

*Office of
Inspector General*



NSF Grants Conference
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OIG works with NSF and the research community

- We investigate allegations of:
 - Fraud, waste, and abuse
 - Research misconduct
 - Violations of law, regulation, directive, or policy
- We conduct audits:
 - Financial
 - Performance
- We invest in outreach:
 - Presentations
 - Briefings
 - Publications and brochures
 - www.nsf.gov/oig/outreach_all.jsp



Importance of Integrity

- **Presidential Memorandum on Scientific Integrity (3/9/09)**
“The public must be able to trust the science and scientific process informing policy decisions.”
- **Professional society standards – general & discipline specific**
- **Funding agency standards**
“NSF expects strict adherence to the rules of proper scholarship and attribution.” – NSF Grant Proposal Guide II.D.3
- **Government-wide standards for conduct, procurement, and financial disclosures applicable to employees, contractors, grantees, etc.**



Examples of OIG Cases

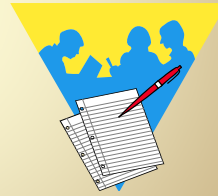
- Plagiarism, intellectual theft, fabrication and falsification in:
 - NSF proposals (awarded and declined)
 - Work supported by NSF (publications and reports)
- Misuse of award funds
 - Fraud, Embezzlement, Theft, Purchase Card Abuse
- Inappropriate costs
- Duplicate funding
- False certifications in:
 - Federal Financial Report
 - Cost Sharing
 - Human Subjects



Proposal Certifications

- Compliance with award terms and conditions
- Accuracy and completeness of statements
- Conflict-of-interest policy (written and enforced)
- Drug-free workplace
- Debarment and suspension
- Lobbying (proposal >\$100,000)

**Providing false information is a
criminal violation (18 USC §1001).**



Common Civil/Criminal Offenses

- Conspiracy - 18 USC 371
- False Claims - 18 USC 287
- Embezzlement - 18 USC 641
- Theft of Federal Program Funds - 18 USC 666
- False Statements - 18 USC 1001
- Mail Fraud - 18 USC 1341
- Wire Fraud - 18 USC 1343
- Civil False Claims - 31 USC 3729(a)



Outcomes of Investigations



- Refer to federal, state, local authorities
 - Criminal or civil outcomes may include:
 - Prosecution
 - Settlement Agreement / Compliance Agreement
 - Fines; Reimbursements; Incarceration
 - Administrative outcomes may include:
 - Termination / Restrictions on Awards
 - Certifications / Assurances
 - Suspensions / Debarments
 - Reprimands / Retractions
- Referral to OIG audit

Oversight of ARRA Awards

- Expenditures
 - Consistent with ARRA purpose and goals
 - Subject to appropriate internal controls
 - High risk in A-133 audits, FY 2010-2013
- Compliance with reporting and special provisions
- OIG will address Whistleblower allegations /retaliation claims



Cost Determinations

Costs must be allowable, reasonable, allocable, documented, consistent in the treatment of costs

- Unsupported expenditures, including
 - Reimbursements not documented (invoices, etc.)
 - Time and effort not timely, not signed/certified
- Unallowable expenditures, including
 - Direct charges for costs in the indirect pool
 - Overload salary (unless NSF-approved)
 - Meals, non-related travel, alcohol
 - Unapproved changes in participant support



Cost sharing

- No Federal funds can be used
- Track cost sharing per award (no duplication)
- Documented and certified (AOR for >\$500,000)
 - Valuation at actual/fair market value
 - Report annual and cumulative amounts
 - Both awardee and subawardee cost sharing



Effort Reporting

- Documentation (Support for Award Charges)
 - Report 100% of Effort
 - Certification (Suitable Means to Verify)
 - Cost Transfers Explained and Approved
- Recipient Policies and Procedures
 - Timeliness in approval/certification
 - Train on Effort Reporting requirements



Participant Support

Participants or trainees for NSF-sponsored conferences, meetings, symposia, training activities and workshops

- Costs: transportation, per diem, stipends, related
 - No indirect costs
 - Not for employees (except some training projects)
 - NOT working meals
 - Records: name, amount, date, purpose



Subrecipient Monitoring

Awardee is responsible for oversight of the Subawardee

- Ensure subawardee not debarred/suspended
- Written agreements
 - Flow-down award terms/Federal requirements
 - Reporting of costs and performance
- Assess and monitor subrecipient award administration
 - Site visits, other contacts
 - A-133 audits
 - Ensure timely and appropriate corrective action





Whistleblower Protection

- A core value of OIG is protecting NSF employees, contractors, and grantees who step forward to identify potential wrongdoing
- Federal law prohibits retaliation for providing information reasonably believed to evidence
 - a violation of law, rule, or regulation
 - gross mismanagement
 - gross waste of funds
 - abuse of authority, or
 - a substantial and specific danger to public health and safety



Whistleblower Protection

- Protection for employees found in
 - Inspector General Act of 1978
 - Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989
 - Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act
- Protection for contractors/grantees found in
 - Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994
 - ARRA
 - Federal Acquisition Regulations
 - Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act of 2009
 - National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2013



Whistleblower Protection

- *NSF federal employees* are protected if they make a whistleblower disclosure to the US Office of Special Counsel, the OIG, or a supervisor
- *Employees of NSF contractors and grantees* are protected if they make a whistleblower disclosure to their management, an OIG, or an official responsible for investigating misconduct
- *Both federal employees and contractor/grantee employees* are also protected for communications to Congress or the media



How to File Reprisal Complaints

- NSF federal employees and covered contractor /grantee employees may make reprisal complaints
 - by contacting the US Office of Special Counsel (which under the WPA has sole authority to both investigate and prosecute complaints of reprisal from federal employees) or
 - through the OIG Hotline



Whistleblower Ombudsman

- IAW the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012 (WPEA), the NSF IG established a Whistleblower Protection Ombudsman to educate employees
 - About prohibitions on retaliation for protected disclosures, and
 - (for those who have made or are contemplating making a protected disclosure) about the rights and remedies against retaliation for protected disclosures
- Note, however, that the WPEA *prohibits* the Whistleblower Ombudsman from acting as a legal representative, agent, or advocate of the employee



NSF Whistleblower Ombudsman

The NSF Whistleblower Protection Ombudsman is:

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Office of the Inspector General
(703)292-4993
wkilgall@nsf.gov

When should you contact OIG?

- Report significant admin or financial problems
- Report allegations of wrongdoing
 - Research misconduct
 - Fraud /theft involving NSF funds
 - Violation of regulation, directive, or policy

OIG Outreach

- Presentations, seminars, and on-site visits
 - Designed for students, PIs, and administrators
 - Topical fact sheets and brochures
 - Briefings, conference presentations
 - www.nsf.gov/oig/outreach_all.jsp
- OIG Semiannual Report
 - <http://www.nsf.gov/oig/pubs.jsp>