

APPENDIX B

Site Visit Cover Letter

[Date]

PI's Name and Title

PI's Address

Dear [PI's Name]:

Per our telephone conversation this week, this letter confirms that the COSMOS team's three-day site visit to the [MSP's Title] is scheduled for:

Three-Day Interval of Dates
Address of Main Location of Site Visit

Your MSP's participation in the site visit is part of a national cross-site evaluation of the MSP Program as a whole, not an evaluation of any specific MSP awardee. All comprehensive, targeted, institute, and Phase II MSPs are included in the sample population.

Site visit schedule. Over the three days, the site visit will involve interviewing you as the [MSP Title's] principal investigator and your project coordinator together (for about seven hours), the project evaluator separately (about eight hours), and a single person from up to eight of your partnering organizations separately (about one hour each). A sample three-day agenda, showing how these persons might be scheduled, is attached. However, we are flexible and are willing to meet whenever you are able to schedule the interviews.

Forwarding of documents ahead of time. Two weeks prior to the site visit, I would appreciate your forwarding to me any recent documents about the [MSP's Title], so that we can review them ahead of time. Our team has access to the documents you already have submitted to NSF, so you do not need to forward those. Useful other documents might include: strategic or other plans, descriptions of the [MSP Title's] activities, relevant policy documents, and available evaluation reports and studies apart from those already submitted to NSF. Electronic files are preferable, but you also may mail hard-copy documents to me at: COSMOS Corporation, 3 Bethesda Metro Center, Suite 700, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Confidentiality. Please be aware that all of the interviews will be both anonymous and confidential. In other words, in any subsequent site visit or evaluation report, no names will be used to identify any individuals or the name of the [MSP's Title] or its locale.

Copies of site visit report. After the site visit, I will send you a copy of the site visit report, to review for its accuracy. To receive an electronic copy of the national evaluation's findings or to receive other new NSF publications, please subscribe to the NSF's Custom News Service, an e-mail and web-based alert service available on the NSF homepage at: <http://www.nsf.gov/home/cns/start.htm>.

Funding of the national evaluation. The national evaluation is supported by NSF as part of Contract No. EHR-0456995 and conducted by researchers from COSMOS Corporation, Brown University, Utah State University, and George Mason University. Aside from performing as evaluators, no members of the evaluation team have had any affiliation or role in relation to the individual MSPs or the MSP Program.

Privacy notice. Information from this evaluation will be retained by the National Science Foundation (NSF), a federal agency, and will be an integral part of its Privacy Act System of Records in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and maintained in the Education and Training System of Records, 63 Fed. Reg. 264, 272 (January 5, 1998). These are confidential files accessible only to appropriate NSF officials, their staffs, and their contractors responsible for monitoring, assessing, and evaluating NSF programs. Data submitted will be used in accordance with criteria established by NSF for monitoring research and education grants, and in response to Public Law 99-383 and 42 USC 1885c.

Public burden. Submission of the requested information is voluntary. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0200 (expiration date: xx/xx/xx). Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2.7 hours per respondent. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Suzanne Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer for OMB Collection 3145-0200, Facilities and Operations Branch, Division of Administrative Services, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Suite 295, Arlington, VA 22230.

For additional information. For additional information, contact the project director of the national evaluation (Robert K. Yin, 240-223-5200, ryin@cosmoscorp.com), or the NSF contracting officer's technical representative (Bernice Anderson, 703-292-5151, banderso@nsf.gov).

Sincerely yours,

[name and title of evaluation team member
who made the initial phone call referenced
in the first paragraph above]

cc: Robert K. Yin, project director