

Attachment 4: Respondent Letter to Request Interview and Follow-up Email

Emails signed by the NIH officer and the evaluation team will be sent to all respondents. These letters will introduce the evaluation and will request that participants complete the Interviews or to serve on the Focus Group panel. This appendix includes the letters that will be sent to awardees (pioneers), unfunded applicants, pioneer lab members, and focus group panelists, as well as the thank you letter that will be sent after the interview or focus group panel.

1. Email sent to awardees (pioneers)

Dear _____

The Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI), a federally funded research and development center based in Washington, DC, has been requested by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to evaluate the progress of awardees of the NIH Director's Pioneer Award (NDPA). The primary objectives of the evaluation are to research the differences that the award made in your research in terms of risk, innovativeness, risk, and pioneeringness.

We are interviewing awardees because we believe that some of the most valuable information will come from those who were involved directly in the evaluation process. These informal interviews are one mechanism that will provide important information concerning the overall NDPA program. We anticipate conducting approximately 22 such interviews.

We would like to talk to you by phone on [date and time].
OR We would like to visit you on [data and time].

Please note that:

- **Your responses will be kept strictly confidential:** If you choose to participate, respondent confidentiality will be protected to the extent provided by law, and STPI will report only aggregate information concerning overall impressions of the process to the NIH.
- **Your participation is entirely voluntary:** You are under no obligation to interview with us, but we strongly encourage you to do so. A successful evaluation of the NIA awards process depends on a high response rate to gather as much information and as many perspectives as possible. There are no consequences or risks for participating. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may discontinue the interview at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- **Whom to contact for additional information:** For additional information about the study you may contact Bhavya Lal, STPI project director (blal@ida.org). If you have any questions that you would like to address to the NIH Office of the Director, please contact G. Stephane Philogene, Ph.D., the Office of the Director's Program Officer responsible for this evaluation (e-mail: PhilogeS@OD.NIH.GOV).

Sincerely,
STPI NIH NDPA Outcome Evaluation Team
[Contact information]

2. Email sent to NDPA Unfunded Applicants

The Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI), a federally funded research and development center based in Washington, DC, has been requested by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to track the careers and ideas proposed by applicants.

We are employing various data collection techniques to answer these questions; however, we believe that some of the most valuable information will come from those who were involved directly in the application process. We anticipate conducting approximately 440 such interviews (200 in 2009 for 2004-2006 application year and 240 in 2010 for 2007 application year).

Please note that:

- **Your responses will be kept strictly confidential:** If you choose to participate, respondent confidentiality will be protected to the extent provided by law, and STPI will report only aggregate information concerning overall impressions of the process to the NIH.
- **Your participation is entirely voluntary:** You are under no obligation to interview with us, but we strongly encourage you to do so. A successful evaluation of NDPA applicants depends on a high response rate to gather as much information and as many perspectives as possible. There are no consequences or risks for participating. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may discontinue the interview at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- **Whom to contact for additional information:** For additional information about the study you may contact Bhavya Lal, STPI project director (blal@ida.org). If you have any questions that you would like to address to the NIH Office of the Director, please contact G. Stephane Philogene, Ph.D., the Office of the Director's Program Officer responsible for this evaluation (e-mail: PhilogeS@OD.NIH.GOV).

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 minutes per interview. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: NIH Project Clearance Officer, 6705 Rockledge Drive, MSC 7974, Bethesda, MD 20892-7974, ATTN: PRA 0925-0534.

3. Requested mailed survey

To increase response rates, individuals who are unable to fill out the survey on the web will be supplied with a hard copy (or email copy):

Date

Dear Prof. _____,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the NDPA survey sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. As you requested, we are sending the survey to you by mail. Please note that your answers will be kept confidential and you will not be quoted by name in the report of the evaluation findings.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the postage-paid envelope. If you prefer, you may return the completed survey by fax to 202-223-1695.

If you have any questions about the study, please call Marybeth Hughes at 202-419-5487 or Stephanie Shipp at 202-419-5498. In the meantime, thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

STPI NIH NDPA Outcome Evaluation Team
Science and Technology Policy Institute
1899 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Suite 520
Washington DC 20006

3. Email sent to Pioneer Lab members

Dear _____

The Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI), a federally funded research and development center based in Washington, DC, has been requested by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to evaluate the outcomes of the NIH Director's Pioneer Award (NDPA).

We are interviewing members of NDPA awardee labs because we believe that some of the most valuable information will come from those who were involved directly in the program. These informal interviews are one mechanism that will provide important information concerning the overall NDPA program. We anticipate conducting approximately 25 such interviews.

We would like to visit you on [data and time].

Please note that:

- **Your responses will be kept strictly confidential:** If you choose to participate, respondent confidentiality will be protected to the extent provided by law, and STPI will report only aggregate information concerning overall impressions of the process to the NIH.
- **Your participation is entirely voluntary:** You are under no obligation to interview with us, but we strongly encourage you to do so. A successful evaluation of the NIA awards process depends on a high response rate to gather as much information and as many perspectives as possible. There are no consequences or risks for participating. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may discontinue the interview at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- **Whom to contact for additional information:** For additional information about the study you may contact Bhavya Lal, STPI project director (blal@ida.org). If you have any questions that

you would like to address to the NIH Office of the Director, please contact G. Stephane Philogene, Ph.D., the Office of the Director's Program Officer responsible for this evaluation (e-mail: PhilogeS@OD.NIH.GOV).

Sincerely,

STPI NIH NDPA Outcome Evaluation Team
[Contact information]

4. Focus Group Panelist

Dear _____

The Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI), a federally funded research and development center based in Washington, DC, has been requested by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to evaluate the progress of awardees of the NIH Director's Pioneer Award (NDPA). The primary objectives of this part of the outcome evaluation are to assess whether NDPA awardees are conducting pioneering research.

These Focus Group interviews are one mechanism that will provide important information concerning the overall NDPA process, and will hopefully highlight aspects of the award process that may need to be revised or improved for future rounds of awards. We anticipate conducting approximately 22 such focus groups.

We would like to talk to you by phone on [date and time] and to plan the focus group discussion for [date and time].

Please note that:

- **Your responses will be kept strictly confidential:** If you choose to participate, respondent confidentiality will be protected to the extent provided by law, and STPI will report only aggregate information concerning overall impressions of the process to the NIH.
- **Your participation is entirely voluntary:** You are under no obligation to interview with us, but we strongly encourage you to do so. A successful evaluation of the NIA awards process depends on a high response rate to gather as much information and as many perspectives as possible. There are no consequences or risks for participating. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may discontinue the interview at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
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Sincerely,

STPI NIH NDPA Outcome Evaluation Team
[Contact information]

5. Thank you note to respondents

Dear _____

Thank you very much for participating in our interview for the NIH Director's Pioneer Award (NDPA) outcome evaluation. The information you provided is very valuable for our study.

We enjoyed listening to your comments and recommendations. Again, the data collected are confidential and only shared in aggregate.

If you have questions or additional comments, please feel free to email us anytime.

Sincerely,

STPI NIH NDPA Outcome Evaluation Team
[Contact information]