



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-20-0050-O

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We received an allegation that a PI proposed doing research using a database that she did not have permission to use. We wrote to the PI to obtain her perspective on the matter. In her response, the PI provided a copy of an agreement she had with the organization which manages the database. The agreement gave her permission to use the data for a specific type of analysis. However, it was unclear whether the permission was specific to the immediate research on which the PI was working, or if permission extended to future work such as was proposed in her most recent NSF proposal.

Due to the lack of clarity of the agreement, we cannot conclude that the PI inappropriately used intellectual property by violating the agreement she had with the organization. However, we did send the PI a Questionable Research Practice letter suggesting that she coordinate with the organization responsible for the database to make sure she has permission to use it on her future NSF proposals.

This case is **closed** with no further action taken.