National Science Foundation

Update
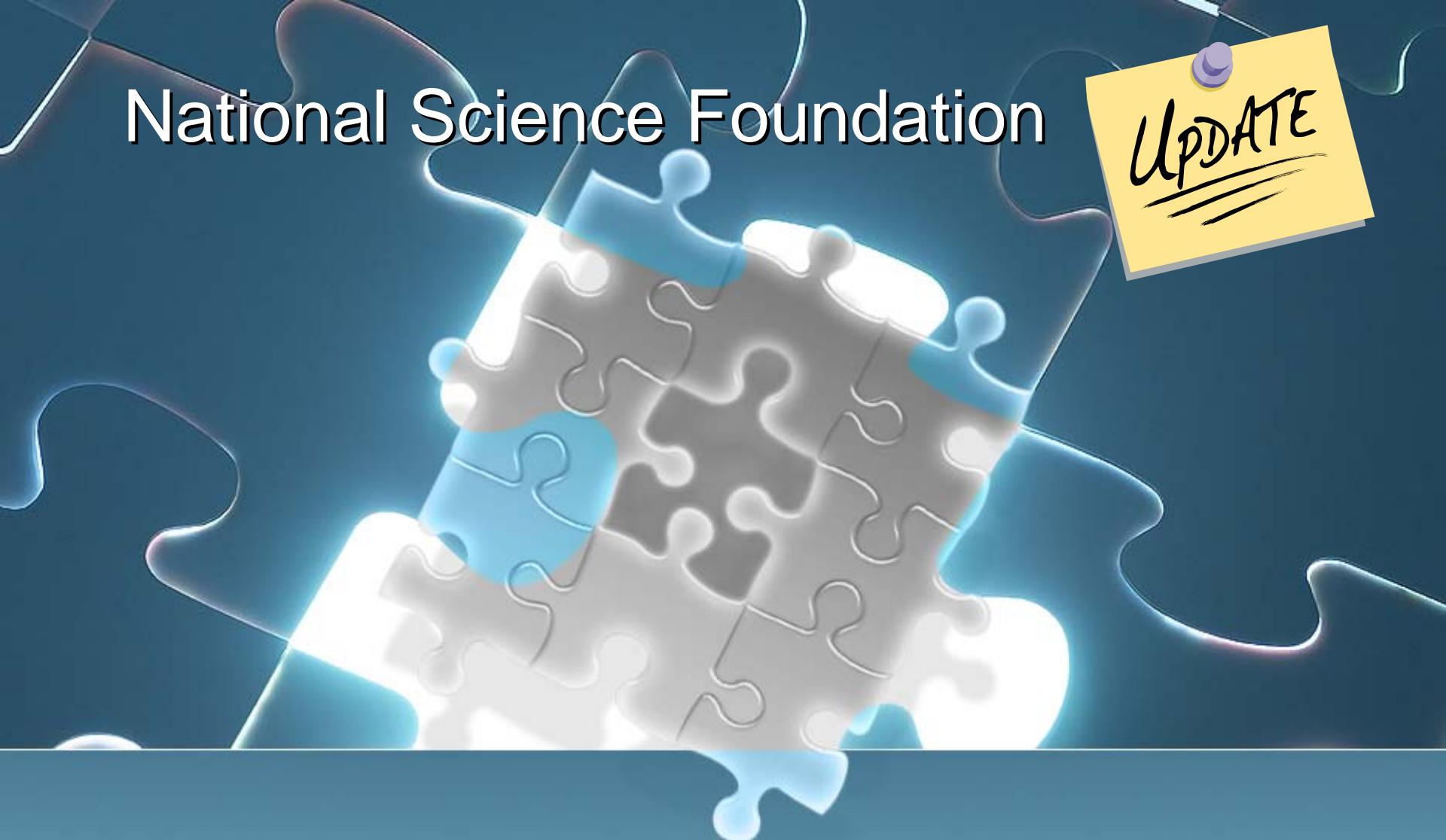
Federal Demonstration Partnership Meeting
January 12-13, 2009
Washington, DC

Ask Early, Ask Often!

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Main Topics

- America Competes Act Update
- Recent Changes to the Grant Proposal Guide
  - Effective January 5, 2009
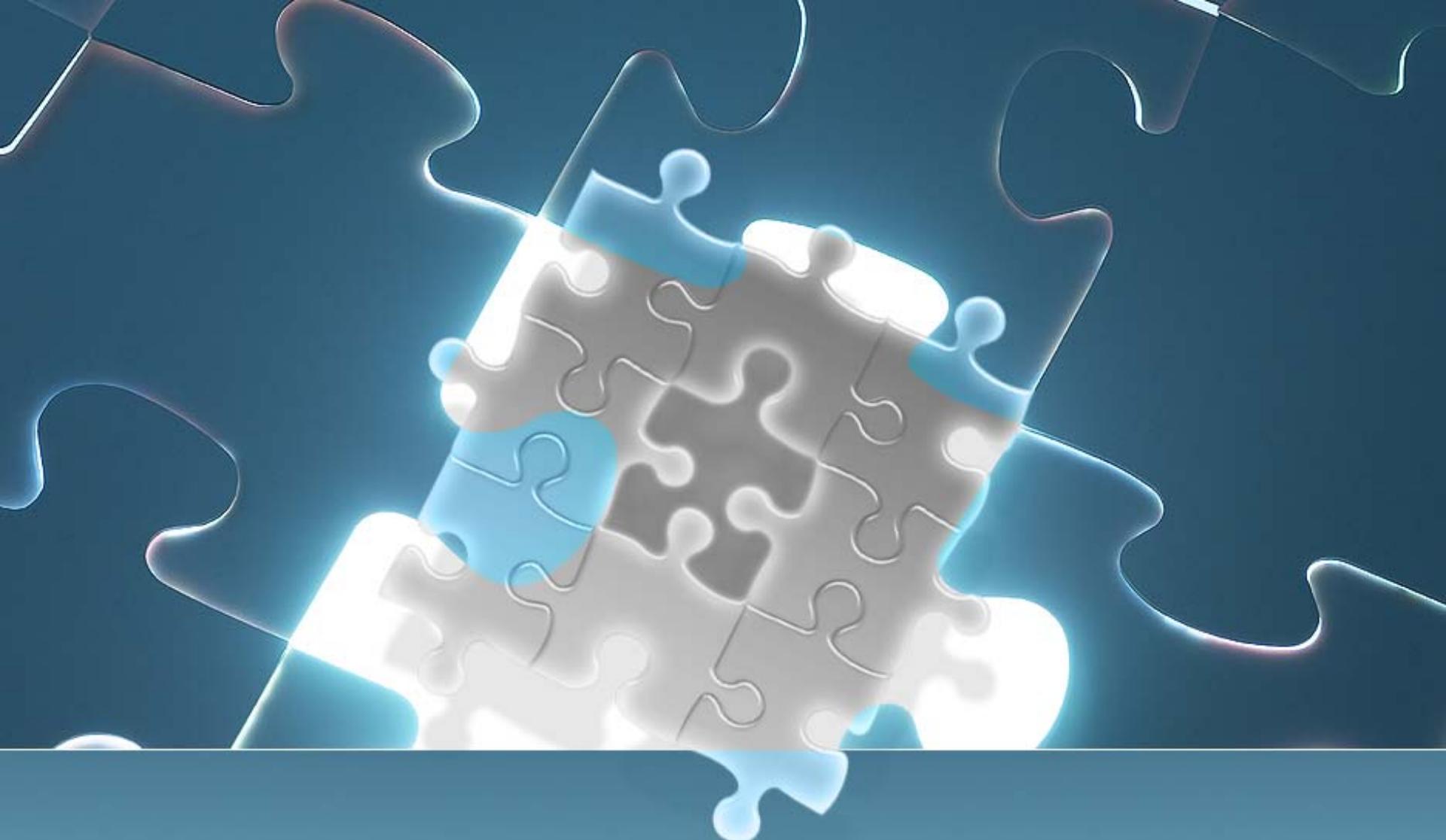
NSF's
America Competes Act Implementation Update

America COMPETES Act

- Signed into law on August 9, 2007
- Shares goals of the American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI)
- Focuses on three primary areas of importance:
  - Increasing research investment;
  - Strengthening educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics from elementary through graduate school;
  - Developing an innovation infrastructure.

ACA Policy-Related Provisions of Interest to the Research Community

- SEC 7008: Postdoctoral Research Fellows
- SEC 7009: Responsible Conduct of Research
- SEC 7013: Cost Sharing
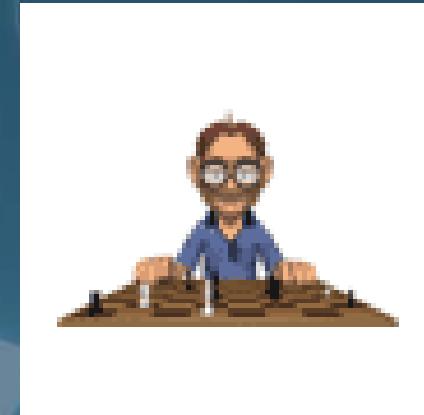
SEC 7008: Postdoctoral Research Fellows

- "Mentoring - The Director shall require that all grant applications that include funding to support postdoctoral researchers include a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals, and shall ensure that this part of the application is evaluated under the Foundation's broader impacts merit review criterion. Mentoring activities may include career counseling, training in preparing grant applications, guidance on ways to improve teaching skills, and training in research ethics.

- Reports - The Director shall require that annual reports and the final report for research grants that include funding to support postdoctoral researchers include a description of the mentoring activities provided to such researchers."

Section 7008 Implementation Strategy

- Section 7008 has been implemented via revisions to the relevant sections of the Grant Proposal Guide (GPG), the FastLane Project Reporting System, and the Representative Activities of Broader Impacts document that is posted on the NSF website.

  - Each proposal that contains postdoctoral researchers must include, as a separate section within the Project Description, a description of the mentoring activities to be provided to such individuals. This includes simultaneously submitted collaborative proposals and proposals that include subawards.

  - No change to the existing 15-page project description limitation!

Section 7008 Implementation (continued)

- The following new paragraph has been added to the Project Description section of the GPG:

"Each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers must include, as a separate section within the 15-page project description, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. Examples of mentoring activities include, but are not limited to: career counseling; training in preparation of grant proposals, publications and presentations; guidance on ways to improve teaching and mentoring skills; guidance on how to effectively collaborate with researchers from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary areas; and training in responsible professional practices. The proposed mentoring activities will be evaluated as part of the merit review process under the Foundation's broader impacts merit review criterion. Proposals that do not include a separate section on mentoring activities within the Project Description will be returned without review."

Section 7008 Implementation (continued)

- The Review Criteria section of the GPG has been revised to add language stating that the mentoring activities described in the Project Description will be evaluated under the Broader Impacts criterion.

- The Return without Review section and the Proposal Preparation Checklist will emphasize that proposals that do not describe mentoring activities provided to postdoctoral researchers **will be** returned without review.

Section 7008 Implementation (continued)

- The FastLane project reporting format has been modified to inform PIs of the requirement to report on the mentoring activities provided to postdoctoral researchers during the performance period.

  - This includes any postdoctoral researcher not identified in the original proposal submission!

Section 7008 Implementation (continued)

- Stay tuned!!

- NSF will be making an important clarification to how mentoring plans are submitted in the upcoming weeks!

SEC 7009: Responsible Conduct of Research

- "The Director shall require that each institution that applies for financial assistance from the Foundation for science and engineering research or education describe in its grant proposal a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers participating in the proposed research project."

- The Ethics Education in Science and Engineering (EESE) program sponsored a workshop on August 25/26th to address RCR and responsible professional practices. Focus of the workshop was on pedagogy and what are the best ways to teach ethics and responsible conduct of research, the best way to deliver knowledge about these subjects and some advice on implementation issues.

SEC 7009: Responsible Conduct of Research (continued)

- Observations from the workshop:
  - Non instructor lead training is less effective;
  - Ethics training should be integrated into scientific and engineering research;
  - Multiple approaches are needed;
  - Time available for training must be considered;
  - Content can vary by disciplinary areas and career age (undergrad versus postdoc);
  - PIs should be positively involved;
  - Mentoring can have negative effects on integrity, if the context of science and engineering is not considered – this directly leads to bad behavior; and
  - Consideration should be given to funding (and maintenance of) a web-based clearinghouse that is easily accessible, user-friendly, and houses the many resources that currently exist on ethics education.

SEC 7009: Responsible Conduct of Research (continued)

- Draft workshop will be submitted to NSF very shortly!
- Proposed implementation will consider the results from the workshop, as well as the following:
  - A new certification requirement at the time of proposal submission that would stipulate that the institution has a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in responsible and ethical conduct to undergrads/grads/and postdocs participating in the NSF-funded project;
  - The role of the PI in describing the training proposed in the proposal; and
  - The post award requirements for complying with the training requirement -- or is this another broader impact such as mentoring.

SEC 7009: Responsible Conduct of Research (continued)

- NSF continues to plan to solicit public comment on the draft implementation plan from the grantee community via the Federal Register.

- Anticipated release date of Federal Register notice is early winter 2009.

Recent Changes to the Grant Proposal Guide

- Implementation of ACA Mentoring Requirement
- Faculty salary
- Replacement of the Small Grants for Exploratory Research Program with:
  - RAPID
  - EAGER

Faculty Summer Salary Policy (since 1978)

"As a general policy, NSF recognizes that salaries of faculty members and other personnel associated directly with the project constitute appropriate direct costs and may be requested in proportion to the effort devoted to the project.

NSF regards research as one of the normal functions of faculty members at institutions of higher education. Compensation for time normally spent on research within the term of appointment is deemed to be included within the faculty member's regular organizational salary.

Summer salary for faculty members at colleges and universities on academic-year appointments is limited to no more than two-ninths of their regular academic-year salary. This limit includes summer salary received from all NSF-funded grants."

The existing policy was originally issued in 1978; Reference NSF 78-41: *Grants for Scientific Research*

Revised Faculty Salary Policy

- Limits salary compensation for senior project personnel to no more than two months of their regular salary in any one year:
  - The limit includes salary compensation received from all NSF-funded awards.
  - Broadens the previous policy away from the concept of "two summer months" and allows senior project personnel to schedule work when appropriate throughout the year.
  - Any compensation for such personnel in excess of two months must be specifically justified in the proposal, and if approved by NSF, will be included in the award budget.

New Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide Implementation

- Posted on the NSF website by October 1, 2008

- Effective date will be January 5th, 2009

- All new funding opportunities with target/deadline dates after January 5th, 2009 will be subject to the new requirements

Research.gov

- Research.gov is an exciting initiative lead by NSF that enables organizations and grantees to access streamlined research grants management services and other resources for multiple federal agencies in one location.
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Accessing Documents on the NSF Website

- www.nsf.gov
- Click: **➡ Looking for Funding?**
- Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide
  - Proposal Preparation & Submission
    - Grant Proposal Guide
    - Frequently Asked Questions
  - Award Administration
    - Award & Administration Guide
    - Grant & Agreement Conditions
    - Frequently Asked Questions