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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Science Foundation Wins AGA's 2021 Innovation Challenge

(Alexandria, Va.) AGA is pleased to announce that the National Science Foundation (NSF) is the 2021 Innovation Challenge winner with its Financial Obligation Root Cause Explorer (FORCE).

"It's an honor that the AGA community selected NSF's FORCE as their favorite innovation, alongside some fantastic presentations from HHS, SBA OIG, and the PRAC," said Jesse Simons, Chief of the Payments and Analytics Branch at the National Science Foundation. "We hope that this is just the beginning of a longer journey of using artificial intelligence to drive exciting new financial management insights and look forward to potentially expanding our initial FORCE use case through government-wide collaboration."

NSF developed FORCE, which uses a fully operational artificial intelligence and machine learning technology stack of data aggregation, visualization, natural language processing/text analytics, and dashboard platforms to quickly analyze NSF's portfolio of 50,000 open grants. FORCE identifies awards at risk of atypical spending, performs cluster analysis on unstructured text within NSF documents and uncovers hidden themes in the underlying research activities. FORCE allows users to synthesize qualitative data in near real-time across the entire portfolio and provide business intelligence for risk management. Previously, this analysis would require the time-consuming process of researching individual awards within the portfolio.

"NSF's Financial Management at Speed and Scale is about Innovation, Partnerships, and People," said Mike Wetklow, Deputy Chief Financial Officer at the National Science Foundation. "These data science innovations will not only enhance our oversight and risk management capabilities but will also help strengthen and empower the Federal workforce."

"The three final teams all creatively described the benefits and attributes of their innovative solutions. It was a tough decision when it came down to casting a vote. Key benefits presented by all three teams included streamlining the user experience and efficiently accessing information needed for analysis and decision making. I look forward to hearing about how other agencies will implement the NSF FORCE approach." Ann Ebberts, AGA, CEO.

Out of numerous submissions, it was narrowed down to three finalists:

- The Grants Quality Services Management Office, U.S. Department of Health and Human Service
- Pandemic Response Accountability Committee and U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General
- National Science Foundation

The Innovation Challenge is an opportunity for organizations to share their technical solutions to nagging problems or challenges governments face. Submissions promoted accountability, transparency, and innovation in the public sector. The Innovation Challenge took place virtually on Nov. 18, at the final session of AGA's Technology & Transformation Summit. The 1,700+ attendees voted on the winner.

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About AGA

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