

**.gov Reform Initiative**

**National Science Foundation Web Improvement Plan**

Working Draft as of 10/11/2011

## Background

In the [August 12, 2011 Agency Instructions for Completing Web Inventories and Web Improvement Plans](#), Agency CIOs were asked to work with their Agency Web Manager and Office of Public Affairs to submit an Interim Progress Report on their efforts to streamline Agency-managed .gov domains (due September 6, 2011) and to begin development of an Agency-wide Web Improvement Plan.

“By October 11, Agencies shall develop a Web Improvement Plan that communicates their **strategy for managing web resources more efficiently, improving online content, and enhancing the customer experience of Agency websites.**” This comprehensive plan will “address the broader objectives of **streamlining content, infrastructure, and ultimately improving customer service.**”

The purpose of this Web Improvement Plan is to identify the strategy, actions, measurements, and timelines that the Agency is using to streamline website infrastructure, improve web content, and enhance the customer experience with Executive Branch websites.

Agencies are being asked to create a Web Improvement Plan that will be developed iteratively over the next few months. In this plan, Agencies will describe Agency-wide efforts to effectively manage publicly accessible websites in the .gov domain. Only agencies in the Executive Branch are required to submit a Web Improvement Plan. The initial plan for the National Science Foundation, due to OMB by October 11, 2011, is in the following section.

## **Step 1: Current State of Agency-wide Web Improvement Efforts**

Over the past few months, Agencies have been reviewing their .gov domains, web operations, and other web-related efforts in response to OMB .gov Reform data collection efforts (individual domain inventories, web governance survey, interim progress reports, etc.). The following describes the state of current web improvement efforts at the National Science Foundation.

### **1) Does your Agency currently have an Agency-wide web strategy?**

No.

NSF does not currently have an Agency-wide web strategy.

### **2) How does your agency currently ensure that Agency-wide web resources are managed efficiently (e.g. governance, technology/infrastructure, hosting, staffing, operations, etc.)?**

NSF has centralized many of the Agency-wide web resources to manage them more efficiently. Governance for the NSF web site is provided by the Web Implementation Group, which identifies and prioritizes improvements to the site. The technology infrastructure, hosting, and operations for most of NSF's web site is provided by the Office of Information and Resource Management. The Office of Legislative and Public Affairs provides off-site hosting services for NSF multimedia content. While directorates, divisions, and offices maintain their own content, staffing for centralized functions is provided by OIRM.

### **3) How does your Agency currently ensure that website content is readily accessible, updated, accurate, and routinely improved?**

Many of the pages on the NSF website are database-driven, which ensures the most current information is displayed consistently throughout the site. NSF sends the webmaster for each directorate and division a monthly report on the database-driven content displayed on their site; the report highlights content that is more than 30 days old. All database-driven pages are thoroughly tested for accessibility before being added to the site. In addition, when non database-driven pages are published, the publisher must certify the pages meet NSF's accessibility requirements before they are able to be published.

**4) How does your Agency currently ensure that websites are meeting user expectations and needs and that the customer experience with websites is continually enhanced?**

NSF periodically conducts focus groups and usability testing of NSF.gov to evaluate if the site is meeting user expectations and to identify areas for improvement. Major enhancements to the site undergo usability testing before being deployed. NSF currently has a contract that includes a task to review data collection and user feedback methods used for the NSF web site, and to develop a plan and procedures for analyzing the data and feedback to identify potential site improvements. NSF also continually requests feedback from users on their experience with areas of the site that have been identified as challenging, such as search. Research.gov uses the ACSI survey to track user satisfaction with the site.