

## Closeout of Case Number I99070028

This matter arose as a result of [REDACTED] inquiry relating to a complaint filed with their office from an individual who alleged she had been harassed to participate in an NSF study. This office opened an I case file to address the possibility of an unknown party using the NSF name or survey requirements to seek data on an individual, perhaps improperly. As it turns out, it was in fact, an NSF contractor performing an NSF survey, which was the subject of this complaint. NSF's Division of [REDACTED] has a number of contractors who perform various surveys of recent college graduates and longitudinal surveys of what employment experiences these graduates have after some time spent in the workforce. The [REDACTED] program official responsible for this survey explained the process and procedure that the contractor in this instance used to contact the complainant. The company submitted a log of telephone and Federal Express notices sent to this individual. The program officer commented that there are 20,000 participants contacted for these surveys and that he usually receives approximately 4-5 complaints per survey cycle. The contractor has a process whereby upon instruction from the program officer, the complainant's name would be removed and would no longer be contacted for a response to this survey. In this instance, the program official advised me that he would check with other program officers for other [REDACTED] surveys to assure that if the complainant's name were on others, she would also be removed from those lists.

The program official and I placed a call to the [REDACTED] to answer the complaint letter and went through a careful explanation of the facts with the [REDACTED] trade practice consultant. She requested that she receive documentation regarding the National Science Foundation being a federal agency and that as such, she would close the complaint file, since they do not consider complaints against agencies of the federal government.

I advised her that our letter would be forthcoming and that we certainly hoped she would pass along our apology and explanation to the complainant. She will do so and will close the case upon receipt of our letter.

The policy and procedures in place that [REDACTED] uses to address complaints from survey recipients appear adequate. We have concluded that there does not appear to be a need for further investigation or corrective action of any kind.

No further action will be taken on this case.

[REDACTED]