

ETHICS PROGRAM INSPECTION REPORT

Agency: National Science Foundation

Report No.: 26-421

Date: June 30, 2026

Period Covered by Review: January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT ETHICS


 Preventing Conflicts of Interest
 in the Executive Branch

1.0 AGENCY DATA		
EMPLOYEES		
1.1	Number of full-time agency employees.	1353
1.2	Number of Presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed (PAS) public financial disclosure reports required to be filed.	1
1.3	Number of non-PAS public financial disclosure reports required to be filed.	232
1.4	Number of confidential financial disclosure reports required to be filed.	851
ETHICS PROGRAM		
1.5	Title of Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO).	Senior Assistant General Counsel
1.6	Grade level of DAEO.	SES
1.7	Title of Alternate DAEO (ADAEO).	Assistant General Counsel
1.8	Grade level of ADAEO.	AD-4
1.9	Title of the primary, day-to-day ethics program administrator.	Assistant General Counsel
1.10	Grade level of the primary, day-to-day ethics program administrator.	AD-4
1.11	Current number of full-time ethics officials.	3
1.12	Current number of part-time ethics officials.	56
1.13	Number of reporting levels between the DAEO and the agency head.	2
COMMENTS		
None.		

2.0 LEADERSHIP					
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS			Yes	No	N/A
2.1	OGE has received an up-to-date designation from the agency head naming the DAEO. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.107(a).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.2	OGE has received an up-to-date designation from the agency head naming the ADAEO. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.107(a).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
COMMENTS					
None.					

3.0 PUBLIC FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE (OGE Form 278e, OGE Form 278-T)					
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS			Yes	No	N/A
The agency has written policies and procedures in place governing: <i>See</i> 5 U.S.C. § 13122(d)(1)					
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of public financial disclosure reports. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review/evaluation of public financial disclosure reports. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public availability of public financial disclosure reports. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.4	The agency can demonstrate that late filing fees are collected or, where appropriate, waivers are issued when public filers do not timely file financial disclosure reports. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.704	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.5	Public financial disclosure reports are securely maintained. <i>See</i> OGE/GOVT-1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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3.6	Public financial disclosure reports are retained in accordance with the retention requirements. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.603(g)(1).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.7	There is reasonable assurance that the lead human resources official or designee promptly (no later than 15 days after appointment) notifies the DAEO of all appointments to positions that require incumbents to file public financial disclosure reports. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.105(a)(1).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.8	There is reasonable assurance that the lead human resources official or designee promptly (no later than 15 days after termination) notified the DAEO of terminations of employees in positions that require incumbents to file public financial disclosure reports. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.105(a)(2).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DATA ANALYSIS		%		
3.9	Percentage of sampled non-PAS new entrant reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.201(b).	79%		
3.10	Percentage of sampled non-PAS annual reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.201(a).	84%		
3.11	Percentage of sampled non-PAS termination reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.201(e).	100%		
3.12	Percentage of sampled non-PAS public financial disclosure reports reviewed within 60 days of receipt. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).	26%		
3.13	Percentage of sampled non-PAS public financial disclosure reports certified within 60 days of receipt. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).	26%		
3.14	Percentage of sampled PAS annual reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.201(a).	N/A		
3.15	Percentage of sampled PAS termination reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.201(e).	100%		
3.16	Percentage of sampled PAS annual and termination reports reviewed within 60 days of receipt. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).	0%		
3.17	Percentage of sampled PAS annual and termination reports certified within 60 days of receipt. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).	0%		
COMMENTS				
3.14: There were no annual reports required during the period covered by OGE's review. 3.16, 3.17: There was only one PAS filer at the agency during the review period.				

4.0	CONFIDENTIAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE			
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS		Yes	No	N/A
The agency has written policies and procedures in place governing: <i>See</i> 5 U.S.C. § 13122(d)(1)				
4.1	• Collection of confidential financial disclosure reports.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	• Review/evaluation of confidential financial disclosure reports.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Confidential financial disclosure reports are securely maintained. <i>See</i> OGE/GOVT-2.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4	Confidential financial disclosure reports are retained in accordance with the retention requirements. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.604.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5	The agency's OGE-approved alternative confidential financial disclosure system complies with plans approved by OGE. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.905.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.6	There is reasonable assurance that the lead human resources official or designee promptly (no later than 15 days after appointment) notifies the DAEO of all appointments to positions that require incumbents to file confidential financial disclosure reports. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.105(a)(1).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DATA ANALYSIS		%		
4.7	Percentage of sampled confidential new entrant reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.903(b).	100%		
4.8	Percentage of sampled confidential annual reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.903(a).	88%		

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4.9	Percentage of sampled reports reviewed within 60 days of receipt. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).	41%
4.10	Percentage of sampled confidential financial disclosure reports certified within 60 days of receipt. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. §§ 2634.605(a) and 2634.909(a).	41%
COMMENTS		
None.		

5.0 NOTICES TO PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES						
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS				Yes	No	N/A
Written offers of employment for positions covered by the Standards of Conduct provide: <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.303.						
5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A statement regarding the agency's commitment to government ethics. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice that the individual will be subject to the Standards of Conduct and the criminal conflict of interest statutes as an employee. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact information for an appropriate agency ethics office or an explanation of how to obtain additional information on applicable ethics requirements. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where applicable, notice of the time frame for completing initial ethics training. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where applicable, a statement regarding financial disclosure requirements and an explanation that new entrant reports must be filed within 30 days of appointment. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5.6	The agency has established written procedures for issuing the notice to prospective employees. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.303(c).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5.7	The agency's written procedures are reviewed by the DAEO each year. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.303(c).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5.8	The agency can demonstrate that there is an effective process for ensuring all covered employees receive the required information with their written offer of employment. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.303.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
COMMENTS						
None.						

6.0 NOTICES TO NEW SUPERVISORS						
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS				Yes	No	N/A
The agency must provide each employee upon initial appointment to a supervisory position with: <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.306.						
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact information for the agency's ethics office. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The text of 5 C.F.R. § 2638.103. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of, a hyperlink to, or the address of a Web site containing the Principles of Ethical Conduct. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other information the DAEO deems necessary. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
6.5	The agency has established written procedures for supervisory ethics notices. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.306(d).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6.6	The agency's written procedures are reviewed by the DAEO each year. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.306(d).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6.7	The agency can demonstrate that there is an effective process for ensuring that new supervisors receive the required information within one year of appointment. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.306(b).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
COMMENTS						
None.						

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7.0 INITIAL ETHICS TRAINING				
	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	Yes	No	N/A
	Each new employee of the agency subject to the Standards of Conduct must complete initial ethics training. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304.</i>			
7.1	The training presentation(s) addressed concepts related to conflicts of interest, impartiality, misuse of position and gifts. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(e)(1).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2	The agency provided new employees with either the following written materials or written instruction for accessing them: The summary of the Standards of Conduct distributed by the Office of Government Ethics or an equivalent summary prepared by the agency; provisions of any supplemental agency regulation that the DAEO determines to be relevant or a summary of those provisions; such other written materials as the DAEO determines should be included; instructions for contacting the agency's ethics officials. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(e)(2).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3	The agency has established written procedures for initial ethics training. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(f).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4	The agency's written procedures are reviewed by the DAEO each year. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(f).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	DATA ANALYSIS	%		
7.5	Percentage of new employees who received initial ethics training. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304.</i>	100%		
7.6	Percentage of new employees who received initial ethics training within three months of appointment. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(b).</i>	100%		
	COMMENTS			
	None.			

8.0 ANNUAL ETHICS TRAINING				
	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	Yes	No	N/A
	Each calendar year, public filers, confidential filers, and certain other employees must complete ethics training which meets specified requirements. <i>See 5 C.F.R. §§ 2638.307 and 2638.308.</i>			
8.1	The training presentation(s) addressed concepts related to financial conflicts of interest, impartiality, misuse of position and gifts. <i>See 5 C.F.R. §§ 2638.307(e)(1) and 2638.308(f)(1).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.2	The agency provided employees with either the following written materials or written instruction for accessing them: The summary of the Standards of Conduct distributed by the Office of Government Ethics or an equivalent summary prepared by the agency; provisions of any supplemental agency regulation that the DAEO determines to be relevant or a summary of those provisions; such other written materials as the DAEO determines should be included; instructions for contacting the agency's ethics officials. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(f)(2) and 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(e)(2).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.3	The agency's annual ethics training complies with the formatting requirements for public filers, confidential filers, and certain other employees. <i>See 5 C.F.R. §§ 2638.307(d) and 2638.308(e).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.4	The agency's program for annual ethics training complies with the tracking requirements for public filers, confidential filers, and certain other employees. <i>See 5 C.F.R. §§ 2638.307(f) and 2638.308(g).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.5	The agency can demonstrate it has an effective process for ensuring covered public filers, other than those whose pay is set at Level I or Level II of the Executive Schedule, complete live annual ethics training at least once every two years. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(e)(2).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	DATA ANALYSIS	Training Format		
		Live	Interactive	

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Percentage of public filers who completed annual ethics training before the end of the calendar year. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(a).</i>			
8.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Schedule Level I and Level II. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(e)(1).</i> 	100%	0%
8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other PAS and Equivalent. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(e)(2).</i> 	100%	0%
8.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SES and Equivalent. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(e)(3).</i> 	100%	0%
Percentage of confidential filers and certain other employees who completed annual ethics training before the end of the calendar year. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a).</i>			
8.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees required to file an annual confidential financial disclosure report. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(1).</i> 	10%	90%
8.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees appointed by the President. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(2).</i> 	N/A	N/A
8.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees of the Executive Office of the President. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(2).</i> 	N/A	N/A
8.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracting officers described in 41 U.S.C. § 2101. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(3).</i> 	N/A	N/A
8.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other employees designated by the head of the agency. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(4).</i> 	100%	N/A
COMMENTS			
None.			

9.0 ETHICS ADVICE AND COUNSELING					
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENT			Yes	No	N/A
9.1	Based on a sample collected by OGE, guidance provided by agency ethics officials to employees appears to be consistent with applicable laws and regulations. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.104(c)(4).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
COMMENTS					
None.					

10.0 SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (SGE) SERVING ON ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND BOARDS					
Confidential Financial Disclosure					
10.1	Number of SGEs serving on Advisory Committees and Boards.	22,795			
DATA ANALYSIS			%		
10.2	Percentage of sampled confidential new entrant reports filed timely. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2634.903(b).</i>	100%			
10.3	Percentage of sampled reports reviewed within 60 days of receipt but not later than the SGE's first meeting. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).</i>	80%			
10.4	Percentage of sampled reports certified within 60 days of receipt. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).</i>	80%			
Ethics Training					
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS			Yes	No	N/A
Required ethics training must be provided to each SGE. <i>See 5 C.F.R. §§ 2638.304 and 2638.307.</i>					
10.5	The training presentation(s) addressed concepts related to conflicts of interest, impartiality, misuse of position and gifts. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(e)(1).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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10.6	The agency provided employees with either the following written materials or written instruction for accessing them: The summary of the Standards of Conduct distributed by the Office of Government Ethics or an equivalent summary prepared by the agency; provisions of any supplemental agency regulation that the DAEO determines to be relevant or a summary of those provisions; such other written materials as the DAEO determines should be included; instructions for contacting the agency's ethics officials. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(e)(2).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DATA ANALYSIS		%		
10.7	Percentage of SGEs who received initial ethics training. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304.	100%		
10.8	Percentage of SGEs who received initial ethics training timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(b)(2).	100%		
10.9	Percentage of SGEs who received annual ethics training. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(d)(2).	100%		
COMMENTS				
None.				

RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Element	RECOMMENDATION	Compliance Due
1	3.12, 3.13	<p><u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Ensure that non-PAS public financial disclosure reports are reviewed and certified within 60 days of receipt.</p> <p><u>AGENCY RESPONSE:</u> NSF concurs with this recommendation. During the reporting period, NSF experienced several unusual operational challenges that contributed to extended review times. First, NSF was transitioning from its internal financial disclosure filing system, eFile, to the Integrity platform. Second, government shutdown-related disruptions affected normal agency operations. Third, the agency experienced a period of significant organizational and personnel changes. A substantial portion of ethics resources was devoted to assisting departing employees with ethics counseling, post-employment guidance, financial disclosure obligations, and other separation-related matters. NSF has continued to work through the resulting backlog and has implemented measures to improve timeliness as operations have stabilized and users have become more familiar with the Integrity system.</p> <p>We are pleased to report that NSF has made substantial progress in the timely review and certification of non-PAS public financial disclosure reports. In 2026, we received 272 reports and have already reviewed and certified 189 of them. Of all reports received, only four have exceeded OGE's 60-day review and certification standard. These results demonstrate the effectiveness of the process improvements implemented by the ethics program and our continued commitment to achieving timely compliance with OGE requirements while maintaining a high-quality review process.</p>	8/15/2026
2	3.16, 3.17	<p><u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Ensure that PAS public financial disclosure reports are reviewed and certified within 60 days of receipt.</p> <p><u>AGENCY RESPONSE:</u> NSF concurs with this recommendation. The delay identified in this instance resulted from a unique combination of circumstances and does not reflect NSF's normal review practices. After the report was submitted, NSF ethics officials conducted an initial review and identified areas requiring additional information. Due to an administrative oversight, NSF did not adequately document that the initial review had been completed. Nevertheless, contemporaneous email correspondence between NSF and the filer demonstrates that NSF reviewed the report and requested supplemental information necessary to complete the filing. Shortly thereafter, a lapse in appropriations occurred.</p>	8/15/2026

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		NSF believes these circumstances were exceptional and unlikely to recur. The agency has now fully transitioned to the Integrity system, has gained additional experience with its administration, and has reinforced internal tracking procedures to ensure that review activity is properly documented. NSF remains committed to timely review and certification of all public financial disclosure reports and does not anticipate similar delays in the future.	
3	4.9, 4.10	<p>RECOMMENDATION: Ensure that confidential financial disclosure reports are reviewed and certified within 60 days of receipt.</p> <p>AGENCY RESPONSE:</p> <p>NSF concurs with this recommendation. During the reporting period, NSF experienced several unusual operational challenges that contributed to extended review times. As noted above, a substantial portion of ethics resources was devoted to assisting departing employees with ethics counseling, post-employment guidance, financial disclosure obligations, and other separation-related matters; government shutdown-related disruptions affected normal agency operations; and the agency experienced a period of significant organizational and personnel changes. Taken together, these circumstances created temporary capacity constraints that contributed to review times exceeding 60 days. NSF has continued to work through the resulting backlog and has implemented measures to improve timeliness as operations have stabilized. Indeed, we are pleased to report the continued success of NSF's confidential financial disclosure program. In 2026, NSF received 515 Confidential Financial Disclosure Reports (OGE Form 450), and 513 have already been reviewed and certified. Approximately 98.4% of reports were reviewed within 60 days of receipt (507 of 515), and 97.9% were certified within the 60-day standard (504 of 515). These results reflect the effectiveness of the program's processes, careful workload management, and sustained commitment to timely compliance with federal ethics requirements.</p>	8/15/2026
4	6.3	<p>RECOMMENDATION: Provide each employee upon initial appointment to a supervisory position with the Principles of Ethical Conduct.</p> <p>AGENCY RESPONSE:</p> <p>NSF concurs with this recommendation. While all newly hired employees, supervisors and non-supervisors alike, receive the Principles of Ethical Conduct as a new employee, NSF recognizes that it did not consistently provide this information upon their initial appointment to supervisory positions. NSF is currently working with human resources staff to revise NSF's supervisory appointment letters to include a hyperlink (and URL) to the Principles of Ethical Conduct. NSF expects this corrective action to be implemented promptly and believes it will fully address the recommendation by ensuring that all newly appointed supervisors are provided the Principles of Ethical Conduct upon appointment, regardless of whether they are a new hire.</p>	12/31/2026

GENERAL AGENCY COMMENTS