



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

What is the Office of Inspector General?

Each federal agency has an Office of Inspector General (OIG) that provides independent oversight of the agency's programs and operations. The office is responsible for promoting efficiency and effectiveness in agency programs and for preventing and detecting fraud, waste, and abuse. By statute, the NSF OIG is independent from the agency, with the IG reporting directly to the National Science Board and the Congress. We consult NSF in developing our plans and obtain agency feedback on reports before they are issued. Semiannually, the OIG submits a summary report of its activities to the Congress, National Science Board, and NSF.

To promote efficiency and effectiveness, we assess internal controls, financial management, information technology, and other systems that affect the operation of NSF programs. By identifying individuals who attempt to abuse the public trust or defraud government programs, the OIG also enforces integrity in agency operations. Our office is staffed with auditors, investigators, attorneys, scientists, and other specialists. Close working relationships with NSF and its awardees help us focus our efforts on priority areas and facilitate our proactive educational efforts.

How does an OIG contribute to good government?

- Offer analysis and advice on critical government-wide initiatives, such as computer security, program performance, workforce planning, and financial management.
- Look independently at problems and recommend solutions.
- Issue factual reports based on professional auditing, investigative, and evaluation standards.
- Investigate fraud, misuse of funds, and other violations of laws and regulations.
- Provide technical and consultative advice as the agency develops new plans.
- Maintain a hotline for reporting confidential information on fraud and abuse.

How does the NSF OIG work?

1. Conducts audits and reviews of NSF programs and operations.

- Audits and reviews of NSF awardees.
- Audits and reviews of NSF's program management and operations.
- Audits of NSF's annual financial statements.
- Audits and reviews of NSF's information technology systems.

Audits and reviews may result in:

- Recommendations to improve NSF program management.
- Questioned or disallowed costs of awardee grant funds.
- Recommendations to improve compliance with NSF and federal regulations.
- Referrals for possible investigations.

2. Investigate possible wrongdoing involving organizations or individuals that receive awards from, conduct business with, or work for NSF.

- Criminal/civil investigations -- including violations of laws, rules, and regulations; misappropriation of funds; and employee conflicts of interest.
- Administrative investigations -- including allegations of research misconduct, abuse of authority, grantee conflicts of interest, mismanagement, waste, and substantial dangers to public health and safety.
- Providing confidentiality and protection from retaliation to federal employees, former employees, and applicants in whistleblower cases.

Investigations may result in:

- Civil penalties
- Criminal sanctions
- Administrative action
- Recommendations for management improvement
- Referrals for possible audits

3. Conduct outreach to NSF and the research community.

Our outreach efforts build partnerships within the agency and with other federal agencies, NSF awardees, and the scientific and engineering communities. These partnerships assist us in resolving audit and investigation issues and promoting education on research misconduct and award administration matters. Individual OIG staff act as liaisons to NSF directorates and offices to keep agency personnel informed about our office and to develop substantive knowledge about NSF programs so that we can better assist NSF in achieving its goals. We also offer interactive case-study seminars about research misconduct and other issues for administrators, principal investigators, students, and staff in other OIGs.

How can I find out more about the OIG?

Information about OIG organizational structure, staffing, and reports, including OIG semi-annual reports summarizing recent audits, investigations, and other work, can be found on our Website: www.oig.nsf.gov

OIG may also be reached by phone: 703-292-7100, fax: 703-292-9159

Or by mail: Office of Inspector General
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