

The Uncensored NSF Research Proposal

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Title: Do NSF grants impede economic growth?¹

Abstract

We do great things.

Budget proposal: annual figures per annum (in US dollars)

1. Research assistance	250,000
2. Travel	50,000
3. Failure compensation	140,000
4. Data fixing	10,000
5. Last-resort payments	100,000
6. Help in summing big numbers	50,000
Intermediate total	800,000
Overhead (15%)	120,000
Gratuity (15%)	120,000
Security surcharge (1%)	500,000
Something for the kids (10%)	80,000
Help in taking percents	20,000
Total	2,000,000

¹ They most certainly don't!!!

Explanation for budget items

Research assistance. Since we are totally inept for the research problem, we will naturally need research assistance. In fact, we would like to have the best research assistance possible. So, we thought we might want to recruit a top economist, of a Nobel caliber. We will need to pay her an amount which is on the same order of magnitude of his annual salary, in order to induce her to do this research for us.

Travel. We've never been to Indonesia. Spending a month or two there should be fun.

Failure compensation. Since this research project is doomed to fail, we expect to suffer a severe damage, in terms of our career and emotional health. Therefore, we demand a modest compensatory payment of \$70,000 each.

Data fixing. Preliminary findings seem to refute our hypothesis that NSF grants do **not** impede economic growth. Therefore, we will probably need to tamper with the data in order to get the desired results.² This item should be relatively inexpensive: we have hired a cute little chimpanzee called Sasha to enter our data into the computer and run a few regressions.

Last resort payments. If our proposal meets rejection, we will be obliged to consider some last-resort measures, such as bribing an NSF official or starting a war against Iraq. Such measures are obviously costly. If we do not get the money, we threaten to publish a paper in a top journal, stating **conclusively** that NSF grants are really-really bad for the economy. The QJE, for instance, will be happy to publish this paper.

Other items. Self-explanatory.

² See footnote 1.