

**Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of
Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB#: 0925-0648; Exp. Date: 03/2018)**

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:

Customer Feedback on NIH’s Targeted Guidance for New Investigators

PURPOSE:

This is a request to conduct voluntary customer satisfaction surveys of the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH’s) grants process for New Investigators. These surveys will help fulfill the requirements of:

- *Executive Order 12862, “Setting Customer Service Standards,” which directs Agencies to continually reform their management practices and operations to provide service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector; and*
- *The March 3, 1998 White House Memorandum, “Conducting Conversations with America to Further Improve Customer Service,” which directs Agencies to determine the kind and quality of service their customers want as well as their level of satisfaction with existing services.*

Background

Entry of new investigators into the ranks of independent, NIH-funded researchers is essential to the health of this country’s biomedical research enterprise. NIH’s interest in the training and research funding of new investigators is understandably deep and longstanding. Over the years, special programs to assist new investigators in obtaining independent research funding have been created. In spite of concerted efforts over several decades, the average age at which an investigator first obtains R01 funding increased by five to six years between 1980 and 2001. In the period between 2001 and the current year, the age of PhDs has remained relatively constant at around 42. The age at first award for MDs and MD/PhDs has continued to increase. Policy changes adopted in 2007 and in subsequent years have substantially increased the number and the percentage of competing R01 awards going to New Investigators. In 2006, 1,362 New Investigators received R01 awards amounting to 23.9 percent of all competing R01s. By 2010, the 2,091 New Investigators constituted 31.8 percent of all competing R01s. In spite of substantial increases in both the number and percentage of New Investigators, the average age at first award has not decreased.

In 2009, NIH instituted a new adjunct to the New Investigator policies involving the identification of Early Stage Investigators (ESIs). ESIs are New Investigators who are within 10 years of completing their terminal research degree or within 10 years of completing their medical residency at the time they apply for R01 grants. In order to encourage a reduction in the period of training leading to independence, the NIH Institutes and Centers monitor their New Investigator pool to make sure that approximately half have ESI status. Applications from ESIs, like those from all New Investigators, are given special consideration during peer review and at the time of funding. Peer reviewers are instructed to focus more on the proposed approach than on the track record, and to expect less preliminary information than might be provided by an established investigator.

Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The NIH remains committed to identifying and attracting new biomedical researchers and will continue to explore novel ways to encourage early transition to independence. The purpose of

the information collection is to solicit feedback from New Investigators who have recently submitted a grant application to the National Institutes of Health about the types of information that will be helpful to them, and inquire about guidance they currently use in their efforts to prepare a NIH grant application. The survey will ask them to rate the usefulness of an orientation package that encourages further participation in the NIH grants process through application resubmission, and directs them to publically available funding facts that can be used to inform their strategies for competing for NIH research grant support.

The orientation package will come in the form of a single email message sent to them shortly after their summary statement is released, which contains their critiques from the reviewers of their recent application. The message points to web-based information and resources for applicants that are currently available on the NIH web site. At the end of the message, a linked is provided to access that OER Survey for New Investigators.

NIH will use the information collected to determine whether to more formally institute targeted outreach to new investigators, and if so, tailor the information contained in the outreach materials.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

The respondents will be NIH R01 and R21 grant applicants who are eligible to apply as New Investigators and/or Early Stage Investigators by virtue of their never having been named as the Principal Investigator/Project Director on a major NIH research grant award. Most NIH grant applicants have a MD and/or Ph.D. as their terminal degree. New Investigators are most often employed as junior faculty members (assistant professor or equivalent rank) at an institution of higher learning, medical school or research institute.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: Luci Roberts, Ph.D., Director of Planning and Evaluation, NIH/OER

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? [] Yes [X] No
2. If Yes, is the information that will be collected included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? [] Yes [] No
3. If Applicable, has a System or Records Notice been published? [] Yes [] No

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? [] Yes [X] No

ESTIMATED BURDEN HOURS and COSTS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	No. of Responses per Respondent	Time per Response (in hours)	Total Burden Hours
Individuals: NIH Grant Applicants (New Investigators)	1050	1050	10/60	175
Totals	1050	1050		175

Category of Respondent	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate*	Total Burden Cost
Individuals: NIH Grant Applicants (New Investigators)	175	\$67.70	\$11,847.50
Totals	175	\$67.70	\$11,847.50

*The median hourly wage for the [19-1040: Medical Scientists labor category](#) is \$67.60. Since New Investigators, by definition, have not become independently supported researchers, their salaries tend to fall on the lower end of the range of salaries. Thus, we believe the median hourly wage is more appropriate than the mean hourly wage for this population.

FEDERAL COST: The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$24,690

Staff	Grade/Step	Salary	% of Effort	Fringe (if applicable)	Total Cost to Gov't
Federal Oversight					
Dir. Planning & Evaluation	15/10	\$160,300	5%		\$8,015
Contractor Cost					
Data Analyst		\$156,000	10%	n/a	\$15,600
Travel					
Other Cost					
Survey Software					\$1075

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?
 Yes No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

Respondents will be New Investigators who have submitted a NIH R01 or R21 application to NIH for one of the FY 2017 or FY 2018 council rounds. The information associated with these applications can be retrieved from the NIH grants database. A sample of New Investigators will be chosen, stratified by the NIH institute or center (IC) assigned as the prospective funding IC, using an average sample size allocation stratification scheme. Approximately 350 prospective respondents will be sampled from each of three council rounds/year. The total number of New Investigators who will be sampled is, thus, 1050/year. This sample size is chosen based upon a power analysis for a logistic regression model involving 70 full predictors (69 predictors excluding the intercept), 20 reduced predictors, a medium effect size of R^2 reduced = 0.2 and power of 0.9. The resulting sample size is 171. If we assume an approximate response rate of 50% the resulting number invited to participate is 342.

Administration of the Instrument

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)
 Web-based or other forms of Social Media
 Telephone
 In-person
 Mail
 Other, Explain
2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? Yes No

Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.