

REQUEST FOR OMB REVIEW

PART B: COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL
METHODS

NIEHS DERT Extramural Grantee Data Collection

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B.1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

Because this is a generic request, the potential study population includes all principal investigators (PIs) who are currently receiving or have received funding from NIEHS. Once NIEHS selects a portfolio or program for evaluation, we will identify and notify the PIs from that specific portfolio or program. We intend to collect data from the entire population of PIs within a given portfolio or program being evaluated.

To minimize possible bias from nonresponse and to maximize statistical power, we aim to achieve a response rate of at least 75% for each portfolio or program evaluation. In surveying the universe of eligible PIs, the only source of sampling error is nonresponse. Therefore, our estimated standard error includes the following finite population correction factor:

Standard error=SQRT ((nonresponse rate)*(standard deviation)²/(no. of surveys in analysis))

B.2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

This section describes data information collection procedures. The discussion is divided into two subsections: (1) data collection procedures and (2) quality control procedures.

Data Collection Procedures

Because all PIs at NIH are required to have an email address, we will contact all PIs by email.

The email will include:

- information about the data collection activity,
- a timeline for the data collection and instructions for participating in the data collection;
- a link to a secure web-based survey and login information,
- a link to a PDF version of the survey that PIs can print out, complete and return if they prefer a paper-based survey;
- the name and toll-free number of a staff member to call with questions about the study.

We will monitor all emails that bounce back and identify other methods of contacting PIs for whom we do not have a valid email address. We will monitor completion of the data collection and will send reminder emails at the following timepoints:

- 2 weeks after initial contact
- 1 day before the data collection is scheduled to be completed
- 1 week after the data collection was scheduled to be completed

In order to maximize response rates, we will mail the survey to nonrespondents via express mail within 2 weeks of sending the final email reminder. We will call any remaining non-respondents within two weeks of mailing the survey, to remind them to complete the survey. If we reach the person directly, we will offer to conduct a phone interview to collect the data, otherwise we will leave a message.

Quality Control Procedures

Beginning with study initiation and continuing through all phases of data collection and analysis, NIEHS will take steps to ensure that the data collected are of the highest quality possible. We will train all project staff to understand the purpose, sponsorship, background, objectives, and importance of the project, as well as their specific role and activities on the study. We will emphasize the steps that we will take to protect the confidentiality of the data we collect. We will store any paper copies of the survey that are submitted in locked file cabinets. All project files will be password protected and access to the files will be limited to authorized project staff. Surveys entered online will be password protected and will not allow access once the respondent has completed the survey. The web survey will be hosted on a secure server protected with a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) certificate and 128-bit encryption, the strongest online data encryption protection available.

We will develop a management information system to monitor data collection activities. The database will contain the dates of all email, mail, and telephone contacts with respondents and be used to track the most up-to-date contact information. The web survey automatically tracks started and completed questionnaires, and project staff will be able to see such information in real time. The management information system and web survey completion reports will also be used to generate daily reports summarizing the status of data collection activity through the data collection period.

An emphasis on quality will continue with data editing and data entry. A web based survey option will be encouraged in order to provide faster survey response time and availability of data as well as high quality data since control checks are built in. A mailed hard copy questionnaire

will also be available. The hard copy will also be sent to those for whom email addresses are unavailable or as part of the follow-up protocol to increase response rates.

B.3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

Through experience with NIEHS's evaluation of our Asthma program we have found that the most efficient ways to maximize response rates are to inform grantees by email, provide opportunities for on-line data submission, and conduct multiple follow-ups with respondents. We also will personalize communications with respondents and ensure that data collections instruments are concise.

We will measure and record response rates at each stage and once data collection has been completed, we will conduct a non-response analysis and adjust for non-response by weighting the survey data.

B.4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

The draft survey questionnaire was developed based on previous surveys used to collect data from NIEHS' asthma grantees. Prior to conducting the specific data collection for the identified portfolio or program, we will test the survey with up to 3 PIs to assess:

- the clarify of questions,
- the ease of response,
- the relevance of individual questions, and
- their ability to answer the questions, and
- the amount of time it takes to complete the survey.

We will make minor modifications to the survey content and format if needed. Experienced survey operations staff will format the survey questionnaire for online ease of completion, as well as to facilitate coding and data entry. We will ask staff within the Program Analysis Branch to test any on-line data collection instruments that are created.

B.5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

The primary contact at NIEHS for this data collection activity is Kristianna Pettibone, PhD, Division of Extramural Research and Training, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Her telephone number is (919) 541- 7752 and her email is pettibonekg@niehs.nih.gov.

Dr. Pettibone will have overall technical responsibility for the evaluation design and will oversee all data collection and analysis efforts associated with the OMB clearance request. Dr. Pettibone will also have manage any reports or publications produced as a result of these data collection activities.

List of Attachments

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