



Information Booklet for
National Science Foundation
Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (MPRF)
Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE)

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.

This information booklet outlines the terms and conditions of your National Science Foundation Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowship and provides general information for use during your fellowship tenure. Please 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 efficiently, and unnecessary correspondence will be avoided.

The primary NSF contacts for your fellowship are:

(1) Dr. Fahmida Chowdhury, Program Director, fchowdhu@nsf.gov, 703 292-4672, and

(2) Ms. Christina Jones, Science Assistant, chjones@nsf.gov, 703-292-2960.

You can fax us at 703 292-9083, and here is our mailing address:

Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE)

SBE Office of Multidisciplinary Activities

National Science Foundation, Suite 907

4201 Wilson Blvd, Arlington VA 22230

To get detailed and up-to-date information on the SBE Directorate, along with its divisions and their research funding opportunities, please visit the web pages at: <http://www.nsf.gov/dir/index.jsp?org=SBE>

Details of the MPRF program, along with the most recent program solicitation can be found at: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=503424&org=SBE



I. 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. In addition, as stipulated in the MPRF Program Solicitation, it is expected that your fellowship award will broaden or encourage the broadening of participation of underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, including the SBE sciences, in the US.

II. FELLOWSHIP INSTITUTION and OTHER TERMS

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.

II.1 Sponsoring Scientist

In your MPRF application, you arranged for an appropriate person at the host institution to serve as your sponsoring scientist. This person will be the (unofficial) institutional representative responsible for your scientific and other (training, outreach etc.) activities during the fellowship tenure; however, the "official" institutional representative, for the functions on NSF FastLane, is you, since the grant is awarded to you as an individual.

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.

II.2 Your Fellowship Tenure

NSF expects that you will begin fellowship activities no later than January 01 of the year following the award year. If you are not able to begin tenure by that date, you must contact NSF for a special permission which may be granted under some extreme circumstances (for example, military obligations), or you may decline the fellowship. This declination will not prejudice any future application.

Before you may enter upon tenure of your 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. Once you receive your official diploma, please upload us a copy



of it via the SBE MPRF Forms site for NSF records. Stipend and allowance payments will not be authorized until a starting certificate has been received by the Foundation. Also, please access the SBE MPRF Forms site to download the starting certificate and complete, sign, and upload it within 10 days of the starting of your fellowship tenure.

Your fellowship tenure terminates on the expiration date as stated in the award letter, unless you obtain a No Cost Extension with NSF approval. Starting and Termination Certificates are required for each portion of your tenure. If you are unable to start your fellowship on the effective date stated in the MPRF solicitation (August 01 of the award year or January 01 of the following year), you must request permission to start it at another time (note that the tenure start date can only be delayed by whole months) from the NSF Program Manager. If the change is not approved, the fellowship will be terminated. If the change is approved, and your start date is delayed, you must request a no-cost extension (NCE) to cover the delayed start. The NCE request must be submitted via FastLane, using the "NSF-Approved NCE" option. You need to sign in as your own SRO (Sponsored Research Officer) to make this request. Upon approval of the NCE, 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.

II.3 Foreign Tenure

All arrangements for affiliation with a fellowship institution outside of the USA 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.

III. TRAVEL REGULATIONS

There is no extra allowance for your 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.

III.1 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. This information will be saved in NSF's electronic filing system, together with your funded proposal.

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.



IV. PROGRAM CHANGES

You must request prior approval from the NSF Program Officer for any major change in the study or research program from that proposed at the time of application, any changes in tenure, and any change in sponsoring scientist or in the institution(s) with which you are associated. Although it is expected that you will carry out the program as described in your original 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 original award.

V. STIPENDS

V.1 **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 your MPRF support staff.

V.2 **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. Please report any changes in contact information and addresses promptly to your MPRF program staff. 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.

VI. OTHER ALLOWANCES

VI.1 **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 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 (see section III.1). 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 from this allowance may be spent after the expiration of the fellowship, and unused portions of this allowance must be returned to the Foundation.** With your Annual Report and Final Report, please submit an itemized list of expenses for which this special allowance was used; you can attach this as a PDF file. *There is no need to submit receipts, but we suggest you keep them, so that they can be produced upon request.*

VI.2 **Institutional Allowance.** National Science Foundation will, upon request, provide the fellowship (host) 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, without any special permission from NSF. 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 to be associated with a foreign institution, the institutional allowance will be paid directly to you and you will pay it to the foreign institution. It is your responsibility to make the appropriate arrangement prior to starting the fellowship at the foreign institution. 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 institutional allowance must be returned to the National Science Foundation. Please contact the Program Director for specific instructions.

VII. LENGTH OF AWARD

The length of your Fellowship award is clearly stated in your award letter, and is usually 24 months; in a few rare cases it may be 36 months.

VII.1 No-Cost Extension of Time. Under some circumstances, the fellowship period may be extended through a no-cost extension (NCE), which allows you more time but no extra funds. The NCE request must be submitted via FastLane, using the “NSF-Approved NCE” option. You need to sign in as your own SRO (Sponsored Research Officer) to make this request.

VII.2 Third Year Extension of Fellowship Award. In some special cases, you may request an additional 12 months of support. **A request to renew the fellowship for a third year requires a new application (submitted with the regular deadline) that will be reviewed with the other fellowship applications in the review panel. Such renewals are approved in rare circumstances.** To be eligible, you must have filed annual reports in FastLane for the first two years of the fellowship. Interruptions in tenure or extensions without additional cost to NSF are permitted only for extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the Fellow. Fellowships cannot be renewed or increased with NSF supplements.

VII.3 Termination of Fellowship. At the end of your Fellowship tenure, you must complete a **Termination Certificate**, have it signed prior to departure from the fellowship institution, and submit it to NSF. 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 complete 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 your fellowship tenure.*

Upon termination of your Fellowship, unused portions of your stipends and special allowance, as well as institutional allowance, must be returned to the Foundation. In addition, an itemized list of the expenditure from the used portion of the special allowance is also required. Please contact the Program Director for specific instructions.

VIII. SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT DURING YOUR TENURE

During the tenure of the Fellowship, you are expected to devote full time to the scientific research, training and outreach 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.

If a Fellow is offered an opportunity to teach at the undergraduate or graduate level in a field related to his/her research project, the Sponsoring Scientist (Research Mentor) and the Fellow must write a joint letter



to the managing Program Director at NSF, requesting approval. *The letter should show how the teaching would positively impact the Fellow's future career and describe the steps that will be taken to ensure it does not adversely impact the research project or its expected outcomes.* Such teaching responsibilities, if approved by NSF, must not exceed one course per academic term.

If you already had a faculty position or other employment before starting your Fellowship tenure (regardless of whether such employment was obtained before or after you applied for this Fellowship), you must be placed on official leave before you can start your Fellowship, because this Fellowship is for full-time (12 person-months per year) activity. In such a case you must provide a letter from your Department Chair (or other administrative supervisor, as appropriate for non-faculty positions) stating that you were granted this leave in order to carry out your Fellowship activities. This letter will become part of your records at the Foundation.

Fellowships cannot be renewed or increased with NSF supplements. Sponsoring scientists and host institutions may supplement the award amount from non-Federal sources, with NSF permission.

IX. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

IX.1 Annual 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.

IX.2 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.

IX.3 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.

IX.4 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.

X. OTHER ISSUES: VACATION, INCOME TAXES, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, NSF SUPPORT ACKNOWLEDGMENT, MILITARY SERVICE, etc.

X.1 Vacation. 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.



X.2 **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.

X.3 **Acknowledgment of NSF support.** An acknowledgment and a disclaimer must appear in any publication of any material, including world wide web sites, 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."

X.4 **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.

X.5 **Military Service.** 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.

X.6 **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.

X.7 **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.

XI. CONCLUSION

Overall, you are expected to follow all the rules, both in the strict sense and in spirit, of this NSF award. If you have any questions or need more clarification about any of the issues regarding this award, please feel free to contact your NSF Program Officer or the support staff mentioned on the first page of this document.