

**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
Arlington, VA 22230
STAFF MEMORANDUM**

**O/D 15-14
June 8, 2015**

Administration and Management

**SUBJECT: Understanding Prohibited Personnel Practices, Whistleblower Protections,
and the Hatch Act**

In 1994, Congress enacted 5 U.S.C. §2302(c), which charges agency heads with the responsibility of "ensuring (in consultation with the Office of Special Counsel) that agency employees are informed of the rights and remedies available to them" under the prohibited personnel practice and whistleblower retaliation protection provisions of Title 5.

The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is charged with enforcement of the Whistleblower Protection Act and investigating allegations of prohibited personnel practices, or violations of the Hatch Act. Its 2302(c) Certification Program allows Federal agencies to meet the statutory obligation to inform their workforces about the rights and remedies available to them under the Whistleblower Protection Act, prohibited personnel practices, and the Hatch Act.

The NSF joins a number of other Federal agencies who have been 2302 certified by OSC. Part of the certification process involves ensuring that all NSF employees receive annual notification. I want to ensure that all NSF employees are aware of and understand their rights and responsibilities under the Whistleblower Protection Act, prohibited personnel practices, and the Hatch Act. This information is also posted on each floor within Staffords I and II.

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information that an employee reasonably believes is evidence of a violation of any law, rule, or regulation, or gross mismanagement, gross waste of funds, abuse of authority or a substantial danger to public health or safety. Although each employee is encouraged to bring such matters to the attention of his/her management officials, OSC as well as NSF's Office of Inspector General, provide other avenues for such disclosures. The 12 prohibited personnel practices are best understood by reviewing the information provided in the handouts or by visiting OSC's website (www.osc.gov). The Hatch Act contains descriptions of political activities that are both permitted and prohibited by Federal employees. Neither I nor any member of the leadership of this foundation will tolerate prohibited personnel practices or violations of the Whistleblower Protection Act or the Hatch Act.

I encourage you to review the documents attached: *Your Rights as a Federal Employee, Whistleblower Retaliation, and The Hatch Act*.

Federal employees have the right to be free of prohibited personnel practices, including retaliation for whistleblowing. Please visit the OSC website at www.osc.gov to find out more information about these important rights.

France A. Córdoba
Director

Attachments

Distribution: All Employees

Originating Unit: Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Replaces: O/D 13-06