



DATE: July 25, 2014

TO: Luci Roberts, Ph.D.
Director, Division of Planning and Evaluation
Office of the Director, Office of Extramural Research

FROM: NIH Privacy Act Officer

SUBJECT: Applicability of the Privacy Act: "Enhancing Peer Review Initiative"

I have reviewed the NIH Office of Extramural Research submission to OMB referenced above. The project involves a survey of scientists who conduct research relevant to the mission of the NIH and have applied for research grant funding in the past five years. The primary objective of the survey is to define appropriate expectations for peer review service commitments and better understand the factors that influence decisions to accept an invitation to serve as a peer reviewer.

The survey will be conducted online and invitations to participate in the survey will be sent to a selected sample of members via email and later by mail, if needed. Although the survey will contain demographic questions (race, ethnicity, gender, age) and collect work-related information (employer organization, job title, education, prior research support from and review service to the NIH, National Science Foundation and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, it will not be linked to the individual respondent. However, the sample information collected will be retrieved by a personal identifier (i.e., Commons Profile ID) and linked to the individual respondents in case the email invitation bounces and the survey has to be traced back to the respondent.

An independent contractor, RTI International, will collect and collate the surveys electronically, and will also be responsible for initial data analysis and reporting. All data will be analyzed and reported in an aggregate form that does not personally identify any applicant or reviewer. The data sets transferred back to NIH staff will be fully de-identified and access to data will be restricted to project staff members on an as-needed basis.

I have determined that the Privacy Act will apply to this data collection as the survey respondents will be linked to the sampling frame. This data collection is covered by NIH Systems of Record Notice 09-25-0036, entitled "Extramural Awards and Chartered Advisory Committees (IMPAC 2), Contract Information (DCIS), and Cooperative Agreement Information, HHS/NIH." If you have questions, please contact me at (301) 402-6201.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen M. Plá".

Karen M. Plá

Enclosure

cc: Mikia Currie, OD PRA Liaison