signed by an appropriate official at the fellowship institution and show the date you actually completed fellowship activities; this date cannot be later than the expiration date in the grant letter. If you affiliated with more than one institution, a Termination Certificate is required from each institution at the time you end your fellowship activities at that institution. Submission of this certificate is necessary to comply with Governmental accounting procedures. In the event the certificate is not submitted, you may be requested to return to the Foundation all fellowship funds received during fellowship tenure.

B. Final Report. You must submit a final report in FastLane no later than 90 days following the expiration of the fellowship. This report should describe your scientific accomplishments, the training you received, and the broader impact of your fellowship activities. If you wish to give feedback not covered in the standardized format, please feel free to email it to the Program Director.

C. Additional Reports. NSF may periodically ask you to respond to questionnaires or other inquiries as a part of the follow-up activities of the program. Minimally, the NSF would like to track each of the Minority Fellows over a ten-year period with respect to positions (and addresses), grants received, lists of publications, and research related honors and awards. It would be helpful if you would provide this information without solicitation as a continuing responsibility.

D. Tracking Data. It would be very helpful if you keep NSF informed of your current address after completion of the fellowship and your continuing role in science.

21. Programs of Interest after Your Fellowship

As you begin your independent research career, you may wish to apply for NSF research grants. Especially appropriate for new investigators is an NSF-wide "cross-cutting" program called Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER).
See http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5262
for more information. You should also look into your disciplinary programs for current and ongoing funding opportunities: for those programs, you are encouraged to speak to the relevant program officers.

22. FOLLOW-UP STARTER GRANTS

Fellows who accept a tenure-track position at a U.S. institution eligible to receive NSF funding immediately following their fellowships may apply for a special one-year, nonrenewable starter grant to assist in establishing an independent research program. You must apply for the starter grant within the year following the end of your fellowship. A maximum of $50,000 can be requested and will be reviewed through our merit review process and pending availability of funds. ***Starter grants do not pay salary or indirect costs.*** Starter grant funds are to be used only for costs related to the conduct of research, and the research must fall within the purview of the research programs of the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences.

Follow-up starter grant proposals are to be submitted through the employing institution. Directions are found at www.fastlane.nsf.gov. Click on "postdoctoral fellowships," then "I am an applicant," then "Minority Postdoctoral Fellowships," then "how to apply." Instructions for starter grants are at the bottom of the document.

Starter grants are not fellowships but provide research support; therefore, requests are assigned to the cognizant research program in the Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences for merit review and decision. The starter grant is submitted to the program officers to determine the appropriate program assignment for the starter grant request and notifies the applicant of the NSF program assignment.

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