

Closeout for Case Number M99090049

This inquiry was conducted as result of two complaints filed with consumer protection organizations. The complaints allege that individuals working for the contractor performing the survey were intrusive in the manner in which calls to non-responsive survey recipients were made. We worked with the NSF division responsible for the management of this survey to answer the complaints by letter and began an inquiry into their cause.

We posed a series of questions regarding how complaints are handled in a memo to the program office. The questions relate to the complaint rate during this survey cycle and comparison to similar NSF surveys. We also asked for information about how the contractor and NSF staff respond in these situations.

The program office response to our memo indicates that the number of complaints in this survey cycle is very small compared to other surveys. The methods used by NSF and contractor personnel to handle complaints appear reasonable and appropriate. Program officials advised us that they changed a procedure to ensure that the NSF contact's name and phone number would be given to survey recipients who want to complain. This step in the procedure allows complainants to contact NSF prior to contacting a consumer organization.

This inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken on this case.

cc: Integrity, IG