Resources and Opportunities for
Displaced Staff Scientists
Standard Operating Procedure

PURPOSE:
This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the actions that may be taken by Staff Scientists (SS) either prior or upon notification of displacement, as well as the steps the OD of CCR/NCI's Intramural Research Program (IRP) may take to assist in the process.

BACKGROUND:
The position of Staff Scientist was created to enable faculty-level doctoral scientists to work with Principal Investigators and to further the NCI research mission. Staff Scientists are in general appointed for a time-limited, renewable position intended to support the work of a Principal Investigator (PI) or a Core. However, due to various reasons, the lab or core may close, which leads to the displacement of the SSs, regardless of their performance and dedication. When displacement occurs, Staff Scientists (SSs) are frequently mid-career or beyond, making it difficult to find an appropriate position given their extensive expertise and government employment, some SS could have difficulty finding a new position in the time frame given.

The NIH Sourcebook states that displaced Staff Scientists are assumed to have "guaranteed a position until the not-to-exceed date of his/her appointment".

https://oir.nih.gov/sourcebook/personnel/policies-recruitment-processes/working-displaced-title-42-staff-scientistsclinicians

Currently, SSs receive a lab closure notification after the lab transition meeting. There are unexpected circumstances that occur, such as the sudden retirement or death of a PI, that requires a different timeline to notify lab staff. This career-disrupting event is extremely stressful for the SSs. Several surveys for SSs have indicated that becoming displaced is a great concern for them. This concern has deepened as the number of SSs has started to outpace the number of PIs in recent years. This trend predicts that it will become increasingly difficult for those displaced Staff Scientists to find another lab or core facility to work within NIH.

Given the deep investment by CCR/NCI in SSs, in both time and taxpayer dollars, it benefits the NCI to make all possible efforts to preserve and transfer the expertise associated with this human resource within the IRP. Ultimately, the SS is responsible for finding a new position before the final appointment not-to-exceed (NTE) date.

This SOP aims to address this issue by providing a structured approach to support displaced SSs and preserve their expertise within the IRP.

Proposal:

- Ensure transparent communication and notification of the CCR/NCI Displacement policy between SSs (who approach displacement), the PI and the OD of NCI's Intramural Research Program (IRP) to streamline the process.

- Agreed Upon Steps that all parties may take to assist in the process:
Establish agreed-upon steps for SSs both prior to and upon notification of displacement.

Steps by PI/OD:

Notification of lab closure:

1. The PI may notify CCR leadership, the Administrative Officer (AO) or designee of lab transition for a variety of reasons.
2. The ARC Manager will schedule a transition meeting with the transitioning PI, Chief, CCR Deputy, and various administrative staff to discuss all required transition requirements, including current staffing.

Displacement Process:

1. CCR will determine a displacement date during or soon after these transition meetings.
2. The AO will provide an official notification letter to the SS stating the NTE date of the SS, new temporary mentor if applicable, instructions to the SS if being added to the CCR displaced list, and career counseling resources.
3. Current appointment NTE date is typically honored or may be renewed to coincide with the PI's transition date dependent on duration, immigration, etc. Staff Scientists are typically given at least 12-month notice of NTE date; this notice may have already been provided at the last renewal. Staff Scientists will be placed on the CCR displaced list and the assigned CCR Deputy Director, transitioning PI, and Laboratory Chief will make a concerted effort to place productive Staff Scientists in another laboratory, however there is no guarantee of placement, so it is important that the Staff Scientist is proactive in seeking other employment. Following the transition meeting, the AO will issue a post-transition status memo to all SSs outlining the appointment NTE date, name of mentor post-PI transition (if applicable), NIH career counseling/job opportunity resources, and instructions to the employee if they will be placed on the CCR displaced list.
4. The CCR will clearly communicate the displacement trajectory to the SS. This includes the duration of the displacement grace period and the mechanism and possibilities of transition to a new lab in the IC.CCR will offer assistance to facilitate the transition to a new lab/position.

Steps by SS after Notification of Displacement:

It is the responsibility of the SS to communicate to the IC what the preferences are for a new position. The SS in his/her/their capacity should make every possible effort to be an active participant in the process. If seeking a position in a different lab, SS is expected to be flexible to align his/her/their research expectation to the goals of new lab and working on a different research area. While the IC may provide assistance in the transition it is **not responsible** for ensuring a new position for the displaced SS.

The SS should schedule a meeting with the PI and assigned Deputy Director to discuss their role in the lab closure process. **SS employees must prioritize finding a new job once notice of a NTE date has been communicated.**

Seek Guidance:

1. Contact the CCR Office of Scientific Programs for advice on how to proceed.
2. The Staff member should follow the instructions outlined in the post-transition status memo and email an updated CV to their assigned CCR Deputy requesting a meeting to discuss their situation. The staff member should utilize resources outlined in the post-transition status memo and be proactive in seeking employment. Additionally, the staff member should contact their Lab/Branch Chief. The CCR Deputy discusses career counseling resources with the staff member and assists with identifying potential research matches. Having a document describing your skill set and your CV may help discuss career directions and possibilities.
3. Email your resume to Jenna Wynne (jenna.wynne@nih.gov), CCR OD AO, to be added to the CCR displaced list.
4. Reach out to the CCR SS/SC Organization Co-Chairs for advice.
5. Consult the NCI SS/SC Alumni database and contact former SS/SCs to discuss how they transitioned into their current positions and to ask for advice.

Explore Opportunities:

1. Exploring a temporary informal detail (extramural or other ICs) to a different Lab/Branch or Core facility may be possible if a position is vacant or about to become vacant. Consult your PI and Lab/Branch Chief to discuss possible details or training positions. Be advised that a detail involves coordination with your PI, the identified lab/office, AO, and the CCR OD ARC. Be aware that a detail may not result in a placement.
2. For a transfer to occur the lab/office must have an open FTE position.
3. Searching the web for Talent Recruiting firms in healthcare and biotechnology companies (most of them are on LinkedIn) if you want help in identifying positions.
4. In addition, start applying for jobs on USAJOBS.
5. For transition toward academia, keep a research proposal up to date, acquire teaching experience and download the letter of equivalence from CCR SSSC website.

<u>Steps by SS prior to Displacement:</u>

Maintain CV and Profiles:

1. Keep your Quad Review C.V. up to date monthly.
2. Create a CCR webpage: Include a headshot picture, biography, and selected publications contact Ronya Taylor (ronya.taylor@nih.gov).
3. Create a LinkedIn profile and keep it A.L.I.V.E. (Accurate, Locatable, Impactful, Value-based & Engaging) and update it regularly. (Download the "LinkedIn Optimization for Busy Business Professionals" presentation from the SS/SC website).
4. Create a Research Gate or Scopus profile page and use this link in your resume and LinkedIn page.
5. Prepare a skill set list following industry standards.
6. Create a 2-page industry-type resume with some of the following sections (Profile, Education, Professional Experience, Continuous Education, Skills and Values, Publications, Patents, Impact Presentations & Volunteer Causes). Use links to your
   CCR, LinkedIn, Scopus, or Research Gate profile pages to save space.
7. Get Your PhD diploma certified if it's from a foreign country.
   (http://www.foreigncredits.com/).
8. Create a USA Job profile. https://www.usajobs.gov/
9. Maintain a research plan and proposal up to date for faculty position application.

Professional Development:

1. Enroll in SCEP – available through Erika Ginsburg's office.
   https://www.cancer.gov/grants-training/training/idwb/career-enrichment-program
2. Expand your technical skills, enroll in the technical enrichment program for Staff Scientists/Clinicians (STEP) to acquire expertise in new technologies.
3. Attend Professional Development Day organized by the CCR SS/SC Organization.
4. Enlist in free training and coaching from the NCI Office of Workforce Management and Development and OITE to develop self-awareness and leadership skills.
5. Get USAJOBS ready by watching online presentations on videocast.nih.gov (click on Training and Meetings and then Career Development/OITE) and by downloading the USAJobs slides from the SSSC website.

Networking:

1. Engage in networking activities both inside and outside the CCR by participating in volunteer actions (committees, faculty, etc.).
2. Attend and present at scientific conferences and workshops regularly (once a year at least).
3. Get invited to give talks on your research.
4. Seek for informational interviews.

REFERENCES:

[Staff Scientist | NIH Office of Intramural Research](#)

CCR Careers – https://ccr.cancer.gov/careers/search
The NIH Intramural Research Program – http://irp.nih.gov
Link to Fellowships and Positions of Interest – https://www.training.nih.gov/ and
https://www.training.nih.gov/jobs/
Link to NIH Jobs – https://hr.nih.gov/jobs/
Link to Federal Jobs (must be a US citizen) – https://www.usajobs.gov/
NCI Staff Scientist Career Enrichment Program (SCEP) - https://www.cancer.gov/grants-training/training/idwb/career-enrichment-program
NCI Office of Workforce Strategy and Effectiveness Career Advising Resources –
https://nih.sharepoint.com/sites/NCI-NCiConnectOWPD/CDS%20Files/OWSE%20CDS%20Resource%20-%20Lab%20Closure%20Support%20Resources%20-%20v3.pdf
OITE Career Counseling – https://www.training.nih.gov/career-services/career-counseling/
OITE Well-Being Program - https://www.training.nih.gov/wellbeing
Employee Assistance Program –
https://ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/HealthAndWellness/EAP/Pages/Index.aspx