CLOSEOUT FOR CASE M-00090035

The complainant[1] alleged that the subject's[2] proposal[3] to the NSF Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program significantly overlapped with a proposal that the subject submitted to another agency.[4] The subject submitted the NSF proposal 2 months after the submission of the proposal to the other agency, and, under the section "Equivalent or Overlapping Proposals to other Federal Agencies," stated that his organization had no similar proposals outstanding or awards pending.

We interviewed the subject, who asserted that the two proposals were significantly different, specifically in the different experiments. He said that the experiments in the NSF proposal were more difficult and might not work as expected. However, the subject admitted that the NSF proposal did not address the details associated with these differences.

We asked an NSF program officer,[5] an expert in the field, to compare the NSF proposal, the other agency funded proposal, the interim progress report for the other agency award, and the subject's interview statement. The program officer concluded that the two proposals were "very similar in organization, content, and task descriptions. Tables, figures, and narrative are exactly the same" with the exception of three listed areas. The program officer said that the differences in the NSF proposal were consistent with the subject's explanation, and that if the subject had included the more complete description in the NSF proposal that he described in his statement, it would have shown the differences between the two proposals.

We concluded that the subject was careless in the preparation of the NSF proposal, both in failing to disclose the existence of the similar proposal to the other agency and in failing to adequately describe the proposed research. However, the subject's conduct does not warrant further action by NSF.

This case is closed.

cc: Investigation, IG.

[redacted], a reviewer of this proposal, was a [redacted]

[redacted] President of [redacted]

NSF proposal [redacted] entitled [redacted] was submitted and signed by the subject as the sole PI on [redacted]

[redacted] proposal entitled [redacted] was submitted around [redacted]

[redacted] is a program office in [redacted]