

Supporting Statement – Part A

**Request for Approval of an Information Collection for Office of Polar Programs (OPP)
United States Antarctic Program (USAP) Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention and
Response (SAHPR) Data Collection Plan**

OMB No. 3145-0260

A. JUSTIFICATION

Project: National Science Foundation, Office of Polar Programs, US Antarctic Program (USAP) Sexual Assault/Harassment Prevention and Response (SAHPR) Program, Sexual Assault and Harassment Climate Survey (SAHCS)

This reinstatement request is for approval for information collection of an annual sexual assault and harassment climate on-line survey. This justification focuses on the initial survey to be administered May - June 2023 with the intent to conduct the SAHCS every February-March thereafter.

NSF, through an Interagency Agreement with the Department of Interior, has contracted with Leading and Dynamic Services and Solutions (LDSS) to manage the project. Subject matter experts (SMEs) in sexual assault and harassment climate surveys were subcontracted from Soteria Solutions¹ to fulfill the objectives of the SAHCS. The experts from Soteria Solutions will lead the collection of information in this request and will be referred to as SMEs throughout this document.

The SAHCS will identify and study the perceptions and perspectives of USAP participants located in Antarctica. The survey addresses attitudes and concerns that will help NSF work with program participants and participating organizations to instill positive changes. NSF is committed to a workplace and community that fosters a climate free from sexual assault and harassment. NSF has recently created a Sexual Assault/Harassment Prevention and Response (SAHPR) program which requires reinstatement of this information collection. Disseminating a climate survey ensures accurate baseline data that will allow NSF to monitor SAHPR program progress, course correct efforts, and objectively demonstrate successes.

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

A.1. Data Collection Purpose

The purpose of this collection is to gather data to measure the incidence and prevalence of sexual assault and harassment (SAH) victimization, extent to which USAP community members witness, as bystanders, SAH incidents, community members' perceptions of SAH, and

¹ <https://www.soteriasolutions.org/>

effectiveness of SAHPR efforts. The USAP SAHPR Program Final Report² recommended implementation of the SAHCS to establish and expand upon the understanding of SAH within USAP. NSF is requesting approval for this collection to adhere to the Final Report recommendations. In addition, data gathered from the climate survey will be used to inform other Final Report recommendations, including SAH policies, response and prevention. This request honors our commitment to provide a safe and equitable workplace.

The goal of the climate survey is to generate solution-oriented data which will provide a comprehensive picture of the health and challenges of the USAP workplace and community in which problem behaviors arise and to identify the healthy characteristics and elements of the overall USAP environment which can be enhanced or changed to address these problems.

This baseline data will allow NSF to monitor progress, course correct efforts, and objectively demonstrate successes of SAHPR. The information collected will explore the current experiences of all USAP participants. USAP participants are defined as “all persons working or visiting at a USAP or an NSF managed station, field camp, other facility, ship, or aircraft. This includes, but is not limited to, researchers, students, contractors, federal civilian and military personnel.” USAP participants will also be referred to as community members on the ice in this request.

SAHCS Focus Areas

We will use the following definitions of sexual assault, sexual harassment and stalking:

Sexual assault includes, but is not limited to, any intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of physical force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority, or where consent is not given or cannot be given.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal (i.e. sexist comments) or physical conduct of a sexual nature, that is made a condition of securing, maintaining, or otherwise affects employment, interferes with work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Stalking includes but is not limited to a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other repeated course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

Together, these behaviors will be referred to as sexual assault and sexual harassment throughout the USAPP SAHCS.

The SAHCS will have five major content areas that will provide important data on the incidence and prevalence of SAH victimization and bystander experiences, community members’ perceptions of SAH, and effectiveness of SAHPR efforts:

² <https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/documents/USAP%20SAHPR%20Report.pdf>

- **Demographics** - identities that community members claim, including, but not limited to gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, level of education, job category/classification, number of USAP deployments and salary;
- **General experiences at USAP** - community members' satisfaction with their overall USAP work experience, the extent to which they feel valued, that their workload is manageable, and their skills are appropriately utilized;
- **Perceptions of SAH** - extent to which community members perceive SAH as a problem, their role, confidence and willingness to prevent SAH, knowledge of USAP resources and policies, and community norms related to SAH;
- **SAH bystander experiences** - frequency that community members witnessed (the behavior was directed at another USAP community member, and they observed this behavior before, during or after it occurred) SAH within the past five years; and
- **SAH victimization experiences**- frequency in which community members experienced (where they were targeted) SAH within the past five years.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

This information requested in this reinstatement will allow NSF to monitor progress, course correct efforts, and objectively demonstrate successes of SAHPR elements including SAH policies, response and prevention. If requested, NSF will share the findings from the SAHCS with other Federal agencies and Congress. NSF used the data collected, from a survey and focus groups, in the original request to inform the final report and implementation plan for the USAP Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention and Response Program.

There is one type of information collection planned for this request:

- 1. Online Survey.** The survey will collect information about a spectrum of SAH behaviors, ranging from unhealthy to healthy across the different USAP workplaces and off-work hours environments; examine the extent to which identity groups and categories of participants (i.e., contractor, researcher/grantee, NSF employee, etc.) may disproportionately experience SAH; identify problem and risk-areas within the USAP community; determine the role of colleagues, supervisors and senior leaders in terms of inhibiting or disinhibiting SAH; and generate information that can be incorporated into SAH prevention and response activities designed to reduce and address problematic behaviors and practices.

The survey will be conducted via Qualtrics and will not collect any personally identifiable information. The questions were developed by SMEs who have extensive experience conducting sexual assault and harassment climate assessments and surveys.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of

collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The SAHCS will be administered via the web and is expected to take 25-30 minutes to complete. On-line data collection offers the most efficient means of reaching community members. In addition, programmed skip logic will allow for respondents to only answer questions relevant to them and their experiences. The survey will allow respondents to break off and resume completing the survey, as needed, and to complete the survey at their convenience. While internet access can at times be limited at the three primary research stations, USAP can prioritize internet traffic to the survey. The survey will also have minimal images/graphics, and this will help to increase the speed that the survey site will load for community members as they navigate through the survey.

Using contact information that NSF and USAP contractors have on file for community members who are/were on ice, they will be emailed a survey link to access the secure web survey. Because participants are physically present in Antarctica for varying amounts of time, we will collect data over a two-month period, May through June 2023. Participants will be invited to participate in the SAHCS through multiple strategies, including an e-mail invitation from NSF/ USAP leadership, fliers posted in public places (dining facility, residences, work sites, etc.) at the three primary research stations, and word of mouth.

We anticipate that the survey will take between 25-30 minutes to complete. Participation in the survey will be voluntary and participants will be able to stop responding at any time. Contractors, US Military personnel, and NSF employees will be able to complete the survey during paid work time and grantees will be encouraged to complete the survey as part of their grant activities.

Participants will be clearly instructed that sharing their experiences of sexual assault and/or sexual harassment victimization or being a witness does not constitute a formal report to USAP. They will be instructed where they can make a formal report and access confidential support and resources.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

Duplication is not an issue with this information collection request (ICR).

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

Burden on small businesses or entities is not an issue with this ICR.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Any delays in this approval could significantly impact NSF's commitment to the research and support community to provide a safe and equitable workplace.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

There are no special circumstances with this ICR.

8. Provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments.

The Federal Register notice was published on August 29, 2022, at 87 FR 52813, and no comments were received.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and record-keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

NSF's Office of Polar Programs has consulted with the contracted SMEs who will conduct the SAHCS, to determine respondents and estimated burden times.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents.

Not applicable.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The SAHCS information collections contain assurances of confidentiality:

Online Survey: The online survey will have an introductory page that provides information about the SAHCS and the SAHPR Program. It will include the following information about confidentiality:

Your privacy is important to us. We are protecting and maintaining your confidentiality in the following ways:

- 1. Soteria Solutions is administering the survey AND housing the data.*
- 2. We are not asking for you name.*
- 3. We are not collecting your IP address.*
- 4. Responses are confidential.*

5. *Your participation in the survey is voluntary and you may stop or exit at any time.*
6. *All data will be aggregated when reported out and no data with a cell size less than 10 will be reported*

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

The topics, sexual assault and sexual harassment, of this survey are sensitive issues. While the purpose of data collection is to create a baseline understanding of the incidence and prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment, the SMEs creating the SAHCS will use trauma informed methodologies that are grounded in the best practices in conducting climate surveys in higher education and outlined by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. These practices include using reliable and validated survey instruments that are implemented using research-based survey practices, such as limiting the timeframe that measures individuals' experiences to their most recent USAP deployment(s), including inclusive demographic variables to ensure that the survey captures the unique experiences across a range of identities so that solutions can be tailored to meet a diversity of needs, and separating questions that ask participants to disclose sexual assault and harassment questions from mental, physical, professional and educational outcomes. Because the USAP operations vary in terms of location, mission and personnel, the SMEs will ensure that the SAHCS aligns with the unique experiences of the community members.

Demographic questions are included in the survey to determine if perceptions of the issues, understanding of response and prevention activities, and bystander experiences differ by demographic identity. This includes a question about each of the following: gender, race, sexual orientation, age, income, and education-level. Bystander behaviors, likelihood of reporting, and other perceptions of prevention and response activities can be impacted by a person's identity. It will be important to SMEs and program developers to understand these differences to ensure prevention and response practices are inclusive and relevant across a diversity of identities.

Extensive research on health-risk behaviors as well as sexual assault and sexual harassment in particular has demonstrated that individuals often have inaccurate perceptions of the attitudes and behaviors of others in their immediate environment, as well as for the larger groups that they belong to (for comprehensive literature reviews see Berkowitz, 2010 and Berkowitz et al, 2022). With respect to sexual assault and sexual harassment, two important patterns of misperception have been identified in the research. First, bystanders typically underestimate others': 1) concern when hearing problematic language and observing negative behaviors, 2) respect for someone who intervenes, and 3) willingness to take action. Second, research has also established that offenders typically overestimate others' support for their negative language and behaviors which serves as an encouragement or permission to engage in them.

Interventions to correct these misperceptions have confirmed that when bystanders know that others' share their concerns, they are more likely to intervene. With respect to offenders, the research has also established that when offenders learn that others are uncomfortable with their language and behaviors, they are less likely to engage in them. With regards to leaders, research

has that they are often subject to the same misperceptions as their staff, and that when leaders spread or reinforce these misperceptions they unintentionally enable the problem. Correcting misperceptions is therefore a science-based best practice strategy to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment that is supported by extensive research as well as funding from multiple federal agencies.

In conclusion, in order to meet the requirement of the SAHCS data collection plan to “identify and study the perceptions and perspectives of USAP participants located in Antarctica”, best practice requires that the survey includes questions that can be used to measure if these ‘perceptions’ are accurate, and in turn, to collect the necessary data to correct any misperceptions that are identified. As noted above, correcting misperceptions is a science-based best practice strategy that will serve to meet the prevention goals for SAHCS. Misperceptions that are documented by means of the survey can be corrected through media campaigns and in workshops as well as by having leadership disseminate accurate information about the norms and behaviors of their staff. This will meet the requirement that “data gathered from the climate survey will be used to inform other Final Report recommendations, including SAH policies, response and prevention.”

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

The burden estimates are outlined in Table A.12. below.

Table A.12. Estimates of Hour Burden of Collection of Information

Information Collection Type	Number of Respondents	Burden Estimate	Total
Survey	1,800	30 minutes	900 hours

The survey will be sent to USAP participants who are deployed during the 2022-23, 2021-2022, 2020-2021, and 2019-2020. This amounts to approximately 6,000 participants. The estimated burden assumes a 30% response rate.

SAHCS respondents will be from a wide range of positions throughout the USAP program. Positions could range from retail and food service positions to tenured faculty at institutions of higher education. The information collection is voluntary and there is no current way to accurately predict which employees will respond to the survey. Given the wide range of potential hourly waged positions, the annual cost burden to respondents was calculated using the September 2022 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics median private industry hourly wage of \$32.46

(<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t19.htm>). The estimated cost to respondents for hourly burden is \$29,214.00.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection of information.

The information collection activities do not place any additional costs on respondents or record keepers.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government; provide a description of the method used to estimate cost which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses, and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

Through an Inter-Agency Agreement with the Department of Interior, NSF has contracted with Leading and Dynamic Services and Solutions (LDSS) to manage the project. Subject matter experts (SMEs) in sexual assault and harassment prevention and response were subcontracted from Soteria Solutions, to fulfill the objectives of the SAHCS.

The cost to perform this data collection for the SAHCS is \$177,089 per year.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments (reasons for changes in burden).

There are no changes in burden, as this is a reinstatement.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

Once data collection ends in June 2023, we will draw on best practices of data analysis, beginning with “cleaning” the data and basic statistical analysis using SPSS 27 to determine the extent of missing data, representativeness of the sample, and reliability of the survey’s scales. Descriptive statistics, including frequency tables of all variables and cross tabulation tables to examine different experiences within demographic groups will help to determine if some groups disproportionately experience sexual assault and sexual harassment, including incidence, prevalence and bystander rates among identity groups, community members’ perceptions, and effectiveness of SAHPR efforts. Based on the data analysis, we will prepare a preliminary report to share with USAP and NSF administrators.

After receiving feedback on the preliminary report, the SMEs will create a final report, including executive summary, recommendations, and implications for SAH prevention and response. Following best practices related to transparency and sharing climate survey data, we will also prepare summary reports to be shared with participants and the general USAP community. Final

steps will include publicizing the findings, outcomes, and recommendations for improvement to promote transparency and accountability within the USAP community.

SAHCS Task	Description	Timeline
Data Collection		May – June 2023
	Administer online survey to individuals associated with USAP within the past four years	May – June 2023
Data Analysis		–July - August 2023
	Clean data set and analyze data	July 2023
	Prepare a preliminary report to share with USAP and NSF administrators	August 2023
Develop Final Report and Share Findings		August 2023
	Create final report, including executive summary, recommendations and implications for SAH prevention and response	August 2023
	Publicize findings, outcomes, and recommendations for improvement to promote transparency and accountability within the USAP community	August 2023
	Provide support to NSF and the Collaborative Action Team (CAT) regarding the SAHCS findings and implications for the USAP community	August 2023

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

There is no request for approval of non-display of the expiration date.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions” of OMB Form 83-I.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.