

MEMORANDUM

May 22, 2007

To: Shelly Wilkie Martinez, Desk Officer
Office of Management and Budget

From: Lynda T. Carlson, Division Director
Division of Science Resources Statistics

Via: Suzanne Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer
National Science Foundation

Subject: Notification of information collection under generic clearance

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of our plans to conduct list assessment [interviews/surveys](#) for the Postdoc Data Project (PDP) under the generic clearance for survey improvement projects (OMB number 3145-0174).

Background

To better understand how postdoctoral (postdoc) experiences relate to educational and labor force outcomes, the National Science Foundation (NSF)/Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS) is conducting the PDP. The PDP is a multi-year project to determine the need for and the feasibility of gathering in-depth information on postdocs in the U.S. Current government-collected information provides counts of and limited characteristics on postdocs. However, it does not provide information for foreign-degreed doctoral holders in U.S. postdoc positions nor on how postdoc experiences relate to future outcomes. A formidable challenge to SRS's ability to gather in-depth postdoc information is building a sampling frame to close the gaps in current government-collected postdoc-related data.

[The list assessment task for the PDP investigates the availability of lists/sources to fill the gap in postdoc coverage; and, the feasibility of obtaining the lists/sources and using them to design and conduct a data collection on postdocs. This task seeks to answer questions regarding: correctly identifying and resolving imperfect frame issues; periodicity of obtaining/maintaining/updating the frame; the effectiveness of a de-duplication process if multiple lists/sources are used including existing SRS sampling frames; the sample size that is required to meet key analytic goals; and, the screening rate required to identify an eligible respondent.](#)

[The objectives of the list assessment task are as follows:](#)

- [Identify potential lists to provide data on postdocs and their employers across all sectors;](#)
- [Document the effectiveness of various methodologies employed in obtaining lists and postdoc data from each list; and](#)
- [Assess the quality and relevance of data available from each list and document its suitability for future use in developing a sample frame.](#)

We have identified several potential lists of individuals and of establishments for this assessment. Of primary interest are the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and the H-1B Visa Program database. We have also identified several professional associations to obtain lists from such as the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC), the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), and the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA). These sources have lists of both individuals and establishments to help us build a sample frame.

The list assessment interviewssurveys serve as the primary vehicle for meeting the last objective mentioned above. Through a brief set of questions, we will document and evaluate the quality and content of the available lists of individual postdocs and establishments where postdocs work. The results from these interviewssurveys will inform decisions regarding whether a list is suitable for sample frame building. ~~The objectives of this task are as follows:~~

~~Identify potential lists to provide data on postdocs and their employers across all sectors; and~~

- ~~• Document the effectiveness of various methodologies employed in obtaining lists and postdoc data from each list;~~
- ~~• Assess the quality and relevance of data available from each list and document it's suitability for future use in developing a single sample frame.~~
- ~~• Proposed Methodology~~

~~We have identified several potential lists of individuals and of establishments for this assessment. Of primary interest are the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and the H-1B Visa Program database. We have also identified several professional associations to obtain lists from such as the American Association of Medical Colleges, the American Veterinary Medical Association, and the National Postdoctoral Association. These sources have lists of both individuals and establishments to help us build a sample frame.~~

We will investigate establishment-based and individual-based lists from various sources. We continue to explore other list possibilities throughout the scope of this study as we learn more about how postdoc data are organized. Currently identified sources that we will investigate for the list assessment surveys are below.

Establishment List Frame Sources

- Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR)
- SEVIS exchange visitor lists and the Labor Condition Application (LCA) database
- Dunn & Bradstreet database
- The AAMC and AVMA professional associations
- IRS Publication 78, Cumulative List of Organizations described in Section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
- Guidestar.org - foundations filing IRS form 990-PF grant making activity for over 42K private foundations

Individual List Frame Sources

- SEVIS and H1-B
- Institute for International Education
- Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
- List of grant recipients from federal funding agencies
- The AAMC, AVMA, and NPA

The target respondent for the list assessment [interviewssurveys](#) will depend on the list. For establishment lists, [such as](#) the Labor Condition Application database, the target respondent will be individuals who work at institutions who employ postdocs and who are familiar with the organization of postdoc data at their institution. For individual lists, [such as](#) the Institute of International Education, the target respondent will be potential postdocs themselves.

For establishment lists, we will talk with no more than three individuals [at a particular establishment](#) to select one knowledgeable contact. For individual lists, we will ~~contact~~[talk with](#) the individual sample members themselves. We will make several attempts to obtain a complete response from ~~each~~[the](#) sample members.

We will tailor the questions to each specific list, based on information gathered from our initial review and assessment. For establishment lists, the [interviewsurvey](#) will query about the postdoc counts and key characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity, funding source, and foreign-degree status; whether the institution could provide lists of individual postdocs; and the relative ease or difficulty in providing such a list. For individual lists, the [interviewsurvey](#) will query about postdoc definitions, demographics, and job characteristics to verify the accuracy of the list.

The [interviewsurvey](#) mode, either web, telephone, or postal mail, will depend on the contact information available on the list. When complete contact information is available (email address, telephone number, and postal address), we will test the efficiency and effectiveness of the contact approach by randomly assigning the sample members to a contact mode. When partial contact information is available (only one or two of the types of contact information), we will base mode of contact on a cost-efficient model. If email addresses are provided, a web-based [interviewsurvey](#) will take priority, given that costs for this mode are the lowest of the three modes. Telephone [interviewssurveys](#) will have second priority, and postal mail will serve as a last option. We will not audio-tape the telephone [interviewssurveys](#).

Respondents will be supported through a toll free number and email support provided by the contractor's staff. We will inform them of their privacy and confidentiality rights, including the right to decline participation altogether and the right to refuse any individual question. Respondents will not be recontacted if they ask to be removed from the study.

The contractor for the PDP Phase 2, the Survey Sciences Group, LLC, will conduct the list assessment [interviewssurveys](#). The timeline for this activity is May 21, 2007 through July 13, 2007.

Burden Information

There will be up to 300 [interviewssurveys](#) for each list, and up to 20 lists. We expect that the [interviewssurveys](#) will be no more than 15 minutes in length. Thus, the estimated total maximum burden is 1,500 hours (300 [interviewssurveys](#) x 20 lists x .25 hours per [interviewsurvey](#)). The targeted response rate for each list is 80%.

Incentive Payments

No incentives will be offered to respondents for their participation in this study.

Contact Information

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