



FY 2024

SI Civil Program

Annual Report on Harassment and
Workplace Culture at the Smithsonian
Institution

Prepared by:
SI Civil Branch
Office of Human Resources
Smithsonian Institution

December 2024



Introduction

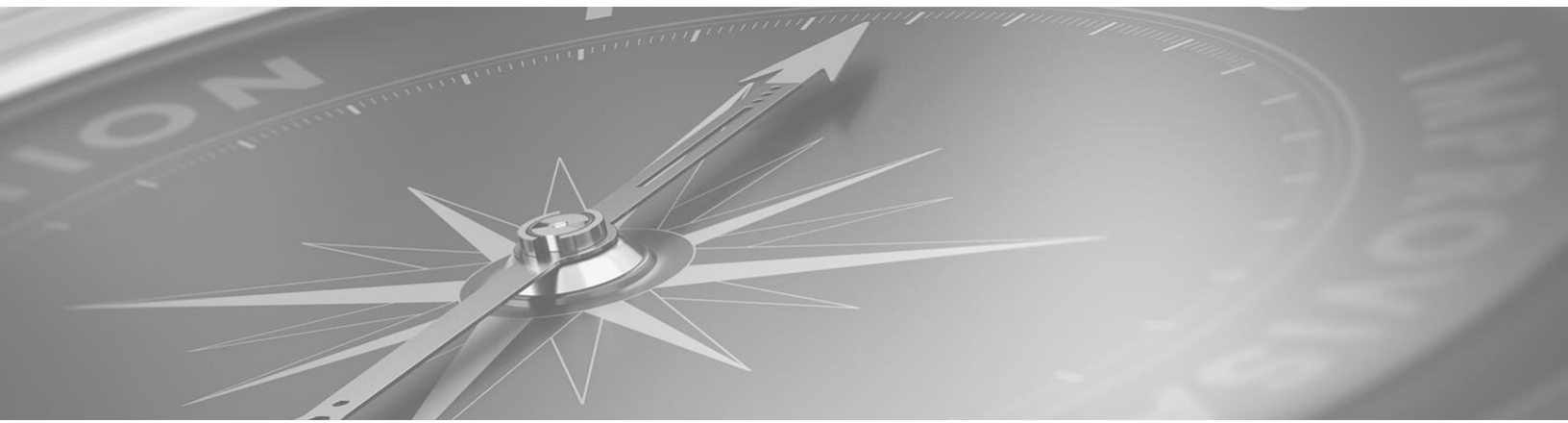
Where we are

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) is committed to fostering a work culture that is free from harassment and workplace violence. This report highlights SI's efforts over the past year to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment, workplace violence, and other concerning behaviors.

In FY 2024, the Smithsonian continued to improve SI Civil, the anti-harassment and workplace violence prevention program in the Office of Human Resources. This year SI Civil focused on outreach and prevention initiatives, communication enhancements, and case resolution efficiency.

The SI Civil Team continues to focus on approaching individuals and cases with empathy, honesty, and integrity. These core values echo the Smithsonian's overall commitment to ensuring individuals feel respected and welcomed in the workplace. Fostering this culture of respect is an essential component of SI's harassment-prevention strategy.

The information and data contained in this report focus on reports compiled by SI Civil for FY 2024. It does not include data related to EEO complaints, which is administered by the Office of Equal Employment and Supplier Diversity (OEESD).





Executive Summary

SI Civil Program

- The SI Civil Program, created in 2021, is a resource for all employees and affiliated staff to report incidents of harassing conduct, workplace violence, or retaliatory behaviors impacting the workplace.
- In FY 2024, the Smithsonian continued to promote SI's commitment to maintaining a harassment-free, welcoming, and respectful work environment at all levels.
- The SI Civil team:
 - Coordinated intake, investigation, and resolution for all cases reported to SI Civil covering matters defined in SD 217 and SD 225.
 - Refined processes and procedures for conducting investigations, communicating with reporting individuals, and ensuring unit directors and senior leaders are notified of serious cases in a timely manner.
 - Held three training sessions for the full Workplace Violence Prevention Response Team.
 - Conducted 15 sessions of the mandatory SI Civil Supervisory Workshop: *Creating a Culture of Respect at the Smithsonian*.
 - Launched a new mandatory training: *Fostering a Culture of Respect: SI Civil Training for Employees and Affiliated Staff*.

FY 2024 Case Data

- SI Civil received **147 reports** of concerning incidents or behaviors at Smithsonian (including harassing conduct, retaliation, threats, intimidation, physical violence, and other categories).
- In **85%** of cases, we found no specific violation of SI policy. Only **15%** of cases resulted in some form of discipline (including reprimand, suspension, demotion, or removal). Specific data related to case outcomes are shared on page 12.



SI Civil Program Overview

SI Civil Program Goals

The SI Civil Program was implemented in January 2021. Its mission is to empower individuals to communicate workplace concerns and facilitate the resolutions of those concerns as quickly as possible. SI Civil's goals are simple:

- **prevent** potentially violent situations from occurring in the workplace;
- **address** harassing behavior before it becomes severe or pervasive;
- promptly and objectively **investigate** incidents, when necessary; and
- take immediate and appropriate **corrective action** when policy violations occur.

SI Civil Policies

- **Anti-Harassment Policy** (Smithsonian Directive 225, effective December 30, 2020)
 - The goal of SD 225 is to address harassing conduct at the earliest possible stage, regardless of whether the conduct is based on a protected class (e.g., race, sex, disability) or rises to a level prohibited by law.
 - The Smithsonian will not wait for harassing conduct to become severe or pervasive before investigating and taking corrective action.
 - **Harassing Conduct** prohibited by SD 255 is defined as unwelcome conduct, that a reasonable person would find objectionable, when:
 1. the behavior can reasonably be considered to adversely affect the work environment; or
 2. an employment decision affecting the employee or affiliated person is based upon the employee's or affiliated person's acceptance or rejection of such conduct.



SI Civil Program Overview

SI Civil Policies

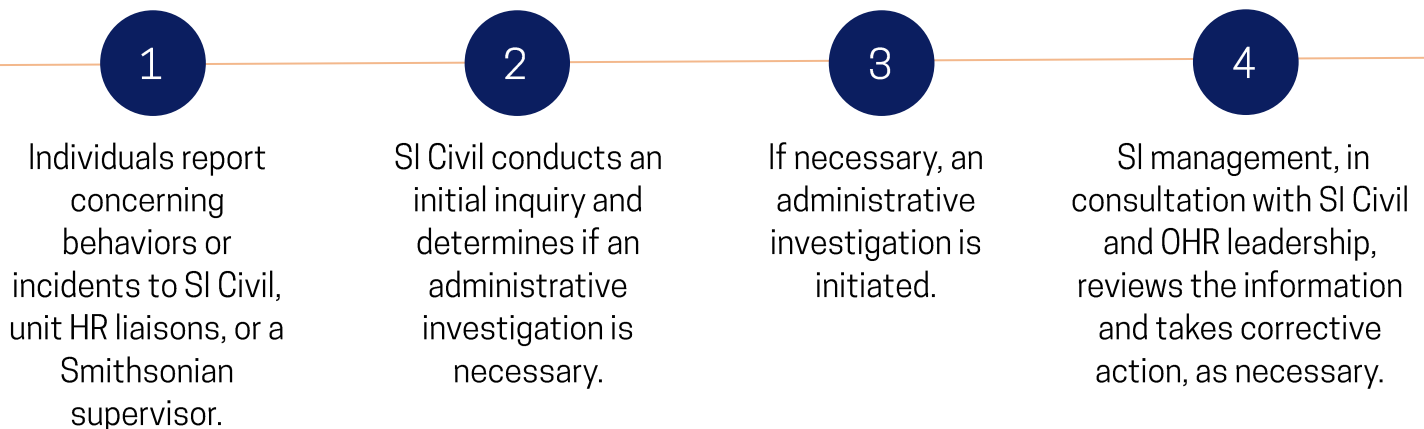
- **Workplace Violence Prevention Policy** (Smithsonian Directive 217, effective December 30, 2020)
 - The goal of SD 217 is to provide guidance for preventing and appropriately addressing threatening or intimidating behavior, potentially violent situations, or incidents of workplace violence. All known incidents of threats, intimidation, or workplace violence will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.
 - If the behavior involves a crime in progress or a specific threat of imminent bodily harm, individuals should treat it as an emergency and contact the Office of Protection Services (OPS), the security office at their facility (if not staffed by OPS), and/or the local police department.
 - SD 217 defines **Workplace Violence** as any act, occurring in the workplace, that endangers, harms, or threatens to harm employees, affiliated persons, or property, or behavior which results in an employee or affiliated person having a reasonable belief of being in physical danger. Workplace violence includes threats and intimidating behaviors.



Reporting Process

SI Civil Reporting Process

The SI Civil reporting process is designed to be simple and keep the reporting individual informed throughout the process.



Notes on the Reporting Process

- Supervisors and those in supervisory-like positions are required to report incidents covered by SI Civil policies to SI Civil within 24 hours of being made aware of the issue.
- Generally, there is no specific time limit for filing a report with SI Civil. Individuals are encouraged to report incidents as soon as possible so the Smithsonian can conduct a thorough inquiry.
- SI Civil will notify the reporting party of the status of the report, when the issue has been referred to the appropriate management officials, and when the matter has been addressed. However, because of privacy rights and procedures, no further information will be provided.
- Corrective action may include discipline (e.g., removal or suspension), counseling, reassignment, coaching, training, or a voluntary facilitated conversation.
- In certain cases, and in coordination with the Office of General Counsel, information is also shared with the Board of Regents and the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP). OSP coordinates mandatory reporting to certain federal funding agencies and private grantors that have reporting requirements in specific situations related to individuals receiving awards.



Other Resources

Finding Support at Smithsonian

In addition to the option of reporting to SI Civil, there are multiple Smithsonian resources available to support individuals. SI Civil staff continuously refer individuals to these resources before, during, or after they file a report with SI Civil. Once an allegation is raised to a Smithsonian management official or to SI Civil, the Smithsonian must look into the specific facts of each report, thus SI Civil cannot maintain absolute confidentiality. These confidential resources are vital in providing support to individuals who are unsure about reporting.

If an individual would like to discuss an incident or issue in a completely confidential setting, they may contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or the Ombuds, both of which operate under principles of confidentiality.

- The **Employee Assistance Program** offers confidential guidance and counseling, free of charge, on any issue. Additionally, the Smithsonian partnered with Inova Employee Assistance to provide employees and members of their households additional services (counseling in multiple languages is available).
- The **Ombuds** provides Smithsonian and affiliated individuals with a neutral, independent, informal, and confidential alternative to address workplace issues and conflicts.

Office of Equal Employment and Supplier Diversity

Employees and affiliated individuals who wish to engage the EEO complaints process may do so by contacting the Office of Equal Employment and Supplier Diversity (OEESD) within 45 calendar days of the date of the alleged discriminatory act. The EEO complaint process is separate and distinct from the SI Civil reporting process. Individuals may file a complaint with both offices.



FY 2024 Highlights

Case Coordination and Resolution

- The SI Civil team coordinated investigations and resolution of reports related to harassing conduct, threats of violence, incidents of intimidation, or other concerning behaviors (including allegations potentially outside of SI Civil’s scope) brought by employees, management, affiliated staff, and visitors.
- In addition, the team refined processes and procedures for conducting investigations, communicating with reporting individuals, and ensuring consistent approaches to case management. The team met regularly to discuss cases, trends, recommendations for management, training, guidance, and ongoing refinements to the SI Civil program.
- The SI Civil Branch Manager provided regular SI Civil case status updates to senior leaders, including the Under Secretary for Finance and Administration, the OHR Director, the Office of Protection Services Director, the Facilities Management Director, and the Office of General Counsel.

Training and Outreach

- SI Civil and OHR staff provided **15** sessions of the mandatory, instructor-led SI Civil Supervisory Workshop: *Creating a Culture of Respect at the Smithsonian*. This workshop provides an overview of the SI Civil program, policies, reporting process, supervisory responsibilities, the benefits of a respectful culture, and skills related to leadership, empathy, and self-awareness. Participants also discuss prevention strategies and participate in discussion scenarios.
- SI Civil staff conducted over **37** other trainings, workshops, and briefings for various groups throughout SI.
- In addition, SI Civil launched a new, mandatory, all-staff SI Civil Training: *Fostering a Culture of Respect at the Smithsonian* (launched in early October 2024). This training provides an overview of the SI Civil Program, policies, reporting process, and important topics such as normalizing civility and respect, building self-awareness, communicating with empathy, avoiding and preventing potential issues, and bystander intervention.
- SI Civil met with employees across the Institution at “OHR2U” events, DEAI working groups, and other outreach events.



2024 SEPS Results

2024 Smithsonian Employee Perspective Survey

- In 2022, additional questions were added to the SEPS to assess Smithsonian’s anti-harassment efforts. Those questions are included in the “Harassment-Free Workplace Theme”. We also review the “Civility Theme” data to inform our work.
- Overall, the 2024 data in these two areas shows that our ongoing efforts have had a positive impact.
- In response to employee feedback, unit directors now share survey results at the unit level to increase transparency and generate dialogue to better inform policies, practices, and priorities at all levels of SI. Staff in OHR, including SI Civil, assist units with addressing negative trending results within these two themes.
- 2024 “Harassment-Free Workplace” theme highlights:
 - Most employees are aware of where to go to report incidents of harassment (**88%** favorable, no change from last year) and believe that Smithsonian is committed to a harassment-free work culture (**77%** favorable, +1% from last year).
 - There was slightly less confidence that other SI employees promote a safe, harassment-free workplace but that rose +2% compared to last year (**67%** favorable this year).
- 2024 “Civility Theme” highlights:
 - Employees believe their work environment is civil and respectful (**86%** favorable, -1% from last year).
 - Similar to last year, a lower favorability score was given to the statement “In our work culture, people feel free to raise dissenting opinions without it having a negative impact on their career” (only **53%** favorable). However, this score increased +2% from last year.



FY 2024 Cases

SI Civil Aggregate Data and Trends

The SI Civil program launched in January 2021 and, as expected, the total number of cases has increased over the past four years. This upward trend speaks to an enhanced organizational awareness of the program and indicates that individuals feel comfortable enough to come forward and report concerns. It also shows that supervisors are reporting to SI Civil, as required by our policies. Insights from basic trend analysis have already shaped SI Civil’s future prevention strategies, including training initiatives and utilizing the performance management process.

SI Civil Cases

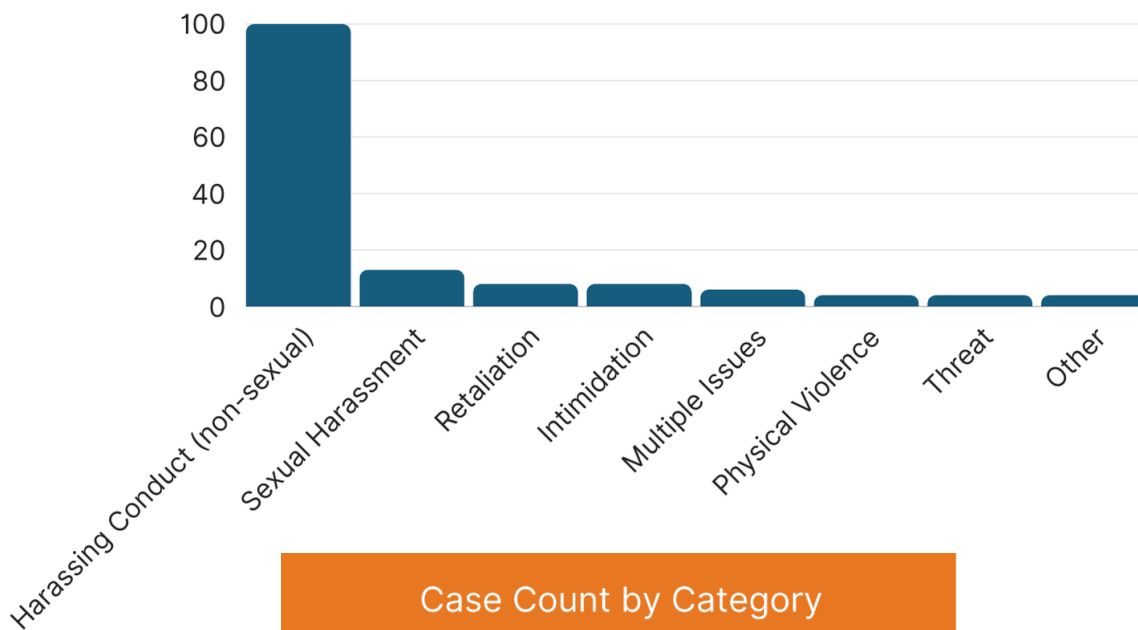
In FY 2024, there were a total of **147 reports**. There were 132 total reports in FY 2023, 90 total reports in FY 2022, and 64 total reports in FY 2021. As mentioned above, this increase was expected. These “reports” include every category of behavior covered by SI Civil policies: harassing conduct, threats, intimidation, physical violence, retaliation, or multiple issues. The categories are fully defined in the SI Civil policies (SD 217 and SD 225).

Although the facts of each case are unique and will result in various outcomes, we also provide an overview of the case outcomes, grouped by category of outcome. A description of each category is included at the bottom of each chart. It should be noted that many of the reports and cases are initially categorized as behavior covered by SI Civil policies but may ultimately lack enough evidence to substantiate the allegation, or the evidence supports a conclusion that the behavior is outside the scope of SI Civil policies. This generally explains the large number of case outcomes classified as “Other Actions or Outside Scope” or “Non-Disciplinary Corrective Actions.”



FY 2024 Cases

Cases by SI Civil Category



Harassing Conduct (non-sexual)	100
Sexual Harassment	13
Retaliation	8
Intimidation	8
Multiple Issues	6
Physical Violence	4
Threat	4
Other	4
Total	147

Description of SI Civil Categories

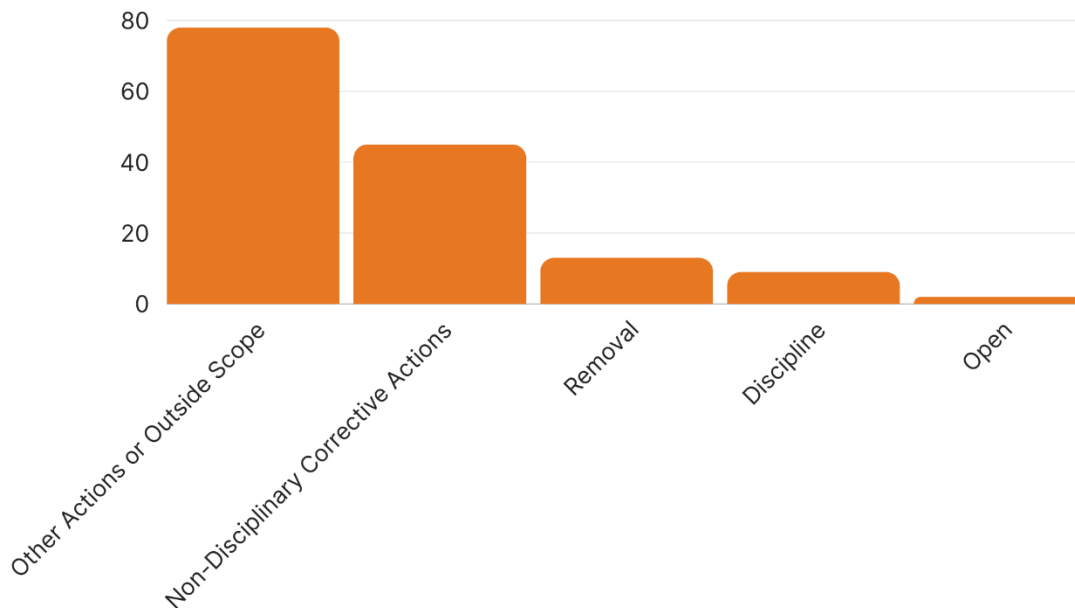
- ❖ *Multiple Issues*: This category includes cases that involve more than one SI Civil category. Allegations of retaliation are typically included in this category (along with the underlying reported incident or protected activity).
- ❖ *Other*: This category includes cases that were reported to SI Civil but, as reported, are outside the scope of SI Civil policies.
- ❖ *For other specific definitions, see [SI Civil policies](#) (SD 217 and SD 225).*



FY 2024 Cases

Cases by Outcome

Other Actions or Outside Scope	78
Non-Disciplinary Corrective Actions	45
Removal	13
Discipline	9
Open	2
Total	147



Description of Outcomes

- ❖ *Other Actions or Outside Scope*: This category includes complaints that were unsubstantiated or found to be unrelated to SI Civil's scope. This category also includes informal or sometimes voluntary actions such as facilitated conversations, training, and additional supervisory support.
- ❖ *Non-Disciplinary Corrective Actions*: This category includes actions that are not disciplinary, such as letters of counseling, reassignments, and mandatory training.
- ❖ *Discipline*: This category includes letters of reprimand, suspensions, and demotions.
- ❖ *Removal*: This refers to the termination of employment or affiliated individual privileges.
- ❖ *Open*: This refers to active cases where an outcome has yet to be determined.



Values and FY 2025 Goals

SI Civil Team Values

- In 2022, the SI Civil Team developed a set of values to accompany the high-level mission and goals outlined on page 4. In FY 2024, the SI Civil team reaffirmed the importance of these values when conducting investigations and communicating with individuals.
 - **Promote Honesty, Integrity, and Trust:** We honor our commitments and conduct our work in a manner that promotes fairness, respect, honesty, and trust.
 - **Celebrate Teamwork:** We encourage the diversity of thoughts, experiences, and backgrounds and celebrate participation and partnership in all of our endeavors. We nurture and embrace differing perspectives to make better decisions.
 - **Advocacy:** We proudly advocate for, and honor the needs and interests of, the Smithsonian community.
 - **Quality Results:** We believe everyone deserves excellent customer service and results you can trust. We take ownership in our work each and every day

FY 2025 SI Civil Team Goals

- Track all reports and cases using SI Civil's case management software.
- Ensure all employees complete the mandatory training: *Fostering a Culture of Respect at the Smithsonian*.
- Ensure remaining supervisors complete the mandatory SI Civil Supervisory Workshop: *Creating a Culture of Respect*.
- Partner with other Smithsonian offices to ensure affiliated staff (academic appointees, contractors, volunteers) receive information on SI Civil policies and reporting.
- Develop more robust operating procedures for the Workplace Violence Prevention Response Team.
- Foster awareness and understanding of SI Civil policies and reporting process by conducting at least 20 trainings, workshops, and briefings for various SI groups.
- Translate the *Fostering a Culture of Respect* training into Spanish and make available to all staff.