



National Science Foundation

Division of Institution and Award Support (DIAS) Resolution and Advanced Monitoring (RAM) Branch Advanced Monitoring Site Visits



Overview/Purpose

- Site visits are one of several monitoring tools used by the Office of Budget, Finance and Award Management (BFA) to provide oversight of NSF's research award portfolio.
- Site visits assess an organization's capacity for award administration; compliance with administrative regulations, public policy requirements, and award terms and conditions, including those contained in the NSF program announcement/solicitation and grant or cooperative agreement; and the extent to which the organization maintains a control environment within which awards are likely to be administered in compliance with federal financial and administrative regulations and NSF agreement provisions.
- The site visit process is designed to provide a point of reference that can inform future NSF monitoring efforts and identify administration or compliance issues.
- NSF also uses the site visit process to provide business assistance to the organization by discussing best practices in award administration and answering questions or concerns regarding grant financial and administrative compliance and NSF policies.
- RAM performs approximately 30 onsite or virtual site visits each year, prioritizing awardee organizations for advanced monitoring desk reviews or site visits based on the results of its annual award portfolio risk assessment, monitoring requests from across NSF, and professional judgment. For some institutions, desk reviews may be performed in advance of advanced monitoring site visits.

Timeframe/Roles

- Site visits are typically completed within four months from the start of the site visit to the receipt of the awardee's response to the site visit report.
- Site visits are performed by teams of two to four BFA Cost Analysts and Grants Management Specialists
- Typically, two to four representatives from the organization (e.g., two sponsored programs office staff and one accounting staff) participate in the site visit process. Because the review process focuses on award administration rather than award performance, the Principal Investigator of the award reviewed is not usually involved.

Useful Links:

National Science Foundation

DIAS Resolution and Advanced Monitoring Branch (RAM)

DIAS Cost Analysis and Pre-Award Branch (CAP)

NSF Proposal & Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG)

Prospective New Awardee Guide (PNAG)

Other NSF Policies and Award Conditions

Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200)

For additional information consult: NSF DIAS website

Questions may be directed to RAM: (703) 292-8244

Topics Covered

Site visits include three core review areas:

- **General Management Survey** – Assesses whether the organization has an organizational structure that can protect assets against the incurrence of improper expenditures and ensuring the accuracy and reliability of financial and operating information
- **Accounting and Financial System Review** – Assesses the sufficiency of the organization's financial management policies, procedures, and practices for: 1) accurate and complete disclosure and documentation of the financial results of NSF awards; 2) effective control and accountability of funds, property, and other assets; and 3) determining the reasonableness, allocability, and allowability of costs charged to awards issued by NSF.
- **Award Cash Management Service (ACM\$) Drawdown Process Review** – Verifies that organization reimbursements do not exceed cumulative expenses recorded in the accounting system as of the time reviewed and have not resulted in excess cash on hand. If funds are drawn in advance of expenditures incurred, verify that funds are timely utilized.

Based on a pre-visit risk assessment, NSF also selects 3-5 of the following targeted review modules:

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| • Overdue Project Reports | • Participant Support | • Program Income |
| • Special Terms and Conditions | • Consultants | • Property and Equipment |
| • Time and Effort | • Travel | • Cost Sharing |
| • Subaward Monitoring | • Procurement | • Indirect Costs |