



U.S. National Science Foundation
Office of Polar Programs

Our Shared Commitment to a Safe, Professional, and Respectful Antarctic Community

The U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP) operates in one of the most remote and demanding environments in the world. The success of our mission depends not only on scientific excellence and operational expertise, but also on the professionalism, trust, and mutual respect of every individual in the program.

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) remains committed to fostering and maintaining an environment in which all members of the Antarctic community are treated with dignity and respect and are able to live and work free from sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, and other forms of misconduct. Conduct that undermines the safety, well-being, or professional participation of others is inconsistent with the standards and expectations of the USAP community and inconsistent with NSF's mission to promote the progress of science and advance the national interest.

Over the past year, NSF has continued to strengthen prevention, reporting, response, and accountability mechanisms informed by feedback from the "2024 Sexual Assault and Harassment Climate Survey" (SAHCS) and continued engagement with the community. We have enhanced reporting channels, formalized a cross-agency case management team that meets in real time to address concerns raised by individuals impacted by sexual assault or sexual harassment, and implemented an independent third-party investigative process to ensure consistency and responsiveness across employers for administrative misconduct matters.

NSF has also continued efforts to improve training, expand supervisory resources, and enhance coordination among operational, investigative, medical, and support entities. These actions are intended to improve both prevention and response capabilities while reinforcing clear expectations for professional conduct across all participant groups, including federal personnel, contractors, grantees, and support staff. Not only will we carry these efforts forward into the new Antarctic Science and Engineering Support Contract (ASESC), but we will continue to expand and improve them based on feedback from the community.



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Maintaining a safe and professional Antarctic community is a shared responsibility. Every member of the USAP community plays a role in maintaining an environment grounded in professionalism, accountability, and respect. Individuals are encouraged to utilize available reporting and support mechanisms, intervene appropriately when concerns arise, and help ensure that those impacted by misconduct are connected to appropriate resources and support services.

All members of the USAP community continue to have access to support resources, including the confidential victim advocate, available via email at usapadvocate@ldsscorp.com, and the [NSF Safer Science Helpline](#), available 24/7 for confidential support, information, and resource coordination.

NSF appreciates the continued professionalism, collaboration, and commitment of the Antarctic community in advancing both scientific discovery and a safe operational environment for all personnel supporting the mission.

Jean Cottam Allen
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Office of Polar Programs