NSF Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Program

Discussion with the Council on Governmental Relations
February, 2017
IPA Program Provides Significant Value to NSF

- IPAs bring fresh perspectives and deep expertise that keep NSF nimble.
- Combining IPAs with experienced federal employees creates the synergy required to support fundamental research at the frontiers of science.
- IPAs enable a close connection with the community, building and nurturing trust, and serve as ambassadors.

Performance and Accountability

- Congressional and Inspector General interest in NSF’s use of IPAs
  - IPA performance plans and assessments
  - Training and development activities

- IPA Steering Committee
  - Opportunity to articulate overall use of IPAs within a strategic workforce framework
  - Opportunity to identify cost savings in context of NSF mission accomplishment and recruitment/retention of IPAs
FY 2016 Facts and Figures

• 175 IPAs
  o ~13% of NSF workforce; ~ 25% of NSF scientific staff

• IPA agreement costs: $42.2M
  o Salary, benefits, per diem, lost consulting

• Requested cost-share was 15%; actual cost-share overall was 6%
Policy Changes Affecting New IPAs

- **Cost Sharing**
  - NSF is piloting a required 10% cost sharing of the IPA’s academic-year salary and fringe benefits.

- **Lost consulting** - no longer a reimbursable cost element

- NSF-funded IPA travel to the home institution under the Independent Research and Development (IR/D) program is limited to twelve trips per year.
  - Additional trips using non-NSF funds permitted.
Cost Sharing Pilot Assessment

- Principal Questions of Interest:
  - To what extent might the new IPA policy changes affect the quality of the IPA Program?
  - What might be the cost implications associated with the pilot for the:
    - Burden to the Institution
    - Individual IPA
    - National Science Foundation
- Engage with our partners to gather information
- Assessment will continue throughout FY 2017
Discussion Questions

- What are your views of the IPA program, including the value to the IPA and back to the IPA’s institution?
- Have the new policies (cost sharing, lost consulting, NSF-supported IR/D trips home) influenced IPA’s decisions to come to NSF, thus far?
- What are your recommendations to streamline the IPA administrative processes between institutions and NSF?