

# NSF Policies on Transparency

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# Basic Framework

- Proposals are private documents.
- NSF gives grants, not contracts.
- NSF's research misconduct role doesn't cover transparency issues.

BUT

- Merit review is a community driven process.

# Example: NSF Data Policy

- Longstanding.
- Posted on [nsf.gov](http://nsf.gov) as “Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures”.
- Data sharing expected
  - “at no more than incremental cost and within reasonable time.”
  - Program Director authority for adjustments.
- Enforced through the usual process (annual reports, future grants).

# Newish: Data Management Plans

- Now a required part of proposals
- 2 pages and can cover
  - Types of data
  - Standards for data and metadata
  - Policies PIs will implement for access and sharing, use and reuse (including privacy protections).
  - Plans for archiving.
- Basic goal: get this all part of merit review.
- FAQ answers most questions.

# How does this apply to Social Sciences?

- Official: SBE Guidance document.
- Implementation: up to each community through merit review.
- PIs can request funds for archiving and dissemination.
  - But no additional program \$ for this.
- No additional staff to enforce data sharing.

# Experience To Date

- Quality of DMPs varies.
- Reviewers want to see more than “AEA standards” (eg, what if you never publish?)
- Bully pulpit and funding carrots have effects.
- Open question: will NSF enforcement be effective/efficient?

# Tentative Conclusions and Questions

- NSF role is real, but not all-powerful.
- Research community leadership and consensus is key.
- What can NSF do here?
- What are the opportunity costs?