



FY 2023

# SI Civil Program

Annual Report on Harassment and  
Workplace Culture at the Smithsonian  
Institution

Prepared by:  
SI Civil Branch  
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Smithsonian Institution

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# Introduction

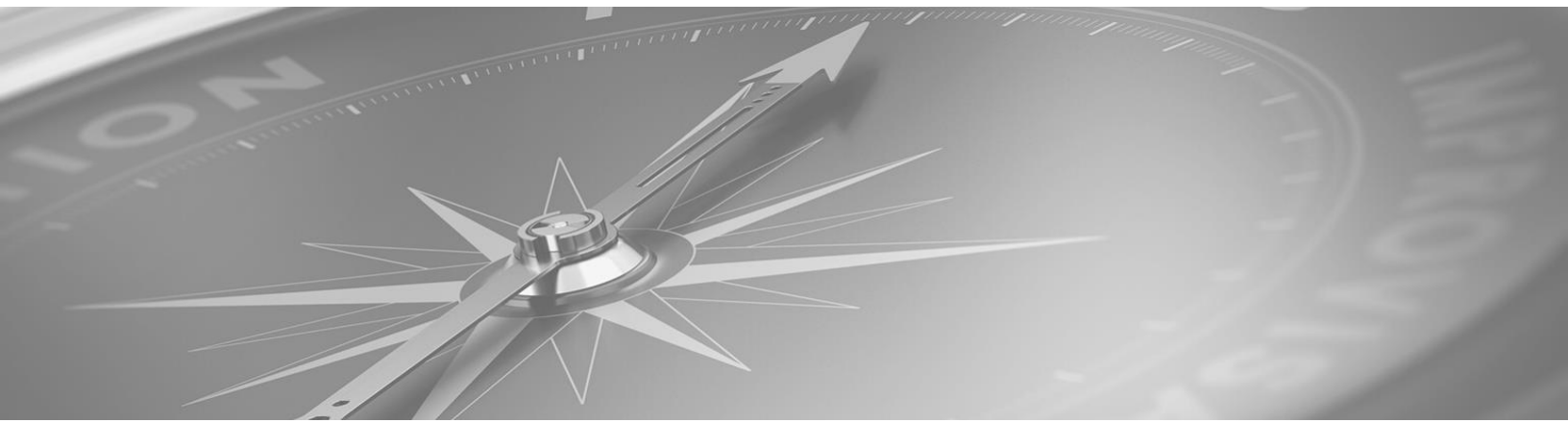
## Where we are

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from harassment and workplace violence. The purpose of this report is to highlight the Smithsonian's harassment and workplace violence prevention efforts in Fiscal Year 2023 and how SI responds to reports of concerning behaviors.

In FY 2023, 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 four areas: team development, process improvement, case tracking, and prevention initiatives.

The SI Civil Team sought to ensure each case was handled with empathy, honesty, and integrity. These core values echo the Smithsonian's overall commitment to ensuring individuals feel respected and welcomed in the workplace. Creating a work environment that fosters respect will serve as a preventative measure against harassment and other concerning behaviors.

The information and data contained in this report focus on reports compiled by SI Civil for FY 2023. 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 FY23 the Smithsonian:
  - Fostered the newly formed SI Civil team (3 total full-time staff) to work collaboratively and refine processes and procedures for: conducting investigations, communicating with reporting individuals, and ensuring consistent approaches to case management.
  - Utilized the new *Voice It* reporting and case management system for internal SI Civil case tracking and data analysis.
  - Held initial training sessions for the Workplace Violence Prevention Response Team.
  - Conducted regular sessions of the new mandatory SI Civil Supervisory Workshop: *Creating a Culture of Respect at the Smithsonian*, reaching over 900 supervisors.
  - Created the new mandatory all-staff SI Civil Training: *Fostering a Culture of Respect at the Smithsonian* (launching in early 2024).
  - Continued to promote senior-leadership's commitment to maintaining a harassment-free, welcoming, and respectful work environment at all levels.
  - Collaborated with other support resources and senior-level leaders to increase unit-level engagement related to Smithsonian Employee Perspective Survey (SEPS).

## FY23 Case Data

- SI Civil received **132 reports** of concerning incidents or behaviors at Smithsonian (including harassing conduct, retaliation, threats, intimidation, physical violence, and other categories).
- In **20%** of cases, a violation of Smithsonian policy was established and resulted in some form of discipline (including reprimand, suspension, demotion, or removal). Specific data related to case outcomes may be found on page 14.



# 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 violations of policy 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

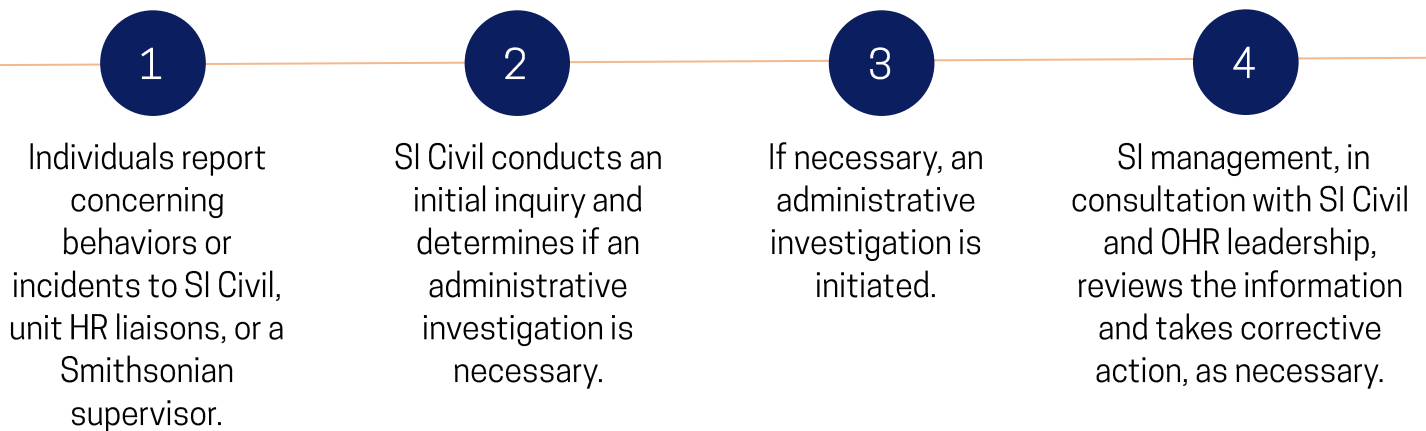
- **Workplace Violence Prevention Policy** (Smithsonian Directive 217, effective December 30, 2020)
  - The goal of SD 217 is to provide guidance for preventing and appropriately addressing threatening or intimidating behavior, potentially violent situations, or incidents of workplace violence. All known 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 (including those in supervisory-like positions) are required to report incidents covered by SI Civil policies to SI Civil within 24 hours.
- 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 Council, 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 Ombudsperson, 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 available).
- The **Ombudsperson** 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.



# FY23 Highlights

## SI Civil Team Development and Case Management

- SI Civil became a separate branch within the Office of Human Resources (OHR) in late 2022. OHR selected an SI Civil Branch Manager and hired two new SI Civil Specialists (one located at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama).
- Throughout FY23, this newly established team has refined processes and procedures for: conducting investigations, communicating with reporting individuals, and ensuring consistent approaches to case management. The team meets regularly to discuss cases, trends, recommendations for management, training, guidance, and ongoing refinements to the SI Civil program.
- 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, affiliated individuals, management, and visitors.
- The SI Civil Branch manager provided regular SI Civil case status updates to senior leaders, including the Under Secretary for Administration, the OHR Director, the Office of Protection Services Director, the Smithsonian Facilities Director, and the Office of General Counsel.
- SI Civil coordinated initial training sessions led by an outside expert for the Smithsonian's Workplace Violence Prevention Response Team and developed a standard list of questions/topics for future Workplace Violence Prevention Response Team risk assessments.





# FY23 Highlights

## Training and Partnerships

- SI Civil and OHR staff provided **21** sessions of the mandatory, instructor-led SI Civil Supervisory Workshop: *Creating a Culture of Respect at the Smithsonian* (reaching over **900** supervisors so far). This workshop provides an overview of the SI Civil Program, the Anti-Harassment and Workplace Violence Prevention policies, reporting process, supervisory responsibilities, the benefits of a respectful workplace, and skills related to leadership, empathy, and self-awareness. Participants also discuss prevention strategies and participate in discussion scenarios.
- SI Civil staff conducted over **20** other trainings, workshops, and briefings for various groups throughout SI (and some external organizations). Some of these audiences and topics included:
  - OPS Basic Entry Level Training (BELT) participants (focused on respect in the workplace)
  - Field Participants at Smithsonian's Environmental Research Center (focused on harassment prevention in a scientific field setting)
  - National Air and Space Museum Visitor Services staff, contractors, and docents (focused on respect in the workplace and handling uncomfortable situations)
  - SI Advancement staff (workshop focused on harassment prevention and bystander training for advancement professionals)
  - 2022 National Conference on Cultural Property Protection (SI Civil overview)
  - NMAAHC Office of External Affairs, Smithsonian Gardens, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, and Smithsonian American Women's History Museum staff meetings
- SI Civil team created a new, mandatory all-staff SI Civil Training: *Fostering a Culture of Respect at the Smithsonian* (launching in early 2024). This training will provide 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 potential issues, and bystander intervention.
- SI Civil staff represented SI Civil at OHR's "OHR2U" events and DEAI working groups.



# FY23 Highlights

## SI Leadership Support

- The Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Under/Assistant Secretaries continue to provide their leadership and support in FY23 to ensure the Smithsonian is committed to a harassment-free and respectful work environment.
- Some of these engagements and actions included:
  - Consistent and supportive communications to the SI community about SI Civil and the importance of maintaining a respectful work environment (SI-wide email sent in January 2023).
  - Creation of the “SI Civil Leadership Video,” which highlights senior leadership’s commitment to making the Smithsonian a more welcoming, respectful, and supportive place to work and visit. This video is played during SI Civil trainings and featured on the SI Civil website homepage.
  - Regular check-in meetings with SI Civil staff on trends, priority cases, and case status updates.
  - Support for identifying SI Civil Champions within each unit for improved communication and collaboration between SI Civil and the entire SI community.
  - Overall backing of SI Civil’s goals and advocacy for our prevention and outreach initiatives.



# 2023 SEPS Results

## 2023 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” of SEPS.
- Overall, the 2023 SEPS results demonstrate that SI’s concerted efforts in the areas of harassment reporting and civility have made a difference.
- SI Civil collaborated with the Ombudsperson and colleagues from EAP to develop recommendations regarding sharing SEPS results with staff and using those results to address challenges. This year, leadership enacted that change and unit directors are now required to 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.
- 2023 “Harassment-Free Workplace” theme highlights:
  - Most employees are aware of where to go to report incidents of harassment (**88%** favorable, +1% from last year) and believe that Smithsonian is committed to a harassment-free work culture (**76%** favorable, +1% from last year).
  - Like last year, there was slightly less confidence that other SI employees promote a safe, harassment-free workplace (**65%** favorable) and that unit-level management will report incidents to Human Resources (**69%** favorable).
- 2023 “Civility Theme” highlights:
  - Employees believe their work environment is civil and respectful (**88%** favorable, +2% from last year).
  - A significantly 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 **51%** favorable, -2% from last year). This score is the lowest for this item in 5 years and is the lowest in both the Harassment-Free Workplace and Civility themes. Smithsonian leadership recognizes that this is a concerning outcome beyond issues related to harassment and continues to work with supervisors and staff on the importance of cultivating and encouraging a range of perspectives.



# FY23 Cases

## SI Civil Aggregate Data and Trends

The SI Civil program launched in January 2021. As SI Civil continues to establish itself as an integral part of the Smithsonian workplace culture, the total number of cases is expected to increase. 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. However, early insights from basic trend analysis have already shaped SI Civil’s future prevention strategies, including training initiatives and early intervention measures.

## SI Civil Cases

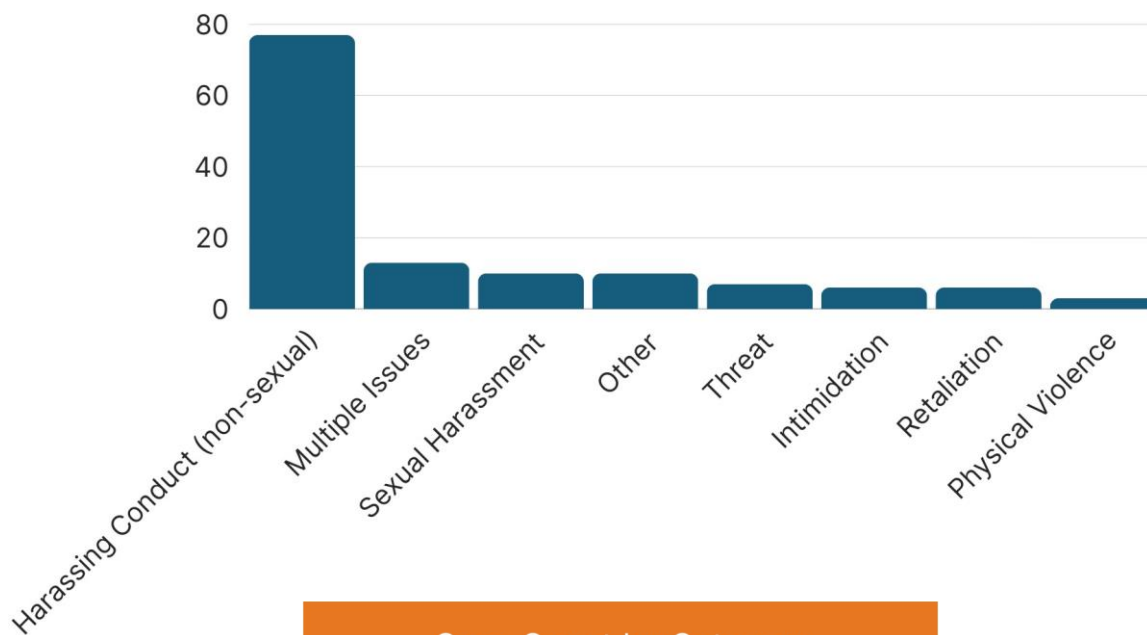
In FY 2023, there were a total of **132 reports**. There were 90 total reports in FY22 and 64 total reports in FY21. As mentioned above, this increase is expected. These “reports” include every category of behavior covered by SI Civil policies: harassing conduct, threats, intimidation, physical violence, 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.”



# FY23 Cases

## Cases by SI Civil Category



Case Count by Category

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Harassing Conduct (non-sexual) | 77         |
| Multiple Issues                | 13         |
| Sexual Harassment              | 10         |
| Other                          | 10         |
| Threat                         | 7          |
| Intimidation                   | 6          |
| Retaliation                    | 6          |
| Physical Violence              | 3          |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>132</b> |

### Description of SI Civil Categories

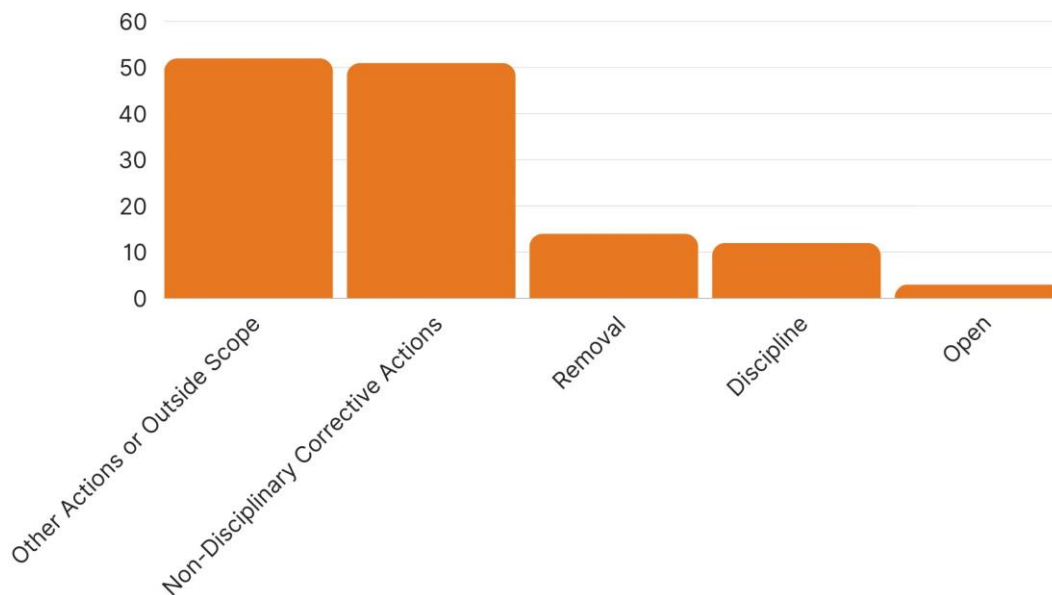
- ❖ *Multiple Issues*: This category includes cases that involve more than one SI Civil category. Allegations of retaliation are typically included in this category (along with the underlying reported incident or protected activity).
- ❖ *Other*: This category includes cases that were reported to SI 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).*



# FY23 Cases

## Cases by Outcome

|                                     |            |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Other Actions or Outside Scope      | 52         |
| Non-Disciplinary Corrective Actions | 51         |
| Removal                             | 14         |
| Discipline                          | 12         |
| Open                                | 3          |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>132</b> |



### 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 FY23 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 FY23, 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

## FY24 SI Civil Team Goals

- Set internal standards and data policies for information stored in the *Voice It* case management system (data quality and management).
- Ensure all SI Civil reports and cases are tracked using *Voice It*.
- Launch all-staff training *Fostering a Culture of Respect at the Smithsonian* for Employees and Affiliated Staff.
- 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.
- Complete training for Workplace Violence Prevention Response Team in early 2024.
- Foster awareness and understanding of SI Civil policies and reporting process by conducting at least 10 trainings, workshops, and briefings for various SI groups.
- Coordinate translation of SI Civil policies and other materials into Spanish.