



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-20-0076-O

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An Institutional Review Board (IRB) firm sent our office a report of noncompliance related to an NSF award involving human subjects research. The firm ended its services to an institution after concluding that two NSF-funded research projects, each with a separate PI, had serious and continuing noncompliance related to the approvals for continuing the studies. Each NSF PI had allowed IRB approval to lapse more than once. One research team collected data after the IRB firm issued a suspension on data collection.

The institution told the IRB firm that it had communication pipeline issues that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The PI excluded the small amount of data collected during the suspension period and informed the cognizant NSF Program Officer of the IRB issues.

After the IRB's determination, the head of the institution changed its internal communication process related to IRB approvals. She also hired a new firm to provide approvals going forward. We determined that the institution's actions were adequate and sent a warning letter to the institution.

This case is closed with no further action taken.