

## MEMORANDUM

Date: October 28, 2008

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

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

Via: Suzanne Plimpton, Clearance Officer  
National Science Foundation (NSF)

Subject: Notification of data collection under generic clearance

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of NSF's plan to conduct cognitive testing under the generic clearance for survey improvement projects (OMB #3145-0174). This activity is associated with the redesign of the NSF Survey of Research and Development Expenditures at Universities and Colleges.

### **Background**

The Survey of Research and Development Expenditures at Universities and Colleges has been conducted annually since 1973. The survey collects information on the amount of research and development (R&D) expenditures at colleges and universities in the United States. In the spring of 2007, NSF began a three-year effort to evaluate and redesign the survey. The goals of the redesign are to update the survey instrument to ensure we are obtaining the most valid and reliable measurements of the amount of academic research activity in the U.S, and to evaluate the need to expand the scope of data collected beyond that of R&D expenditures. We have already hosted a data user workshop, two expert panel meetings, and 15 institution visits in order to receive input on possible changes to the survey. NSF is now developing a revised questionnaire draft and plans to embark on another series of site visits to cognitively test questions that may go into the new survey instrument.

The cognitive tests will be in the form of 25 site visits to academic institutions across the country.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

A draft of the revised questions and topic areas that will be tested during the upcoming site visits is being developed. The draft questionnaire will be forwarded to OMB when it is completed (no later than November 5, 2008). A list of the topics that will be covered during the cognitive visits is attached.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

As soon as clearance is obtained, we will begin the first of four trips to different U.S. regions: New York, Illinois, Tennessee, and Northern California. We will schedule half-day visits to 4 or 5 institutions in each region. We will also attempt to schedule several DC area site visits. These visits will consist of a cognitive test with the survey respondent as well as representatives from other offices who will be required to help complete the survey, such as the accounting or budget office, sponsored programs office, institutional research office, technology transfer office, and the office of the Vice President for Research.

## **Burden Information**

Site Visits: We expect to conduct 25 site visits to academic institutions. An average of 4 people from each institution will be invited to the meeting and we expect each meeting to require 4 hours. Therefore, we estimate a total of approximately 400 hours of respondent burden (i.e., (4 people \* 4 hours) \* 25 site visits = 400 hours).

## **Incentive Payments**

There are no incentive payments.

## **Contact Information**

The contact person for questions regarding this data collection is:

Ronda Britt  
Survey Manager  
Survey of Research and Development Expenditures at Universities and Colleges  
Science Resources Statistics Division  
National Science Foundation  
703-292-7765  
[rbritt@nsf.gov](mailto:rbritt@nsf.gov)

Attachments

cc: Fran Featherston