



U.S. National Science Foundation

MEMORANDUM

DATE July 14, 2025
FROM Jean Cottam Allen, Director, Office of Polar Programs, Directorate for Geosciences
Renée V. Ferranti, Special Assistant to the Director for SAHPR, Office of the Director

SUBJECT: NSF's Response to the Report Based on Findings from the Sexual Assault and Harassment Climate Survey (SAHCS)

As part of NSF's steadfast commitment to creating a safe United States Antarctic Program (USAP), in 2024 NSF commissioned a Sexual Assault and Harassment Climate Survey (SAHCS) of program participants in coordination with Leading and Dynamic Services and Solutions (LDSS). NSF is aware of continued challenges that deployers face with regard to sexual assault and harassment within USAP. The goal of the SAHCS is to establish a baseline understanding of the incidence and prevalence of sexual misconduct so that NSF can continue to improve prevention and response efforts.

NSF especially thanks all of the individuals that took the time to respond to the SAHCS. Their willingness to share their experiences, including information that is difficult and uncomfortable to share, is deeply appreciated. The information that they provided will help NSF make improvements to the working environment on the ice and ensure that every member of the USAP community feels safe and supported. NSF also thanks LDSS for the thoughtful approach for developing and implementing the survey and the excellent analysis of the survey findings.

Report recommendations are grouped by theme: 1) Policies and Procedures; 2) Environmental, and 3) Prevention and Training. These recommendations along with the desired outcomes in the report provide valuable guidance to help us most effectively shape our efforts for continuous improvement and reform. Each recommendation includes numerous action items, and each will be thoroughly considered in our implementation. Some program improvements that we have recently implemented that demonstrate our commitment to using the findings and recommendations to inform change include:

- The SAHPR Program Office established a multi-disciplinary case management meeting process to address reported cases that includes key stakeholders from the Antarctic Support Contract (ASC), the Office of the Inspector General, the Office of Polar Programs (OPP), and others as determined appropriate in accordance with maintaining a specific need to know. All reports of sexual assault and harassment are tracked through initial

report and closure and the SAHPR Program Office provides regular updates to the impacted person. *Supports 4.2.1 - recommendation four and 4.1.2 recommendation two.

- NSF established a process for conducting a sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE) to ensure the integrity and chain of custody of the evidence. *Supports 4.1.2 recommendation two.
- OPP enhanced bystander intervention and SAHPR response training requirements for all deployers. *Supports 4.3.2 - recommendation eight.
- OPP ensures that deployed individuals who wish to change rooms related to SA/SH incidents can make those requests directly and receive quick responses while protecting individual privacy to the maximum extent possible.

We are also looking to improve the contract of the future. Key elements of the solicitation include work scope requirements for the new awardee as well as evaluation factors for bidders in the selection process, such as:

- Mandatory sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response training, including clear roles and responsibilities of managers and supervisors *Supports 4.3.2 recommendations eight and nine.
- Enhanced periodic evaluation of the Contractor's program related to Safe Work Environment, including assessment of the scope of policies and procedures; content of required training, as well as adherence to provisioning requirements; timeliness, thoroughness, consistency and independence of investigations of misconduct; and the timeliness and accuracy of reporting *Supports 4.1.2 recommendation two.

We recognize that while progress is being made, there is still more we need to do to ensure we are responsive to the needs of the USAP community. NSF values the findings in the SAHCS report and the opportunity to align our actions with evidence informed best practices in the field of sexual assault and sexual harassment. NSF is committed to fostering a safe research environment that promotes a culture of respect, accountability, and support.

Upcoming Informal Webinars on Survey Findings

To promote transparency and build trust, we will host informational webinars following the publication of the report.

For questions or further information about the USAP SAHCS, email USAPclimateSurvey@nsf.gov.

NSF and the USAP are committed to supporting all individuals who experience sexual assault, sexual harassment and/or stalking. The following resources are available to current and former USAP community members, both on and off the ice.

NSF Safer Science Helpline (formerly NSF Antarctic Helpline)

- **Phone:** (833) 673-1733
- **Text:** (202) 932-7569
- **Website and Online Chat:** NSFSaferScienceHelpline.org

USAP Victim Advocate:

- **Email:** USAPadvocate@LDSScorp.com
- **Phone:** 720-568-1083 (USAP Extension: x42709)

Additional Resources:

- NSF SAHPR: saferscience@nsf.gov
- NSF Office of Inspector General (NSF OIG): oig.nsf.gov/contact/hotline
- National Sexual Assault Hotline (RAINN): (800) 656-HOPE (4673)