





**2024 NIH SSO survey focused on displaced Staff Scientists.**

Total number of responses: 872

**Question 1.**

Have you ever been displaced?







	Yes	179
	No	420
	No, but I witnessed the situation	262
	Maybe	9

- Appendix A shows how the opinion from Staff Scientists who witnessed displacement differs from those who experienced it.

**Question 2.**

How long in advance were you informed of your PI's intentions (retirement / separation) to arrange for subsequent employment?





	1 + years	114
	6 months – 1 year	107
	Less than 6 months	47
	Less than 3 months	78

**Question 3.**

Did you feel the advanced notice was sufficient to arrange for your next employment?






	Yes	149
	No	208

**Question 4.**

Were you informed of your IC's policies (timelines, interim support, position search assistance, etc...) regarding displaced staff scientists?



	Yes	54
	Yes, partially	104
	No	272

**Question 5.**

After you were informed of your PI leaving, how long it took until you got informed about your IC's policies regarding displaced scientists?



●	Immediately	34
●	Weeks later	54
●	Months later	39
●	Never was I informed of all the policies	197

**Question 6.**

Were you helped by your IC's leadership (SD, Branch chief, your own PI) to find employment?



●	Yes	135
●	Partially	113
●	No	86

**Question 7.**

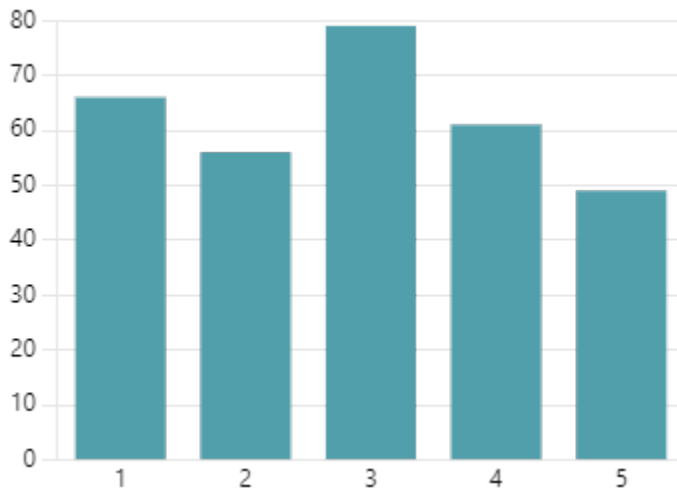
Did your IC try to match your scientific expertise and interests to the potential new host lab or position?



●	Yes	179
●	Partially	144

**Question 8.**

How would you rate your displaced staff scientist experience in the way it was handled by your IC?



1	66	21%	poor
2	56	18%	
3	79	25%	so so
4	61	20%	
5	49	16%	great

Average rating 2.91

**Question 9.**



Based on your experience as a displaced staff scientist, what advice would you give others to improve the process and the chances of succeeding in finding a new position? What would you do different if you had to do it again?

A summary of the 258 responses received is provided at the end.

**Question 10.**

Are you aware of your IC policies for displaced staff scientists?








	Yes	180
	No	688

**Question 11.**

Do you think you will be displaced in the future?



	Yes, in 10+ years	177
	Yes, in 5-10 years	229
	Yes, in 3-5 years	137
	Yes, in less than 3 years	109
	No, I have a PI-independent position	163

**Question 12.**

How concerned are you about being displaced in the future?



Very concerned	32.2%
Somewhat concerned	32.9%
Neither concerned nor unconcerned	14.5%
Somewhat unconcerned	8.6%
Very unconcerned	11.8%

Total 859 responses.

**Question 13.**

Would you be interested in inter-IC transfers being facilitated by NIH leadership?



Yes	613
Maybe	209
No	41

### **Question 9.**

Based on your experience as a displaced staff scientist, what advice would you give others to improve the process and the chances of succeeding in finding a new position? What would you do different if you had to do it again?

A summary of the 258 responses.

### **General Concerns and Suggestions:**

#### **1. Lack of Clear Communication:**

- Many respondents expressed concerns about the lack of clear communication regarding displacement policies, timelines, and expectations.
- Several mentioned that they were not provided with sufficient information about their institute's policies in case of PI retirement.
- Several responders mentioned that their PI did not give the lab members sufficient notice before retiring or leaving NIH.

#### **2. Networking and Proactivity:**

- Networking and proactivity were highlighted as crucial for staff scientists facing displacement.
- Recommendations included attending conferences, engaging in collaborative projects, and seeking mentorship.
- Proactive communication with Scientific Directors (SD) and seeking commitments in advance were emphasized.

#### **3. Importance of Skills and Diversification:**

- Keeping skills up-to-date and diversifying expertise were mentioned as essential for marketability.
- Continuous learning and exploring new techniques or adjacent fields were advised.

#### **4. Emphasis on Emotional and Mental Resilience:**

- Emotional and mental resilience were highlighted as important during the displacement process.
- Seeking support from peers, family, or professional counselors was recommended.

### **Specific Suggestions for Improvement:**

#### **1. Guarantees and Support:**

- Some respondents suggested the need for guarantees or support for displaced staff scientists.

## **2. Institute-Level Support and Job Boards:**

- Recommendations for institute-level support, including mechanisms for displaced staff scientists to find new positions within the institute.
- Suggestions for creating a job board to facilitate easier switching between labs.

## **3. Time and Preparation:**

- Suggestions for providing displaced staff scientists with more time for preparation and transition.
- Recommendations for a minimum time required to discuss retirement and evaluate new labs for displaced staff scientists.

## **4. Recognition and Acknowledgment:**

- Concerns about the perceived lack of acknowledgment and recognition for the contributions of displaced staff scientists.
- Calls for mechanisms to acknowledge and value the experience and contributions of staff scientists within the NIH.

## **5. Networking and Connections:**

- Emphasis on the importance of building a broad network, especially in finding new positions.
- Acknowledgment that personal connections and knowing potential new PIs played a significant role in successful transitions.

## **6. Institute-Wide Policies and Changes:**

- Calls for overarching rules and consistent policies for all NIH institutes.
- Suggestions for changes such as a tenure path or a path to a GS position to make staff scientist positions more attractive.

## **7. Transparency and Early Notice:**

- Requests for transparent communication and early notice about displacement situations.
- Some respondents emphasized the need for clarity regarding timelines and expectations during the displacement process.

## **Individual Experiences and Unique Situations:**

### **1. Diverse Experiences:**

- Responses varied, with some staff scientists finding new positions smoothly, while others faced challenges.
- Instances of successful reassignment within the same IC were mentioned.
- Negative experiences included confusion, disorientation, loneliness, stress and alienation.

### **2. Individual Responsibility and Proactiveness:**

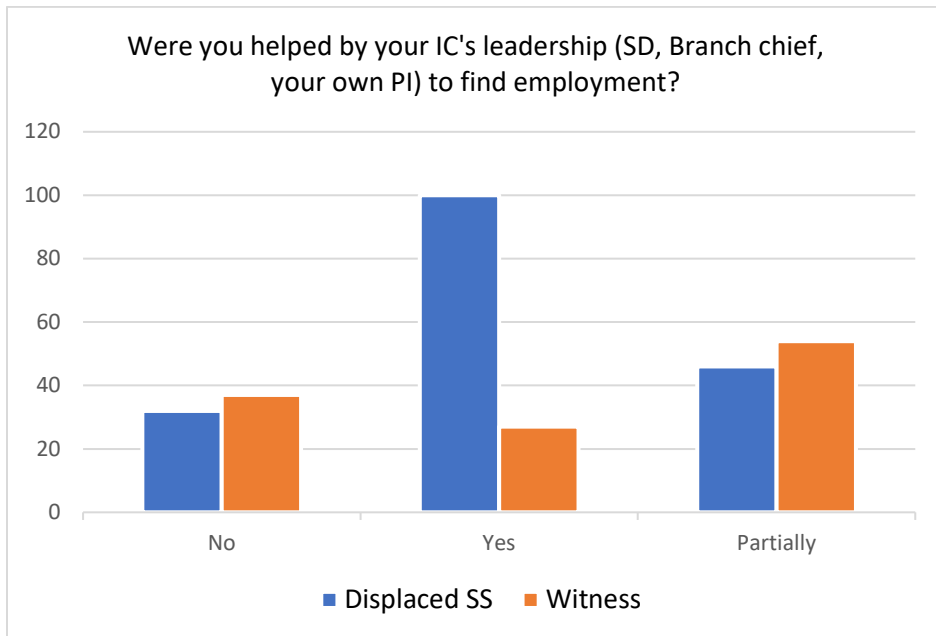
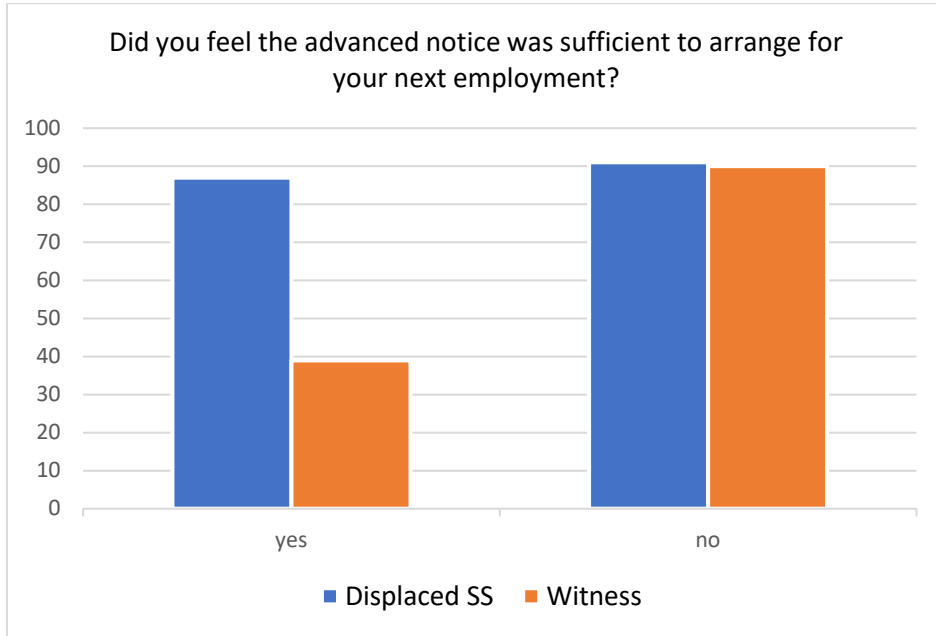
- Recommendations for staff scientists to take initiative, be proactive, and not solely rely on NIH to help.

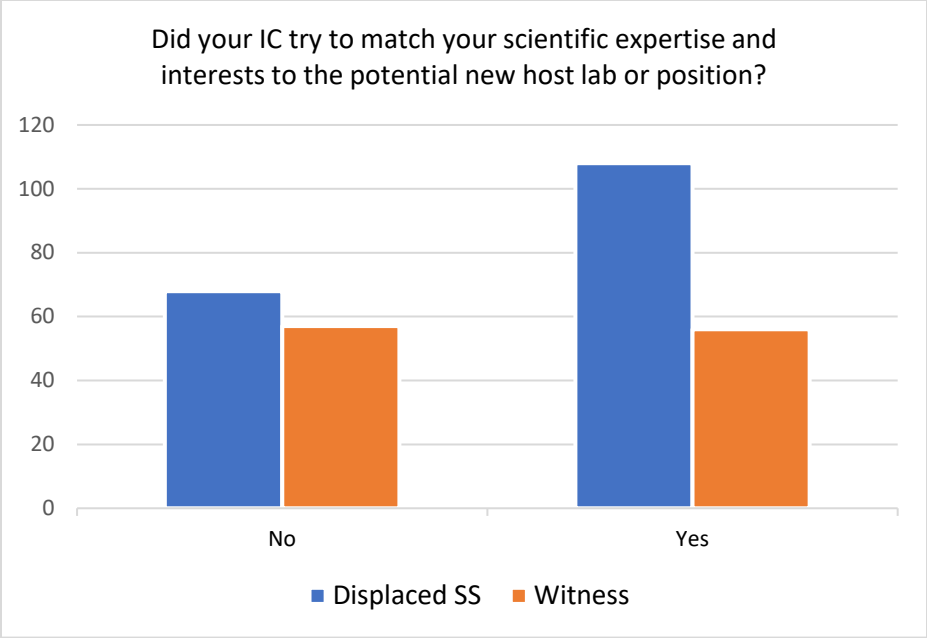


- Instances where individual efforts, networking, and actively preparing in advance were crucial for success.

## **Appendix A**

The opinion from Staff Scientists who witnessed displacement differs from those who experienced it. In the graphs below the number of responses is shown on the y-axis.





There does seem to be a bit of a harsher view on displacement from individuals who witnessed it vs those that actually experienced it. It is likely that the survey misses displaced Staff Scientists who are no longer at NIH. It is plausible that those who left had a bad experience and that's what the witnesses are capturing. Alternatively, the harsher stance could be caused by hearing complaints about the process – but not being intricately involved in the process.