

- Other remedies as appropriate.

What is the Whistleblower Protection Act?

The Whistleblower Protection Act can provide confidentiality and protection from retaliation to federal employees, former employees, or applicants who report allegations of gross mismanagement, fraud, abuse of authority. Allegations must be reported outside of the individual's chain of command and usually to the OIG or to the Office of Special Counsel.

How does OIG review allegations?

- We collect and review information to determine if an allegation is substantive.
- We investigate any substantive allegation.
- We work with NSF, the Department of Justice, Office of Government Ethics and/or awardee institutions to develop adequate resolutions to protect the federal government's interests.

What happens if an allegation is proven?

- Allegations may lead to criminal or civil prosecution or administrative remedies including:
 - Payment of fines or restitution
 - Restoring funds to NSF grants
 - Corrective action (such as debarment)
 - Divestiture of questioned assets
 - Modification or declination to fund a proposal

How can you contact us?

Internet
oig.nsf.gov

Telephone
703 292-7100

OIG Anonymous Hotline
1-800-428-2189

Fax
703 292-9158/9159

Write
National Science Foundation
Office of Inspector General
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22230

E-mail Hotline
oig@nsf.gov

Relevant Statutes and Regulations

Inspector General Act of 1978
NSF Grant Conditions
NSF Personnel Manual
NSF Research Misconduct Regulation
OMB Circulars
NSF Grant Policy Manual
NSF Conflicts of Interest Regulation

OIG
Office of Investigations
Office of Audit



When must you report allegations to NSF's Office of Inspector General?

What are the General Standards for Employee Conduct?

As a federal employee, your actions must be above reproach. You must adhere to basic standards of integrity and decency and conduct yourself professionally, honestly, impartially and ethically.

You must avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest.

You must not engage in conduct that is criminal, dishonest, immoral or prejudicial to the Government.

You must report to OIG evidence or allegations of misconduct, research misconduct, accounting irregularities, fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption involving NSF, NSF employees, NSF-funded research or education activities, or proposals for NSF funding.

What should be reported?

You should report any concern you may have over a situation in which NSF is the potential victim of fraudulent acts by employees, awardees, contractors, or others. It includes any violations of laws, rules, regulations, gross mismanagement, gross waste or misappropriation of funds, abuses of authority, or substantial and specific dangers to public health and safety.

Your concern may be about an internal or external matter. For example, it may be about awardee institution operations or decisions, actions of an individual supported by or

submitting proposals to NSF, or actions of NSF employees.

When someone tells you about his or her concern about misappropriation of funds or gross mismanagement you are obligated to discuss it with OIG. The concern does not have to be described to you as an “allegation.”

If your concern is most appropriately addressed by NSF management, we will provide you with the proper contact information.

Who are we?

Every federal agency has an independent OIG charged with recommending policies and practices designed to promote economy and efficiency, and conducting audits to promote economy, efficiency and compliance efforts and investigations to detect and deter fraud, waste and abuse.

By gathering evidence that individuals or entities have abused the public trust or defrauded government programs, OIG helps enforce standards of honesty and integrity in NSF programs and operations.

What do we do?

OIG staff conducts audits, reviews and/or investigations in response to information from various sources, including agency employees, the OIG Hotline, other OIG offices, and the public. We are unique in the Inspector General community because NSF policy stipulates

that we investigate all allegations of research misconduct.

Must I tell my supervisor first?

No. While some supervisors prefer that their staff come to them before coming to OIG with their concerns, you are NOT required to do so, and your supervisor MAY NOT instruct you not to report your concerns to OIG.

Who do I contact in OIG?

You may speak with anyone in OIG about your concerns. You can also use the OIG organizational chart to identify an OIG staff member whose duties overlap with your concerns. You may ALWAYS report concerns by the anonymous Hotline or by e-mail.

What about confidentiality?

The Inspector General Act of 1978 states that the IG **will not** disclose the identity of an employee who makes a complaint without that employee’s consent *unless* the IG determines such disclosure is unavoidable during the course of an investigation.

We have rarely found disclosure necessary. We work closely with complainants to protect their confidentiality.