



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-17-0025-O

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We investigated allegations that a company and its owner made false representations about the identity of the Principal Investigator (PI) in an NSF Small Business Innovation Research grant proposal and in subsequent communications with NSF after the SBIR grant was made.

Our investigation determined that without the PI's knowledge or consent, the company owner created an email address on behalf of the PI, communicated as if she were the PI, drafted and submitted the proposal as if the PI were the authorized organizational representative of the company, made false representations about the PI's ownership stake in the company, and signed a funding agreement in his name when the award was made.

Our investigation also determined that during the award, the company owner submitted a request to NSF to change the PI, and communicated with the Program Officer, copying an email address that purported to be that of a new PI. The company owner admitted to creating that email account. The individual identified as the new PI did not have access to the email address and had no knowledge of this use of her name.

The case was referred to the Department of Justice, which declined the case for prosecution due to the low amount of monetary loss to the government.

We sent a Recommendation to Withhold Final Payment on the award and a Recommendation for Government-wide Debarment to NSF. NSF agreed with both our recommendations, cancelling the final payment and issuing a notice of debarment to the subject and the subject company.

This case is closed with no further action taken.