



**DATE:** November 21, 2011

**TO:** Dr. Gwynne Jenkins  
Office of Extramural Research, Office of the Director

**FROM:** NIH Privacy Act Officer

**SUBJECT:** Applicability of the Privacy Act: "Enhancing Peer Review Initiative (NIH)"

I have reviewed the NIH submission to OMB to assess stakeholder experience with the peer review enhancements. The initiative will engage the best reviewers, improve the quality and transparency of peer review, and ensure balanced and fair reviews. The findings from the surveys will provide an important source of information for developing recommendations to further refine the enhanced peer review process.

I have determined that the Privacy Act will apply to this data collection involving the collection of personally identifiable information such as the respondent's race, ethnicity, gender, age, education, years of funding, organization type, etc.

A lead letter and introductory email invitation will be sent to each sample member informing them of the study. Follow up emails will be sent to remind sample members of the survey, and to encourage participation. These reminder emails will always include a link to the survey. A final reminder letter will include a hard copy version of the survey to provide an alternative mode for answering the questions. Demographic information gathered by the surveys will not be linked to individual respondents. Data collected will be aggregated and no reported results will identify respondents by name or other identifier that would allow the respondent's identity to be disclosed. The data sets transferred back to NIH staff will be fully de-identified. A written report with accompanying charts will be provided to NIH management for internal use. There are no plans to publish the results of these surveys.

The data collection is covered by NIH Privacy Act Systems of Record 09-25-0156, "Records of Participants in Programs and Respondents in Surveys Used to Evaluate Programs of the Public Health Service, HHS/PHS/NIH/OD."

If you have any questions, please contact my office at (301) 402-6201.

Karen M. Plá

Attachment: NIH Privacy Act Systems of Record 09-25-0156

cc: Mikia Currie, Project Clearance Liaison, NIH  
Seleda Perryman, Chief, Project Clearance Branch, NIH