



National Science Foundation Logo and Visual Identity Guidelines

Standards, Information and Usage



It is imperative to adhere to these standards so that we can increase the public's awareness of who NSF is and what we can do for them.

To protect all that we are working towards, a unified approach will add value to the organization and position in America's research community. The following guidelines provide information on what you may and may not do with the NSF visual identity.

For questions regarding use of the NSF visual identity, please email nsf-logo@nsf.gov.

To obtain files of the NSF logo, visit www.nsf.gov/policies/logos.jsp.

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Basic Design Elements

The NSF Logo

The National Science Foundation (NSF) logo is the sole visual identifier of NSF. As such, it must be present on all external and internal communications.

The following is a description of the elements that make up the NSF logo and why they are important to NSF's visual identity:



Medallion: The medallion on the NSF logo represents the “gold standard” NSF sets in its merit review process of scientific proposals.

Globe: The globe behind the letters represents the domestic and global reach of the impacts that result from NSF-funded research across all fields of science.

NSF Acronym: The letters N-S-F create the acronym for the National Science Foundation. Together, all of the elements create the core of NSF's visual identity.

NSF Typeface for Communications

The two primary fonts for NSF communications are Garamond (used primarily for titles and for writing out the words National Science Foundation) and TW CEN MT (primarily used for body text in printed collateral). Both of these fonts are standard on both Mac and PC computers. Calibri is acceptable on PowerPoint presentations and most sans-serif fonts are acceptable for use on NSF electronic and print collateral.

Approved Variations



4-color high-resolution bitmap logo

The NSF logo is the core component of NSF's visual identity. It creates a distinctive graphic presence for the agency and serves as a visual signature. Whenever possible, the 4-color, high-resolution bitmap logo should be used (shown at left).

The 4-color logo is NSF's primary trademark. Strong effort should be made to use this version at all times. The variations below help to solve certain issues when use of the 4-color version is not feasible. **As such, they should not be used based on artistic preference.** There are specific reasons for using these variations below.

The 4-color vector logo should be used when size is a concern. Though the high-resolution bitmap logo can be scaled quite large, it cannot be sized infinitely. At a certain size, you will start to see pixelation. The larger it is scaled, the more evident the pixels will become. The vector version of the logo, if necessary, could be scaled to the size of a building or any other large type of print. The slight visual difference in the logo is its lack of a beveled look on the gold portion of the logo and on the letters N-S-F. The overall design, however, remains consistent.



4-color vector logo



4-color vector logo without shading

The 4-color vector logo without shading is almost identical to the 4-color vector logo. The only difference here is that the shading is not present and each component of the logo is a solid color. This logo is for limited use; generally only in the case where we are having patches made or other uses of embroidery where shading is not possible.

The grayscale vector logo is another limited use logo. It should only be used when it is known that it will be printed using a black and white laser printer.



Grayscale vector logo

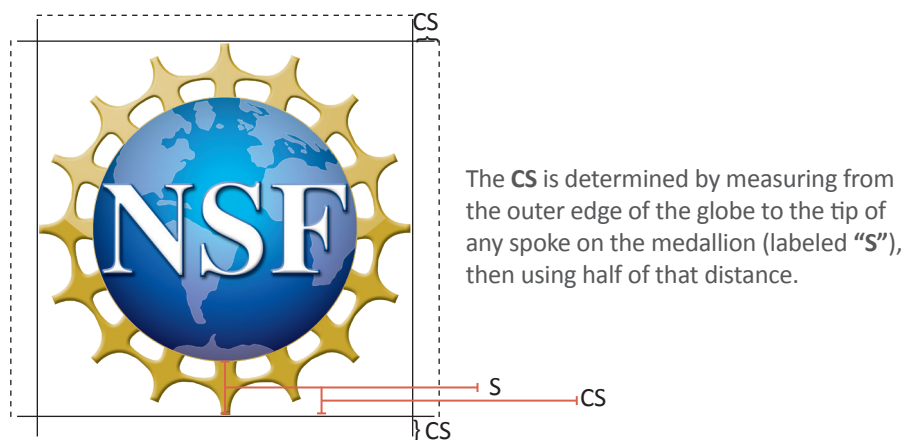


1-ink vector logo

The 1-ink vector logo is generally limited for use when the task necessitates that only one ink be used, such as hot stamping on giveaway items. This logo is also approved for use on documents where the logo must be placed on a background that has similar colors to the 4-color logo, resulting in a loss of impact of the primary logo, or when the logo needs to be too small to see the letters clearly on the 4-color logo. In these cases, it may only be used in black or white. **There are no exceptions to color choice with this logo.**

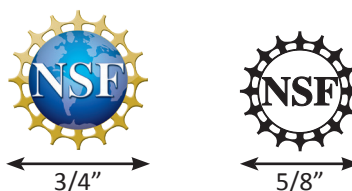
Clear Space

To give it a place of prominence and isolation, the NSF logo should always be surrounded by a generous amount of open/clear space, free of any text and imagery. The example below shows the minimum amount of open/clear space around the logo. Since the size of the NSF identifier will vary depending on the application, use the guidelines in the figure below for how to determine the measurement labeled “CS” for clear space.



Minimum Sizes

The minimum reproduction size of the NSF logo is based on both height and width because it is the same dimension all around. For the full color logos, nothing smaller than a minimum size of 3/4” (0.75 inch) should be used in both print and on the web. Any smaller than this, and the logo loses its impact and artistic integrity. The black and white logo, however, can be used down to a minimum size of 5/8” (0.625 inch).

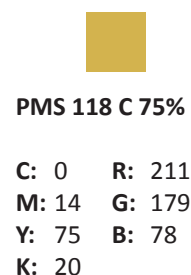
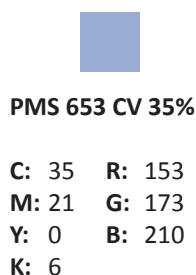
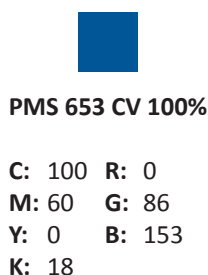


Color Usage

Occasionally, the need will arise when an outside vendor will need specifics as to the color composition of the NSF logo. This will only apply when using the 4-color vector logo without shading. The high-resolution bitmap logo, along with the vector color logo, should always be reproduced using 4-color processing (CMYK).



4-color vector logo without shading



Incorrect Usage

The NSF logo must not be altered or distorted in any way. Whether using the logo alone or partnering with other organizations, care should be taken to follow the standards set forth in this document. T-shirts, hats and other promotional items are especially easy targets for logo misuse. The effectiveness of the logo depends on consistency of usage.

The logo should never be re-proportioned, distorted or set at an angle.



The logo should never be disassembled and used as separate elements, re-typeset using another font or be re-colored.



The logo should never have artificial effects such as drop shadow, transparencies, bevelled edge, emboss or glow.



The logo should never be combined with another logo or piece of artwork to create a new identity. The figure on the right shows correct logo usage with an NSF affiliate. The logo should also not be used multiple times on the same surface or page. The white space rule applies always.



The Complete NSF Visual Identity

The second and equally important part of NSF’s visual identity is the agency name, **National Science Foundation**, spelled out. This identifier, in tandem with the NSF logo, creates the fullness of the agency’s brand and visual identity. Neither of the two elements should be used without the other unless otherwise specified.

When using the complete visual configuration, every effort should be made to have the words “National Science Foundation” as close to the logo’s clear space as possible (see the “Clear Space” section on page 3 for determining the measurement of the clear space). It is preferred that the text be typed on one line, though it is acceptable to stack it in three lines with each word on its own line. The text should always be typed in the **Garamond** type font.

The logo and text can be configured in three ways: (1) with the text to the right of the logo (with text centered top to bottom); (2) with the text below the logo (centered); or (3) text stacked to the right (with text centered top to bottom). It should never appear with the text to the left of the logo. The text should be prominent, but it should not exceed the size of the letters in the logo. On darker backgrounds, the “National Science Foundation” text can be reversed out to white to provide better contrast.

(1) Text to the right configuration



(2) Text below configuration



(3) Text stacked to the right configuration



Partnerships and Placement Among Other Logos

This section addresses branding and how it relates to facilities, vehicles and programs that are co-owned, co-sponsored or co-funded. When funding is equal among partners and the NSF logo will be placed among a horizontal series of outside organizational logos, the NSF logo should always be placed furthest to the left of the series (figure 1). In the case of placement in a vertical series, the NSF logo should be placed at the top of the series (figure 1a). When the partnerships are equal, all of the logos should carry the same visual weight. To achieve this, height and width should be the same. As logo shapes vary among sponsors, use the height and width of only the NSF globe as your guide. This ensures NSF's visual weight among similar sized logos.

When NSF is the primary funding agency, the NSF logo should appear substantially larger than the other accompanying logos. In this case, the NSF logo should appear twice as large as the other logos. To further NSF's prominence in these situations, the NSF logo can be placed alone above the series of accompanying logos (figure 2).

Note that in a series of logos, it is not necessary to use the National Science Foundation text to accompany the logo. In these cases, it is preferable to have the text elsewhere on the item, where the text will be more impacting. When materials, facilities or vehicles are designed with or by a co-sponsor, the full guidelines for the NSF identity do not apply in their entirety, though it is still essential to use the correct logo and prominent placement.

When a program, facility or vehicle is fully funded by NSF, the NSF identifiers must be the central brand identifier. Any identifying marks or logos created by the program, facility or vehicle should play a secondary role in the overall visual identity. In writing, they should also be referred to as "National Science Foundation's *Facility Name*." This applies to signage, print material, websites and any other communications (figure 3 and 3a).

Figure 1. Placement in a series of horizontal co-sponsors' logos



Figure 1a. Placement in a series of vertical co-sponsors' logos

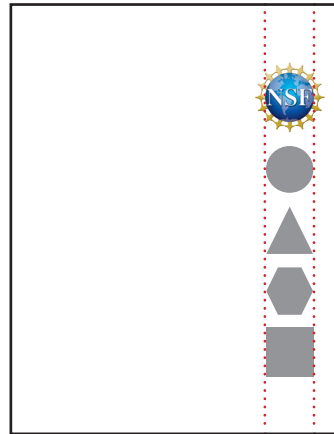


Figure 2. NSF logo prominence when NSF is the primary funding agency

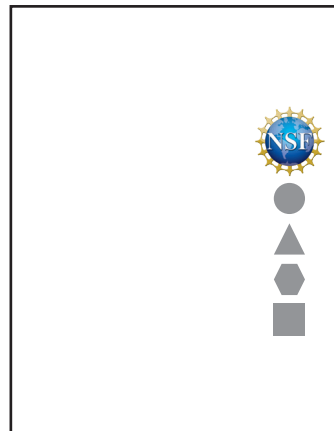


Figure 3. Examples of a fully funded NSF program website and correct visual identity

Program logo = ●

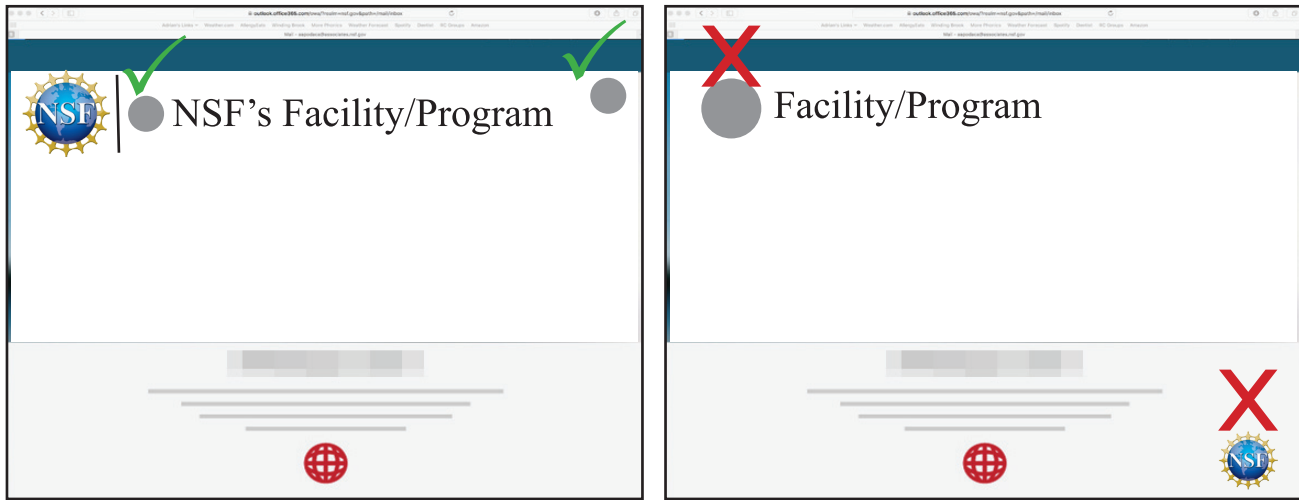
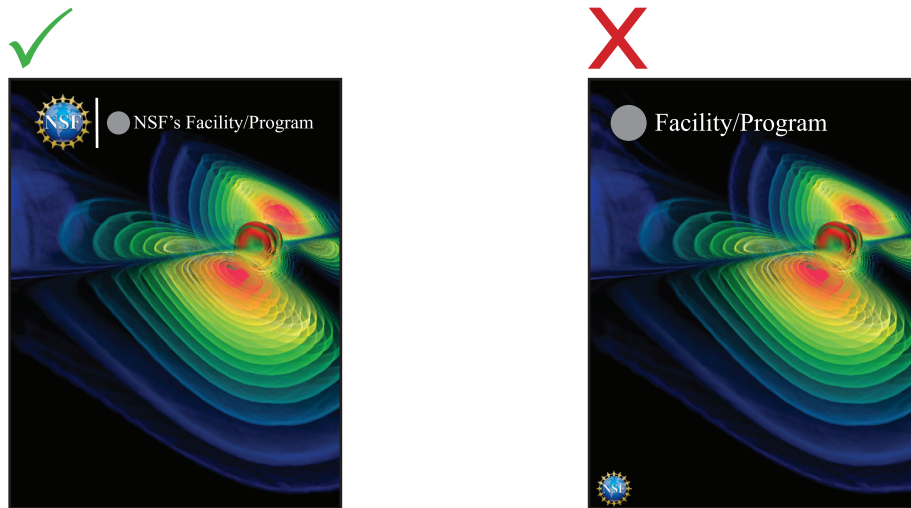


Figure 3a. Examples of a fully funded NSF program poster



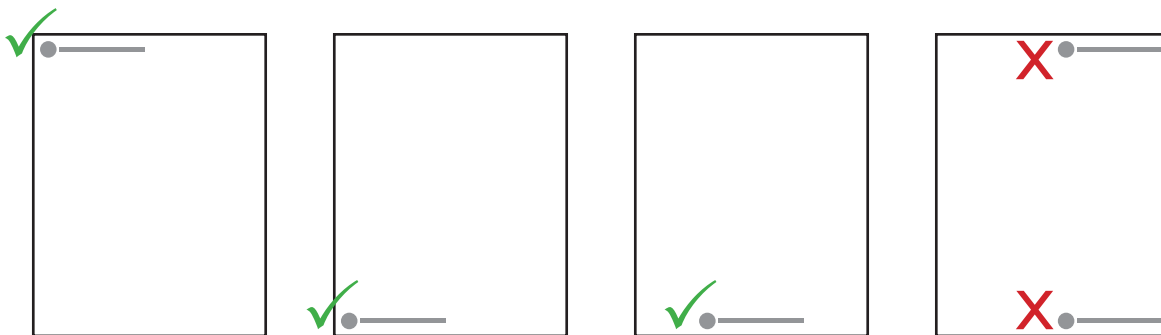
The facility or program logo should NEVER be the primary identifier of a fully NSF-funded facility, vehicle, program, website or other form of communication.

*Applications of the
Visual Identity*

Print Products

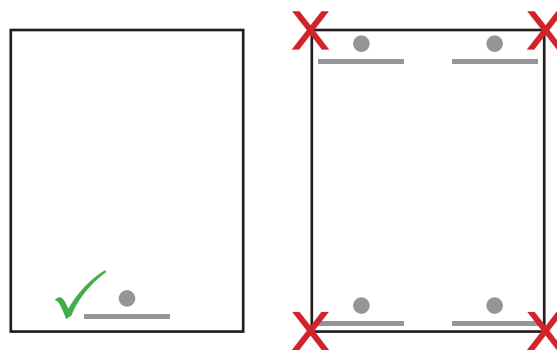
Below are guidelines as they pertain to print items such as brochures, posters and other standard-sized print products. Note the text to right configuration (figure 4) can only be placed in the upper and lower left corners or centered on the bottom. The text underneath configuration (figure 5) can only be used centered on the bottom. The exception to these guidelines occurs when the “National Science Foundation” text appears in an extraordinary large format across the top of the page. In this case (figure 6), the NSF logo may appear in any corner, or on the bottom of the page centered without the “National Science Foundation” text in close proximity.

Figure 4. Text to the right configuration



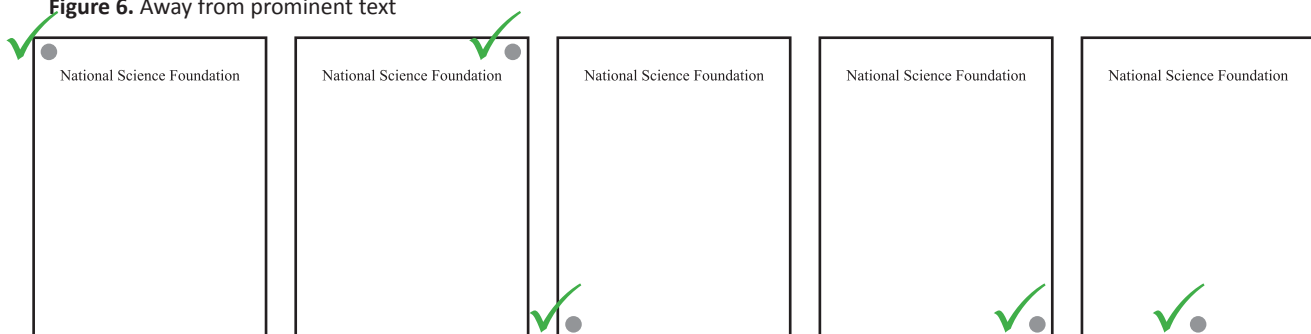
When using this configuration, the unified identity should appear either in the top- or bottom-left areas of the document, or centered at the bottom area.

Figure 5. Text underneath configuration



In this configuration, the unified identity should only appear at the bottom of a document, centered.

Figure 6. Away from prominent text



In this configuration, the logo can be placed unaccompanied in any of the four corners or centered on the bottom.

Use on NSF-funded Facilities, Instruments and Equipment

NSF-funded facilities, instruments and equipment are cornerstones of the U.S. scientific and research enterprise. As such, it is essential that the agency identifiers be applied in such a way that they show NSF's funding and support of the facilities, instruments and equipment. Either through signage or direct application to the facility, instrument or equipment, NSF identifiers should be prominently displayed. If the facility, instrument or equipment has its own identifying logo associated with the institution or organization, the NSF logo should still be displayed as the primary identifier on any signage or communications and never with less than equal representation. The design of any signage should be in alignment with the architectural standards used by the institution or organization.

For Facilities, Centers and Sites Fully Funded by NSF

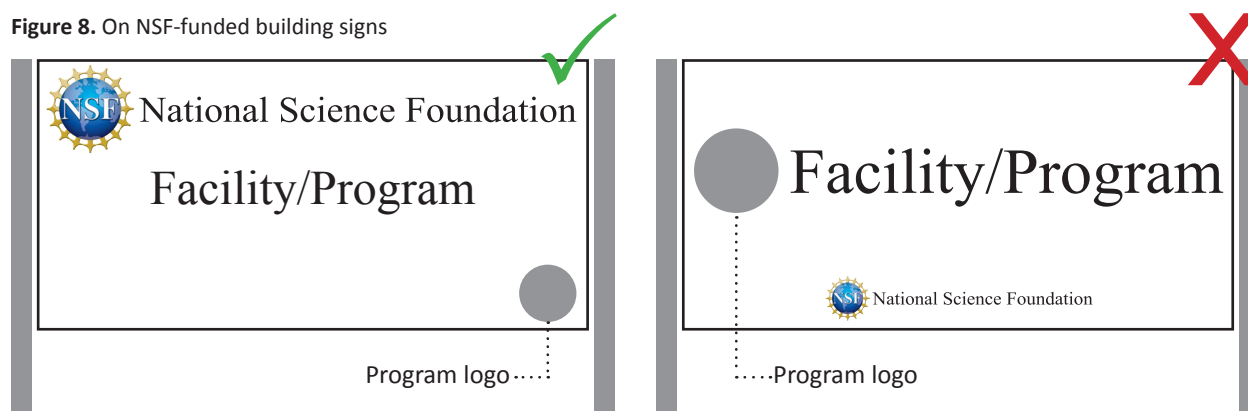
With regard to buildings and field sites, it is ideal to have the NSF identifiers affixed to the building either alone or in tandem with the name of the facility or center. The preferred configuration for use on a building is the text to the right configuration. On buildings, the text becomes as important as the logo itself and can therefore be increased in size (figure 7). The minimum size of the text should equal the size of the letters "NSF" in the logo. The text should not exceed the size of the globe. Overall size should be determined by the size of allowable space on the building. On buildings and permanent signs, the logo and text may be created in a material such as stainless steel and are acceptable in either brushed or polished finish.

When it is not possible to have NSF branding directly on the exterior of the building, an identifying sign should be erected with NSF's branding elements prominently displayed in a location that is most viewable by the general public. For example, placing the sign at the entrance road to a field site where NSF-supported equipment is located instead of on the equipment itself (figure 8). The size of the sign should be reasonable and appropriately scaled to match the location selected, as well as properly identify NSF and the operating institution or organization. Signage should always appear clean and well maintained. It is imperative that NSF identifiers always look their best.

Figure 7. On NSF-funded buildings



Figure 8. On NSF-funded building signs



It is essential that the guidelines concerning partnerships and placement among other logos be adhered to at all times, whether on the building itself or on the signage.

For Facilities, Centers and Sites Partially Funded by NSF

When a building or field site is not fully funded by NSF, refer to the guidance regarding partnerships and NSF logo placement described on page 6 of this document. The same rules will apply to building and field site signage. See examples below (figure 9 and 9a).

Figure 9. On partially NSF-funded buildings

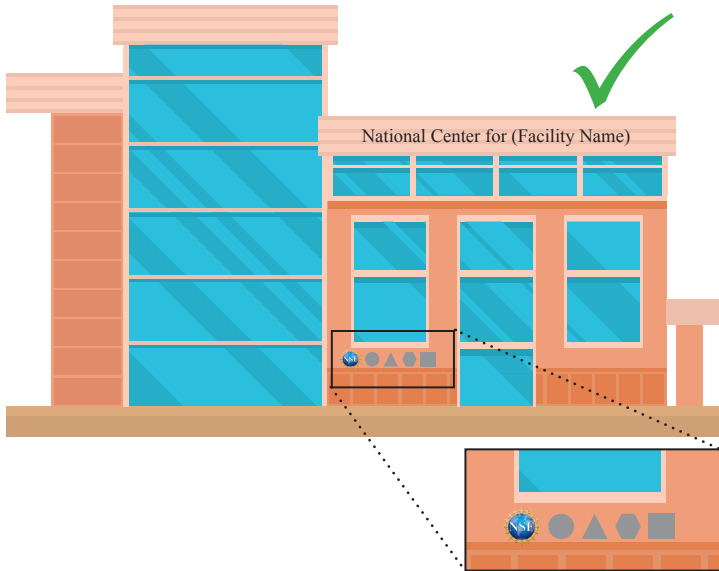


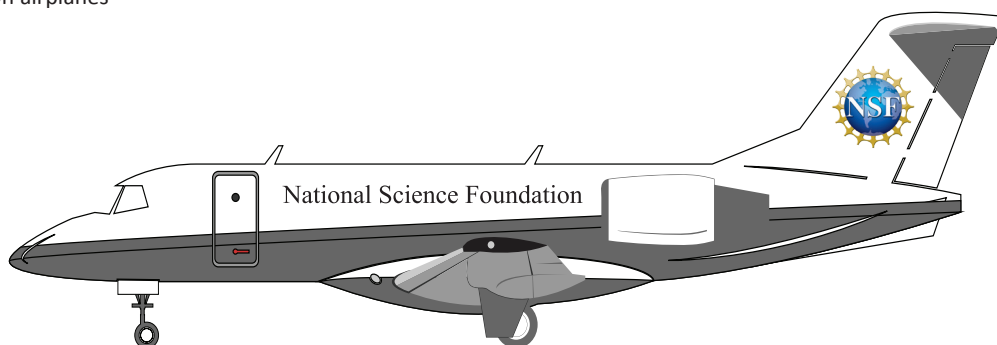
Figure 9a. On partially NSF-funded building signs



On Instruments and Equipment

The goal with branding NSF-owned instruments and equipment is to make sure the NSF identifiers are placed in areas with the most exposure and the least operational interruption. Below are examples as to how an NSF airplane and truck might look in terms of logo and text placement. Paints or adhesives should be weather and fade-resistant and replaced when they show signs of deterioration.

Figure 10. On airplanes



On airplanes, the aim is to place the NSF logo where it is most visible while on the ground. The preferred placement on an airplane is on the vertical stabilizer. The National Science Foundation text should also be prominently placed, preferably along the upper region of the fuselage. Guidelines on the NSF text proximity to the logo do not apply here. The program name or co-operating agency identifiers can be placed substantially smaller, and on the front section of the plane.

Figure 11. On helicopters



On helicopters, like airplanes, the aim is to place the NSF logo where it is most visible while on the ground. The logo should be placed in an area where it is easily seen. The National Science Foundation text should also be prominently placed, preferably along the tail boom. Guidelines on the NSF text proximity to the logo do not apply here. The program name or co-operating agency identifiers can be placed substantially smaller, elsewhere on the helicopter.

Figure 12. On vehicles



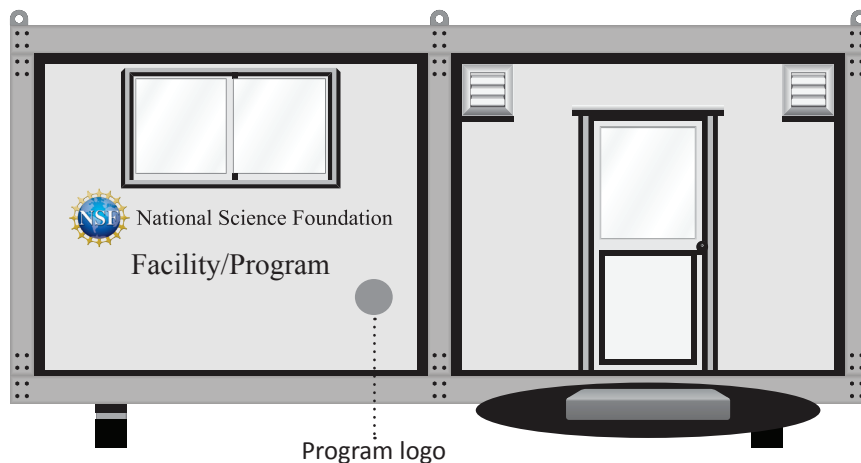
With regard to vehicles such as trucks, vans and cars, and industrial equipment such as forklifts, tractors and loaders, the NSF identifiers should be placed in areas where they are easily seen and where they are unobstructed by physical features (ex., mufflers, gas tanks) on the vehicle. Similar to the airplane, guidelines on the NSF text proximity to the logo do not apply here.

Figure 13. On vessels



On vessels, like the other vehicles, the NSF identifiers should be placed in areas where they are easily seen, such as on the stack where they are unobstructed by physical features (ex., life boats and other equipment). The size of the NSF identifiers should be proportionate to the area where they are placed, but easily recognizable from a reasonable distance. Similar to the airplane, guidelines on the NSF text proximity to the logo do not apply here.

Figure 14. On portable scientific support equipment



On portable scientific support equipment such as laboratory units, winches or large instruments, it is ideal to have the NSF identifiers affixed to the outside surface either alone or in tandem with the name of the research program. The preferred configuration is the text to the right configuration. Overall size should be determined by the size of allowable space on the unit. Guidelines concerning partnerships and placement among other logos should be adhered to at all times.

Appropriate and Authorized Use

NSF's logo can be used by recipients of NSF support for the sole purpose of acknowledging that support. NSF's logo can be used to link to an NSF website or acknowledge NSF assistance or affiliation.

Who cannot use the logo?

NSF's logo cannot be used in a manner that falsely implies employment by or affiliation with NSF. NSF's logo cannot be used to imply or endorse a product or service.

Do I need permission to use the NSF logo?

If you meet the stated requirements above for using the NSF logo (be a recipient of NSF support or linking to an NSF site), no explicit permission is necessary to use the NSF logo. No other potential uses of the NSF logo are permitted unless prior written consent is obtained from the NSF Office of Legislative and Public Affairs.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can I contact for more information on NSF visual identity?

For questions regarding use of the NSF visual identity, please email nsf-logo@nsf.gov.

In what file format is the NSF logo saved?

Depending on how you will be producing the completed material, the file format will make a difference. The following are explanations of which file type works best in what format.

.PDF Portable Document Format

The file format used universally for viewing documents and also used by some digital printing vendors.

.EPS Encapsulated PostScript

The file format used by printing vendors and professional graphic designers.

.AI Illustrator Format

The file format used by printing vendors and professional graphic designers.

.PSD PhotoShop

The file format used by professional graphic designers and illustrators.

.TIF Tagged-Image File Format

The file format used by printing vendors and professional graphic designers.

.WMF Windows Metafile Format

The file format used for insertion into Microsoft Office documents.

.JPG Joint Photographic Experts Group Format

The file format used for web graphics.

.GIF Graphics Interchange Format

The file format used for web graphics.

Where do I get the NSF logo files?

NSF logo files are available for download at www.nsf.gov/policies/logos.jsp.

NSF funded our workshop/symposium. Can I use the NSF logo on the associated report?

Yes. However, the logo should be displayed along with a disclaimer stating that: "Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation."



National Science Foundation