

**National Science Foundation
Office of the Director
Arlington, VA 22230**

Notice No. 126

September 11, 2000

**IMPORTANT NOTICE TO
PRESIDENTS OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES
AND HEADS OF OTHER NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS**

Subject: NSF's Paperless Proposal and Award System - Next Steps

In September 1998, NSF issued Important Notice 123, *Working Toward a Paperless Proposal and Award System*. Important Notice 123 describes NSF's vision for the future in electronic business and outlines the schedule for implementation. As stipulated in this Notice, effective October 1, 2000, **ALL** specified transactions¹ with NSF, (including proposal submission) must be accomplished electronically via use of the NSF FastLane system.² Proposals submitted after October 1 that respond to standing or existing announcements or solicitations must comply with the FastLane requirements, even if the document specified a paper option. NSF's efforts in this area are consistent with recent legislation that directs the entire Federal Government to move in the direction of paperless proposal/grant processes, e.g., Public Law 106-107, *Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999*.

When Important Notice 123 was first issued, we recognized that full implementation of NSF FastLane by October 1, 2000 would be a challenging goal. We would like to thank you for your patience, cooperation and feedback over the past two years in helping us to achieve this goal. To date, in Fiscal Year 2000, over 80% of proposals have been submitted electronically via FastLane. NSF is committed to increasing our outreach to those segments of our customer groups who are having, or might have difficulty with electronic submission.

The results achieved over the past two years demonstrate that use of electronic systems and on-line communications have enabled NSF to respond more promptly and accurately to grantee requests, as well as enable our grantee community to initiate and better manage their NSF business transactions. NSF will continue to work with you and your organizations to improve the conduct of electronic business interactions with the Foundation.

The FY 2001 revision of the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) (NSF 01-2) contains important guidance on the full implementation of Important Notice 123. This new version of the GPG also includes instructions on how to obtain an exception to the FastLane requirement for those who experience difficulties or cannot submit electronically to NSF.

In addition to NSF FastLane efforts, NSF remains an active and collaborating partner on the interagency development of a "common face" for Federal grants known as the "Federal Commons." The "Federal Commons" is an Internet-based point of entry for grant proposers and recipients to conduct business electronically with Federal grant making agencies. Steps are already underway to ensure that FastLane will integrate transparently with this "common face" approach.

Rita R. Colwell
Director

¹ There are a limited number of transactions, including some postaward administrative requirements and supplemental funding requests that, at this time, cannot be transmitted via FastLane. Consult the *Grant Proposal Guide* for further details.

² For those organizations that have not yet used FastLane, we strongly encourage you to visit the FastLane Web site at <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/> for supplemental information and guidance on the use of the FastLane system.