

**National Science Foundation  
Office of the Director  
Alexandria, VA 22314**

**Important Notice No. 144**

**February 8, 2018**

**Important Notice to  
Presidents of Universities and Colleges  
And Heads of Other National Science Foundation  
Grantee Organizations**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) does not tolerate sexual harassment, or any kind of harassment, within the agency, at grantee organizations, field sites, or anywhere NSF-funded science and education are conducted. The 2,000 American colleges, universities and other institutions that receive NSF funds are responsible for fully investigating complaints and for complying with federal non-discrimination law.

As the primary funding agency of fundamental science and engineering research in the United States, NSF is committed to promoting safe, productive research and education environments for current and future scientists and engineers. We consider the Principal investigator (PI) and any co-PI(s) identified on an NSF award to be in positions of trust. The PI and co-PI and all grant personnel must comport themselves in a responsible and accountable manner, including during the performance of award activities conducted outside the organization, such as at field sites or facilities, or during conferences and workshops.

To bolster our commitment to a safe research environment, NSF is taking the following steps:

1. **New Award Requirements:** NSF has developed a new award term and condition that will require grantee organizations to report findings of sexual harassment, or any other kind of harassment regarding a PI or co/PI or any other grant personnel. The award term and condition also will require the grantee to report the placement of the PI or co-PI on administrative leave relating to a harassment finding or investigation. This term and condition will make it clear that NSF may take unilateral action as necessary to protect the safety of all grant personnel, to include suspending or terminating an award or requiring the grantee to replace or remove personnel. NSF will solicit feedback on this new award term and condition through its Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide Federal Register process within the next several weeks.

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2. Harassment-Free Research Workplaces: NSF expects all awardee organizations to establish and maintain clear and unambiguous standards of behavior to ensure harassment-free workplaces wherever science is conducted, including notification pathways for all personnel, including students, on the primary and supplemental awards. This expectation includes activities at all research facilities and field sites and during conferences and workshops. All such settings should have accessible and evident means for reporting violations and awardee organizations should exercise due diligence with timely investigations of allegations and corrective actions.
3. Enhanced Web Resources: The NSF Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) is tasked with seeking to ensure that NSF-funded programs and projects are free of discrimination. ODI recently launched a dedicated web portal to consolidate policies and procedures, promising practices, and frequently asked questions relating to sexual and other forms of harassment with the intent of making it easier for the research community and the public to access information. This portal is where NSF will continue to add content related to ending harassment. To access the portal, please visit [NSF.gov/harassment](https://www.nsf.gov/harassment).

NSF is working to make certain that awardee organizations respond promptly and appropriately to instances of sexual and all other forms of harassment. A community effort is essential to eliminate sexual and other harassment in science and to build scientific workspaces where people can learn, grow and thrive.



France A. Córdoba  
Director