

# Supporting a Safe and Respectful Workplace at Institutions that Receive NIH Funding

Patricia Valdez, PhD

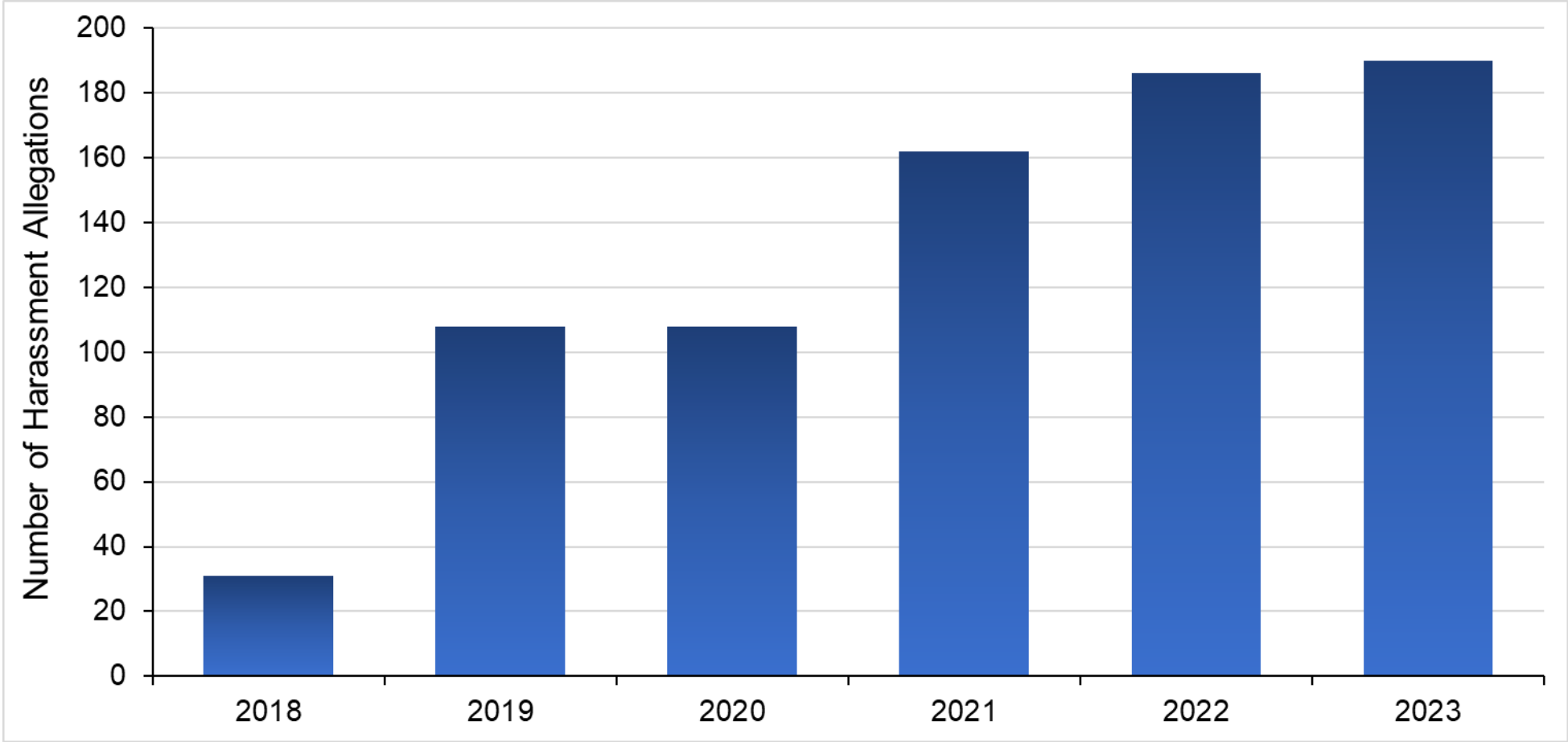
Chief Extramural Research Integrity Officer  
National Institutes of Health

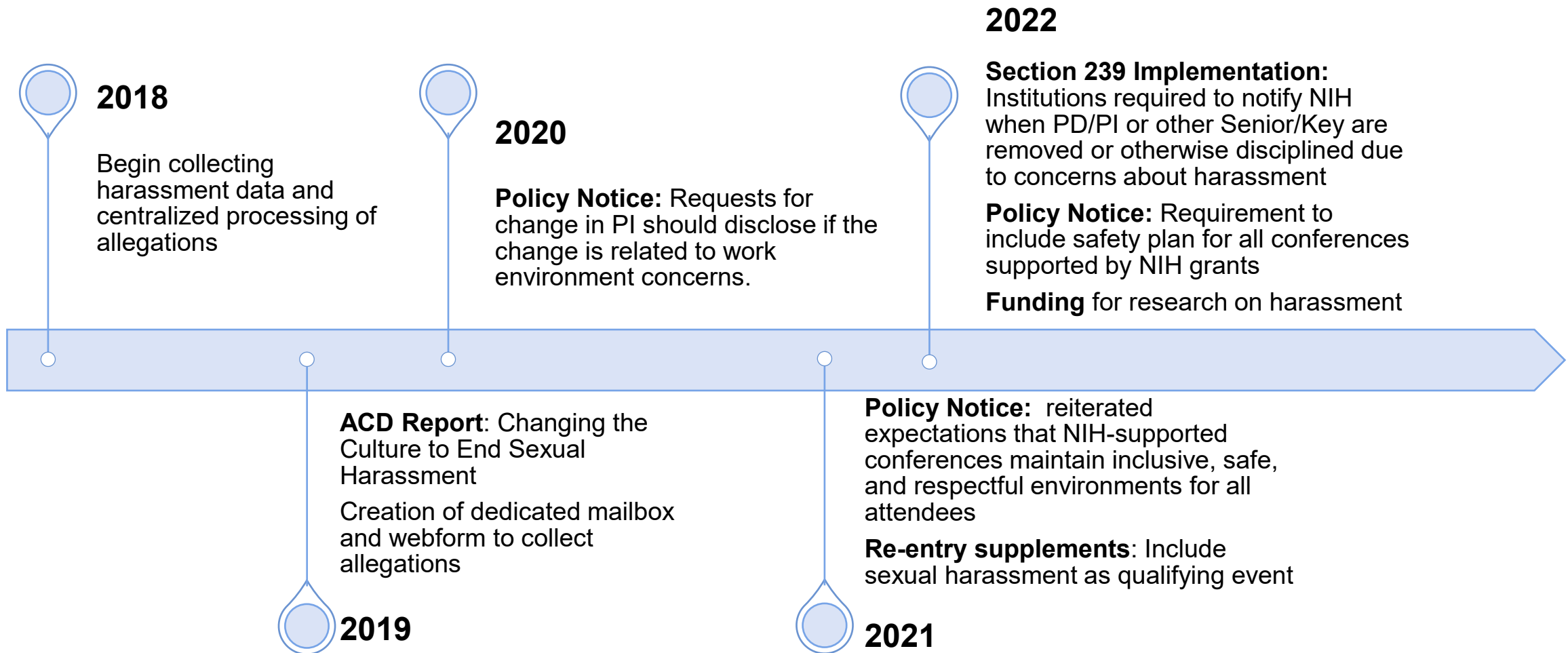
Health Research Alliance  
Convening on Bullying And Harassment  
February 26, 2024

Disclosures: None



# Number of Harassment Notifications/Allegations

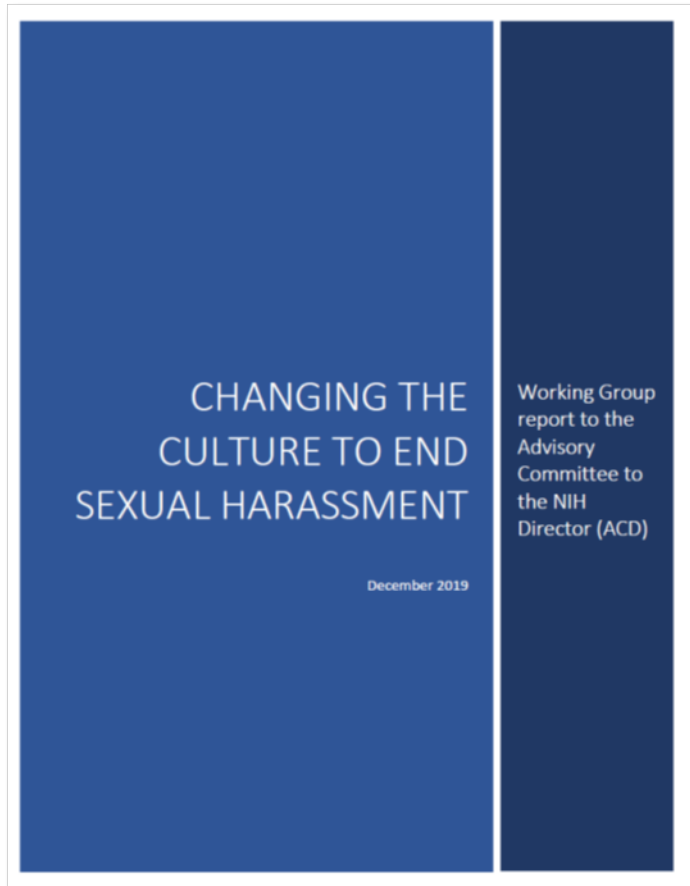




# Changing the Culture to End Sexual Harassment

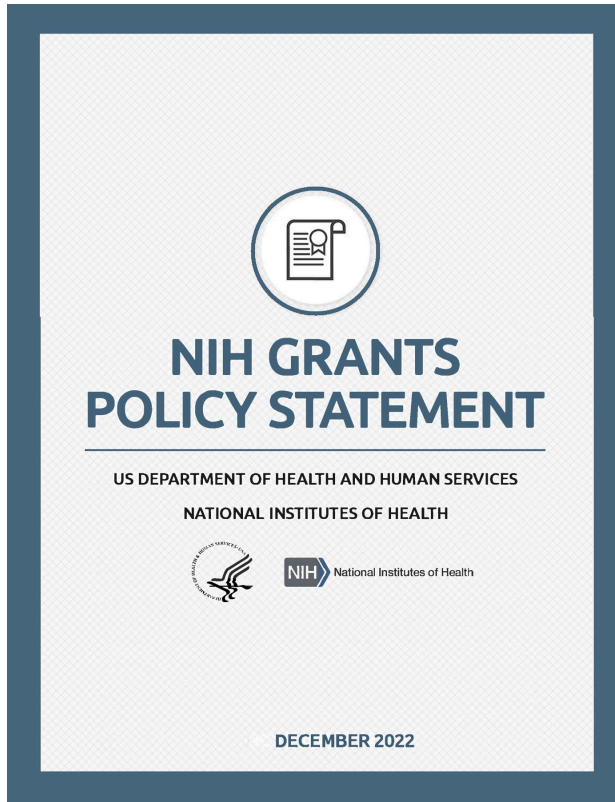
## Overarching Themes

1. Transparency and Accountability in Reporting of Professional Misconduct, especially Sexual Harassment
2. Mechanisms for Restorative Justice
3. Safe, Diverse, and Inclusive Environments
4. System-wide Change



Source: [https://acd.od.nih.gov/documents/presentations/12122019ChangingCulture\\_Report.pdf](https://acd.od.nih.gov/documents/presentations/12122019ChangingCulture_Report.pdf)



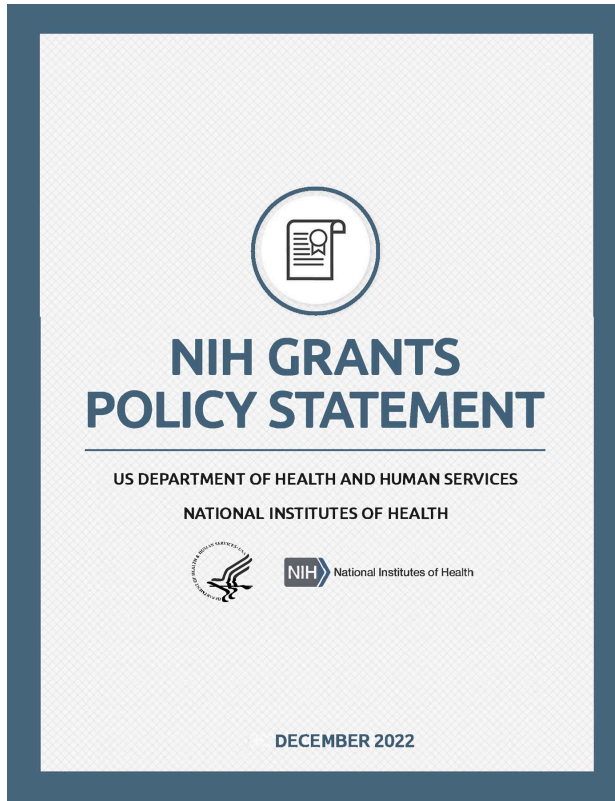


- “NIH recipients are expected to provide safe and healthful working conditions for their employees ...”
- “Civil Rights ... Assurance of Compliance ...”
- “Recipient organizations are expected to establish **codes of conduct** ... expectations of integrity and ethical values ... work environments are free of discriminatory harassment and are safe and conducive to high-quality work”

## NIH GPS 8.1.2.6 Change in Status, Including Absence of PD/PI and Other Senior/Key Personnel Named in the NoA

- Recipient institutions **required** to notify NIH when individuals identified as PD/PI or other Senior/Key personnel in an NIH notice of award are removed from their position or are otherwise disciplined by the recipient institution due to concerns about harassment, bullying, retaliation or hostile working conditions
- Authorized Organization Representative must provide notification within 30 days through a dedicated web form.

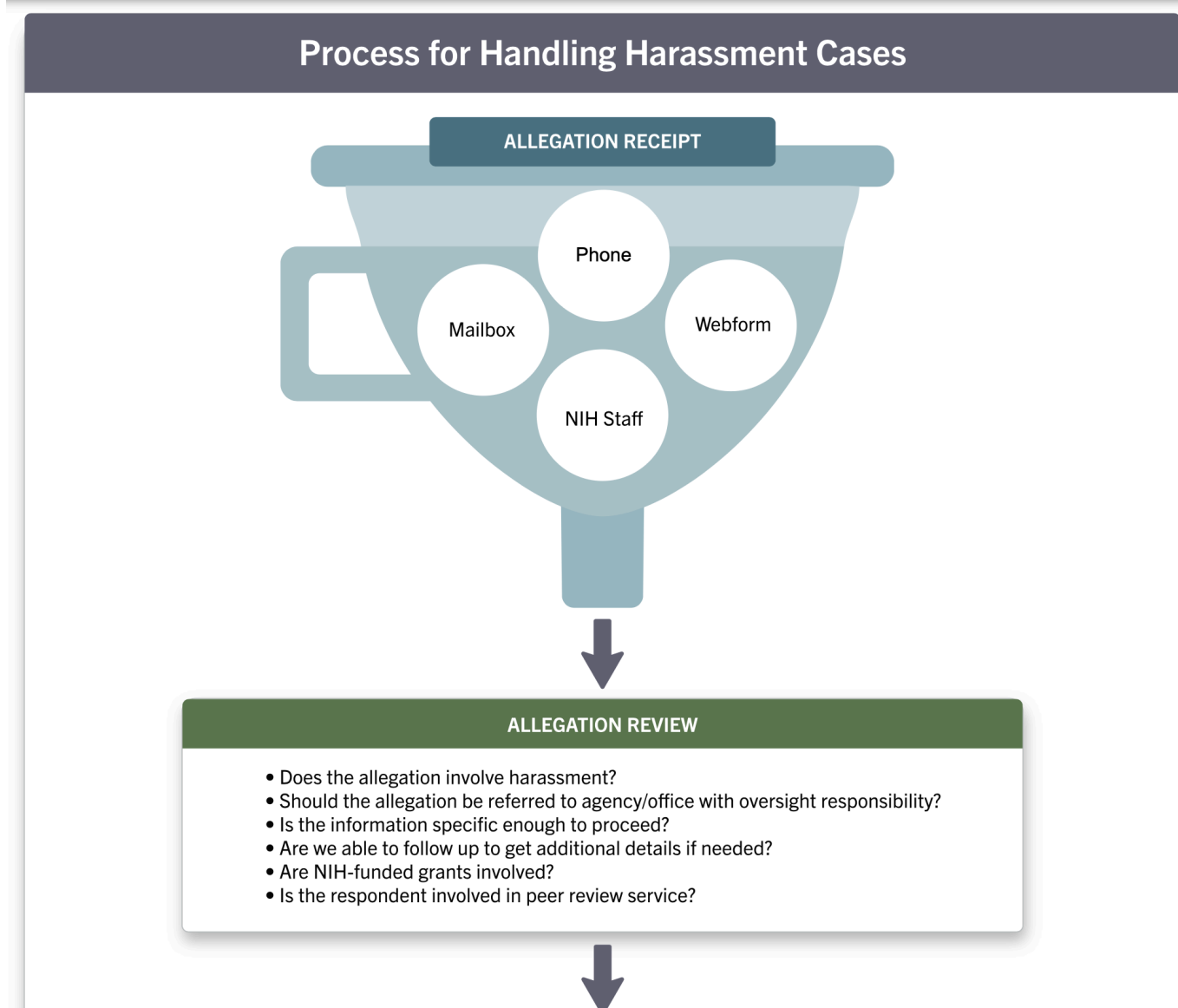
Announced to community on May 10, 2022



# Standard Process for Handling Notifications/Allegations

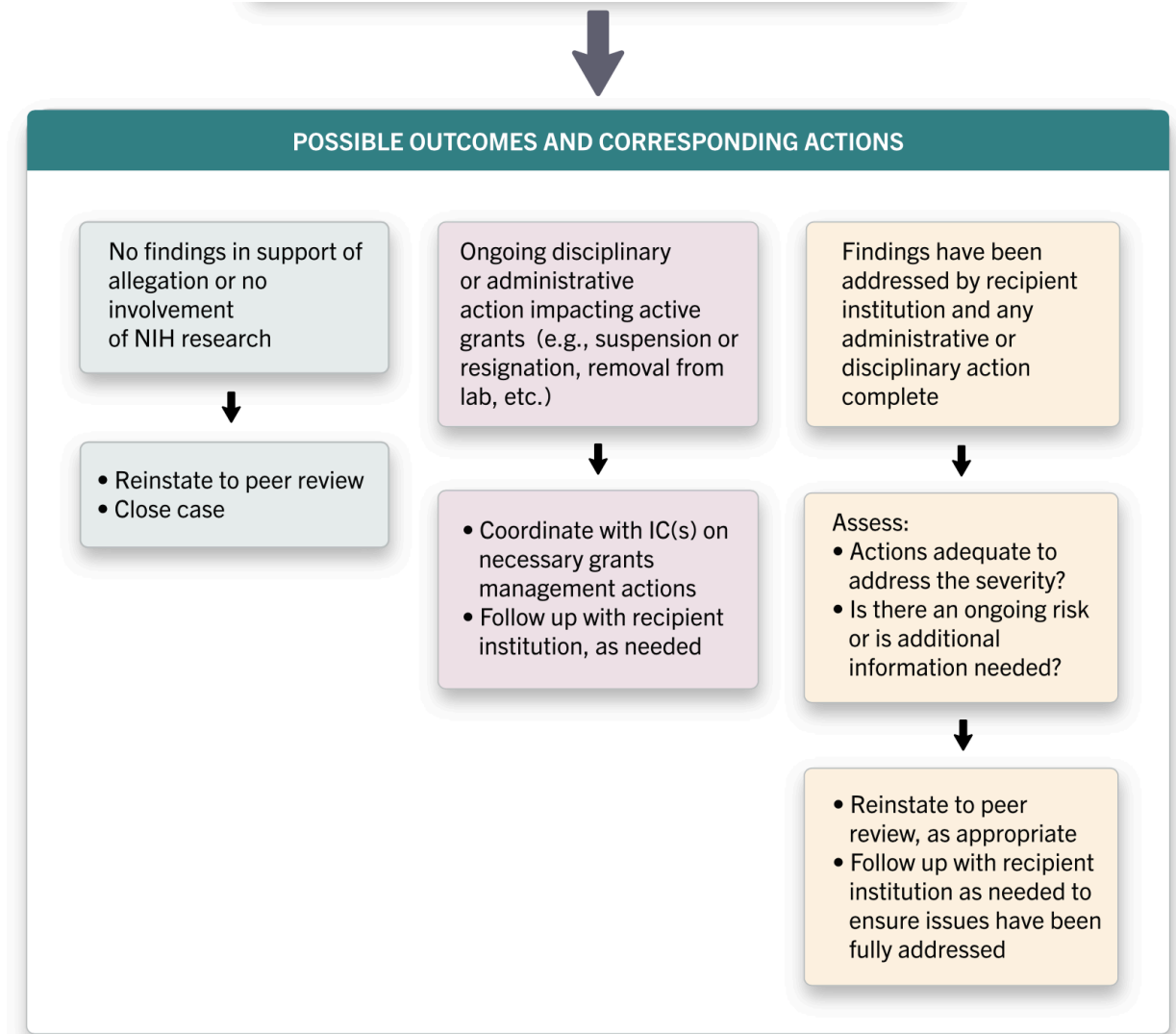
## Notification/Allegation review:

- Additional information
- Contact complainant
- Review grant documents
- Open source (e.g., media)
- Peer review status
- Other agency/office?
- Contact institution (VPR)



# Possible Outcomes

- Institutional discipline
- Grant actions
- Institutional safeguards
- Monitoring (including NIH)
- Removal from peer review
- Informative referrals to OCR/OIG
- Referrals for Suspension, Debarment





# Findings & Outcomes Since January 2018 to December 2023

Finding / Outcome	Sexual Harassment / Gender Discrimination	Other
Total N (%)	352 (45.7)	419 (54.3)
Formal Investigation	239 (67.9)	200 (47.7)
Allegation Substantiated	118 (33.5)	87 (20.8)
PI Removed	84 (23.9)	56 (13.4)
Institutional Safeguards	90 (25.6)	117 (27.9)
Other Grant Actions	37 (10.5)	25 (6.0)
Left Institution	91 (25.9)	42 (10.0)
Removed from Peer Review	192 (54.5)	142 (33.9)

[Data - Harassment and Discrimination Concerns | grants.nih.gov](https://grants.nih.gov)



- Appropriate institutional responses
- Lengthy, complicated institutional investigations
- Dropped / incomplete investigations
- Non-disclosure agreements
- Allegations: Non-specific or not linked to NIH-funded activities
- Individuals are not NIH employees
- Cases that reflect employer-employee disputes
- Heavy case load

- Re-integration Supplements provides opportunity for pre/postdoc students experiencing unsafe or discriminatory environments to transition to safer, more supportive research environments and continue their graduate careers. Unsafe environments may consist of threatening behavior such as:
  - sexual and gender harassment;
  - harassment based on being a member of a racial, ethnic, sexual, or gender minority group;
  - disability-based aggression;
  - aggressions associated with religion; and
  - other similar circumstances.

Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Research Supplements to Promote Re-Entry, Re-integration into, and Re-training in Health-Related Research Careers (Admin Supp - Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

Notice Number:

NOT-OD-23-170



## Funded Research on Harassment and Hostile Work Environments

- R01GM147061: Improving Mentorship Practice through Attributions and Conflict Training (University of Georgia)
- R01GM147063: Sexual Harassment Training of Principal Investigators (Stanford University)
- R01GM147151: Indiana Creating Accountability and Building Relationships to Eradicate Sex Harassment (Indiana University – Purdue University)
- R35GM127043: Breaking the Prejudice Habit: An Evidence-Based Campus-Wide Intervention Effort (University of Wisconsin-Madison)



## Many thanks to:

- Elyse Sullivan
- Michael Lauer
- Liza Bundesen
- Michelle Bulls
- Paula Goodwin
- Hiromi Ono
- And others

### POLICY & COMPLIANCE

Policy Topics

**Supporting a Safe and Respectful Workplace**


[NIH Expectations, Policies, and Requirements](#)

NIH Actions and Oversight

Find Help

Definitions

Data

Resources to Evaluate Workplace Climate 

FAQs

Related Statements

Policy and Resources for

## Supporting a Safe and Respectful Workplace at Institutions that Receive NIH Funding

NIH supports safe and respectful work environments that are free from harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination, or other forms of inappropriate conduct that can result in a hostile work environment. Learn who to contact with questions or concerns, and what NIH's expectations are for institutions and the individuals supported on NIH-funded awards.

### NIH's Commitment

NIH does not tolerate harassment or discrimination of any kind anywhere NIH-funded activities are conducted.

***“At the most fundamental level, our mission is about the respect of human life, which should permeate all aspects of our lives and work. NIH is committed to ensuring a safe and respectful work environment at NIH and the institutions we fund, and will take action if a hostile work environment is affecting NIH-funded research.”*** - NIH Director

