



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A15030023

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We received allegations that an NSF-supported PI¹ at an institution (Institution 1)² committed safety violations regarding use of hazardous materials. Institution 1 temporarily³ suspended the PI and barred her ability to supervise students and post-doctoral fellows due to a violation that did not involve the two NSF-supported⁴ projects. Institution 1 and the PI reached an agreement that ended the PI's suspension, but the prohibition on supervising students and post-doctoral fellows remained. However, Institution 1 identified a separate violation regarding the handling of hazardous material⁵ in an instrument⁶ that was necessary to conduct the NSF-funded research projects. Based on this information, we recommended the awards be suspended and NSF concurred.

The PI obtained a new faculty position at a different institution (Institution 2).⁷ NSF declined the PI's request to transfer the two suspended NSF awards to Institution 2 and financially closed the two awards following their expiration. This resulted in nearly \$281,000 of funds put to better use.

We concluded that closure of the two NSF awards and actions taken by Institution 1 and NSF were adequate to protect NSF's interests in ensuring that NSF-funded research projects are conducted and administered properly. We sent the PI a letter reminding her about compliance requirements and her responsibilities in the appropriate and safe use of hazardous materials in the laboratory, including the proper training and supervision of laboratory staff. Accordingly, this case is closed.

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