NSF FY 13 Sequestration Budget Update

Reviewing the effects of sequestration during a speech at the Federal Demonstration Partnership meeting last month (May 13-14, 2013), National Science Foundation (NSF) Policy Office Head Jean Feldman reported minimal FY 13 cuts to NSF staff, continuing awards, and ongoing construction projects. Unfortunately, Feldman also indicated that harsher budget reductions would be made to new research awards. NSF predicts a reduction of nearly 1,000 research grants with an impact on nearly 12,000 applicants: principal investigators (PIs), undergraduate and graduate students, and grant-funded support positions.

The NSF also issued an update on how the Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013 (enacted on March 26, 2013) has affected FY 13 funding for their Political Science Program. The act contains a provision that restricts funding only to research projects that the Director of the National Science Foundation certifies as promoting national security or the economic interests of the United States. Any unobligated balances for the Political Science Program may be provided for other scientific research and studies that do not duplicate those being funded by other Federal agencies.

With respect to FY 13 extensions of ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) awards, PIs were notified in late September 2012 if their awards were included on the Office of Management and Budget's approved waiver request list. These awards are granted extensions and other no-cost actions are permitted as long as they are consistent with the scope and original terms of the award. However, grants not on the list cannot be extended past September 30, 2013, and any other no-cost actions must be completed by that date. For questions on NSF ARRA, email NSFARRAReviewer@nsf.gov.