# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# National Science Foundation, Deputy Director

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Health, Education, Labor and Pensions |
| Agency Mission | To promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity and welfare; and to secure the national defense.[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Overview | The deputy director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) provides leadership and direction to the federal agency responsible for promotion and advancing scientific and engineering progress in the United States through the support of basic research and education programs.[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Compensation | Level III $165,300 (5 U.S.C. § 5314)[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Position Reports to | NSF Director[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | In fiscal 2015, the National Science Foundation had $734 billion in total outlays and 1,700 employees.[[5]](#endnote-5)The programs of the NSF are carried out through seven directorates headed by assistant directors: the Office of Information and Resource Management, the Office of Budget, Finance and Award Administration, and five staff offices. In addition, the foundation’s Office of the Inspector General reports to the National Science Board (NSB).[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Funds research and education in science and engineering through grants, contracts and cooperative agreements to more than 2,000 colleges, universities and other research and/or education institutions in all parts of the United States (NSF accounts for about 20 percent of federal support to academic institutions for basic research)
* Participates with the director in the development and execution of the foundation’s programs in accordance with the NSF Act, the powers and duties delegated by the NSB, applicable federal laws, executive orders and administration initiatives
* Serves as the foundation’s chief operating officer[[7]](#endnote-7)
* Acts for the director in his or her absence (42 U.S.C. § 1864a)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Before any person is appointed as deputy director, the president shall afford the board and the director an opportunity to make recommendations to him with respect to such appointment (42 U.S.C. § 1864a)
* Previous government experience and knowledge of the legislative and federal budgeting process
* Background in science and understanding of the core services, programs and initiatives that the agency’s key departments deliver
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| Competencies | * Teamwork skills to work smoothly with key principals, and ability to establish positive relationships with coworkers and external stakeholders
* Comfortable leading and managing in ambiguity, as deputies often have very vague or undefined statutory responsibilities and authorities
* Ability to forge strong congressional relationships
* Excellent communication skills to convey director’s messages through congressional testimony, press events and meetings with stakeholders
* Ability to immediately and effectively assume the director’s job
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Cora B. Marrett (2011 to 2014): Senior Advisor, National Science Foundation; Assistant Director for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation; First Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences, National Science Foundation[[8]](#endnote-8) |
| Kathie L. Olsen (2005 to 2009): Associate Director for Science, Science Division, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President; Chief Scientist, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; Senior Staff Associate, Office of Integrative Activities, Office of the Director, National Science Foundation[[9]](#endnote-9) |

1. https://www.nsf.gov/about/ [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Leadership Directories: https://lo.bvdep.com/OrgDocument.asp?OrgId=-1&LDIBookId=19&LDIOrgId=155394&LDISecId=201&FromRecent=0&Save=1&Position=-1#O155394 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. https://www.nsf.gov/news/speeches/marrett/marrett\_bio.jsp [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Leadership Directories: https://lo.bvdep.com/PeopleDocument.asp?PersonId=-1&LDIPeopleId=436759&Save=1 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)