

Advance Email for Panelists

Dear [],

You recently served on a review panel for a funding opportunity managed by CDC's Extramural Research Program Services Office ("ERPOS"). ERPOS is the office that works with programs to develop, announce, review, and administer extramural awards for NCCDPHP and NCBDDD ("the Chronic Disease Center" and "the Birth Defects Center"). First, I'd like to thank you for your service and contributions. Second, I'd like to tell you about a customer satisfaction and quality improvement initiative designed to improve the guidance and services that ERPOS provides to reviewers like you.

As a former panelist, you may be asked to participate in a telephone interview that will take about 30 minutes. Interviews will be conducted by an independent consultant who is an expert in communication and organizational improvement. He has been engaged to gather feedback from a sample of panelists and to prepare a summary report for ERPOS management. Because these interviews will focus only on panelists' satisfaction with the review process, the consultant will not have access to CDC records pertaining to the review of applications, i.e., the consultant will not have access to the applications per se or the panelists' (reviewers') comments on the applications. We are simply looking for ways to improve communication, or strengthen and streamline our procedures. We will not use feedback obtained through this initiative to assess the performance of individual ERPOS staff.

Comments obtained during the interviews will be de-identified and used to prepare an aggregate report. If you participate, your name and organization will not be associated with any specific comments; in fact, CDC will not know who participated in the interviews. The consultant will destroy all interview notes and records when he submits the final report to CDC. Your personal relationship with ERPOS, and your organization's relationship with ERPOS, will not be affected by the comments you provide to the consultant, your decision to participate in an interview, or your decision not to participate at this time. Participation is completely voluntary.

The independent consultant will randomly select interviewees from a list of potential candidates (i.e., previous panelists). If you're contacted, we hope you'll strongly consider participating in our quality improvement initiative. Please feel free to speak openly with the consultant so that the final report provides a clear picture of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement in ERPOS operations. We need our panelists' perspectives in order to be successful and service-oriented.

Our consultant's name is [].

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the ERPOS quality improvement initiative.

Sincerely,

Sam F. Posner, PhD
Associate Director for Science
NCCDPHP