Attachment D
Debriefing Interview Protocols

Protocol for Debriefing Interview with Respondents
Nonprofit Research Activities Pilot Survey

Organization ID: _____

Performer: ❐ Yes   ❐ No
Funder: ❐ Yes   ❐ No

Thank you for completing the Pilot of the Nonprofit Research Activities Survey and for agreeing to participate in this follow-up interview. The information you provide today will help us to better understand your perspective about completing the survey and will help us make changes to the survey before we fully implement it next year. Before we begin our interview, I want to review some information with you.

- Your participation in this interview is voluntary.
- The interview should last about 1 hour.
- There is another person on the telephone with me who is taking notes. Her name is \<name\>.
- *If appropriate:* \<Name\>, from NSF, is also listening to our discussion today. Is that okay? If no, NSF staff member will hang up the phone and end his/her join.me session.
- I would like to audio record this interview so that I get all of your comments. Is that okay with you?
- Before we continue with the interview, I need your consent to be interviewed. I'm going to read it to you, then ask for your verbal consent.

The National Science Foundation designs, conducts, and sponsors surveys on science, engineering, and technology. In order to produce the best information possible, the National Science Foundation routinely evaluates its surveys.

You have volunteered to take part in a study to improve one of the National Science Foundation's surveys. In order to have a complete record of your comments, your interview session will be audio taped. We plan to use the audio tape to improve the survey. NSF and ICF staff directly involved in this research project will have access to the tape. In addition, a transcription service may have access to the audio tape, to provide us with a written version of your comments.

This study is authorized by law (42 U.S.C. 1862 Section 3.a.6). The OMB control number for this study is XXXX-XXXX.

I have volunteered to participate in this study, and I give permission for my tape to be used for the purposes stated above.

If you consent to participate in this interview, please state you name and that you consent.

Do you have any questions before we start?

As <name> mentioned when she spoke to you, I would like to share my computer screen with you. I'll be showing you the web survey <organization name> completed. Is that okay?

If yes: Great! I'm going to send you an e-mail right now (repeat e-mail address) with a link to www.join.me. You should not have to download anything. Please let me know when you receive the e-mail.

Received the e-mail: Okay, please go ahead and click on the link. Let me know what you see.

Did not receive e-mail: Would you mind checking your spam or junk mail folder?

> **If respondent still does not find it:** Let me repeat your e-mail address. The e-mail you receive will come from <name@icfi.com>. The subject says: NPRA Debrief Interview.

If the participant is unable to login into www.join.me**:** Since we are not having luck with the computer, I'm going to e-mail you a copy of <organization's name> completed survey. Is that okay? You should see an e-mail coming from <interviewer's e-mail address> in a minute. It will have a PDF attached. Please let me know when you get it.

If no, it's not okay to go online: If you would prefer, I can e-mail you a PDF of the <organization's name> completed survey. Would that be okay?

> **If still no:** Would you prefer to reschedule the interview? **OR** Is there someone else you think I should talk to?

Assuming participant is able to get online and sees the interviewer's screen or the PDF …

I would like to start with a few general questions, then later we will talk about some of the questions in the survey that I'll show you [online OR ask you to open and refer to the PDF].

First, let's talk for a couple of minutes about participating in this survey and then your experience completing the survey online. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. What was your initial reaction to the National Science Foundation's request for you to complete this survey?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Why did your organization decide to complete the survey?

   _____

   _____

The next couple questions are about your experience completing the survey online.

3. Did you download a PDF copy of the survey?

   ❑ Yes

   ❑ No

4. Did you gather **all** the information needed and enter it into the online system yourself?

   ❑ Yes (Skip to question Q6)

   ❑ No

5. Did you use the online system to invite other members of your staff to complete certain sections of the survey?

   ❑ Yes

   ❑ No

6. How easy or difficult was it to navigate through the survey?

   ❑ Very easy

   ❑ Somewhat easy

   ❑ Neutral

   ❑ Somewhat difficult

   ❑ Very difficult

7. Did you encounter any error messages while working on the questionnaire?

    ❏ No

    ❏ Yes. If yes ask: Do you happen to remember what the messages were telling you?

    _____

    _____

    What was your reaction to getting these messages? Were you able to solve the problem(s)?

    _____

    _____

8. How positive or negative was your experience answering the questions online?

    ❏ Very positive

    ❏ Somewhat positive

    ❏ Neutral

    ❏ Somewhat negative

    ❏ Very negative

Interviewer, if our records indicate this nonprofit called or e-mailed us, ask the following question, otherwise, skip to Q10.

9. Our records indicate that you or your staff <called and/or e-mailed> our survey helpdesk. How satisfied were you with the help you received?

    ❏ Very satisfied

    ❏ Somewhat satisfied

    ❏ Neutral

    ❏ Somewhat dissatisfied

    ❏ Very dissatisfied

For the questions that follow, we would like to focus on the questions and content of the survey itself. *Interviewer, for participants who can see your screen, say:* First, I'd like to point to a couple of the directions. Can you see this? <insert instruction>. *For participants looking at a PDF say:* Go ahead and open the PDF I sent you. Let's look at the instructions at the top of page 3 and the ones at the top of page 4.

10. Were the instructions provided in the survey generally clear or confusing?

    ❑ Clear

    ❑ Confusing. If confusing, ask: Can you describe what was difficult to understand?

    _____

    _____

11. Were there any terms that were not defined and should be defined?

    ❑ No

    ❑ Yes. If yes ask: Which one(s)?

    _____

    _____

12. The survey included a definition of research, what it includes, and examples of what may meet and most likely does not meet the criteria for research. Do you happen to remember reading and/or referring to this information? *Show this section of the survey on the screen or refer participant to page 3 in the PDF.*

    ❑ Yes

    ❑ No

    Was this information helpful? Is there anything you would suggest we add or remove from the definition and guidance page?

    _____

    _____

[Interviewer, be sure to note if the nonprofit is a performer, funder, or both performer and funder and skip the questions that do not apply.]

Now let's talk about some of the specific questions in the questionnaires.

We'll go through the questionnaire sequentially. I'll show them to you on my screen OR You can look at the questions in your survey.

13. (Q2) You reported your organization's total expenses for FY 2015 were <amount>. Do you remember if this was the same amount reported on your IRS Form (990/990-EZ/990-PF), or was it different?

    ❑ Same

    ❑ Different: Please explain.

    ❑ Don't remember

    _____

    _____

    _____

14. (Q4) How easy or difficult was it to provide the number of full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) that were employed in your organization in FY 2015?

    ❑ Very easy

    ❑ Somewhat easy

    ❑ Neutral

    ❑ Somewhat difficult

    ❑ Very difficult

Did you include or exclude consultants, part-time employees, and temporary, or seasonal employees?

    _____

    _____

15. [Q5, if applicable] When you completed the survey, you indicated that your organization performed research in FY 2015. One of the instructions was to include consultants. Was this instruction clear or confusing?

   ❏ Clear

   ❏ Confusing. If confusing ask: What difficulties did you have?

   _____

   _____

Similarly, we asked you to exclude research performed outside your organization by subcontractors or sub-awardees in Q5 but to identify those relationships in Q6. Was this instruction clear or confusing?

   ❏ Clear

   ❏ Confusing. If confusing ask: What difficulties did you have?

   _____

   _____

[Enumerate the ones skipped]:

16. We noticed that you did not respond to Questions 1…6, can you please explain why you did not respond?

Survey Q1

   _____

   _____

Survey Q2

   _____

   _____

Survey Q3

   _____

   _____

Survey Q4

   _____

   _____

Survey Q5

_____

_____

Survey Q6

_____

_____

Interviewer: Ask questions 17–20 ONLY if the organization performed research (i.e., responded yes to Q5).

The next section of the survey asked several questions on the performance of research by your employees or consultants. For the next few minutes, we will focus on this part of the survey.

17. (Q7) How easy or difficult was it to provide the total amount your organization spent on research performed by your employees or consultants in FY 2015?

    ❑ Very easy

    ❑ Somewhat easy

    ❑ Neutral

    ❑ Somewhat difficult

    ❑ Very difficult

Interviewer, if respondent replied "Somewhat difficult" or "Very difficult," ask:

Were any of the following reasons why it was difficult for you to provide the total amount your organization spent on research?

A. Excluding capital expenditures

    ❑ Yes

    ❑ No

B. Separating research and other expenditures

    ❑ Yes

    ❑ No

C. Other reasons why the question was difficult to answer.

_____

Was the amount you reported—<amount>—an estimate or the actual amount your organization spent on research performed by your employees or consultants?

❑ Estimate

❑ Actual

How confident are you that the answer provided is the correct answer?

❑ Very confident

❑ Somewhat confident

❑ Not at all confident

18. (Q8) We asked you to indicate the sources of funding for the research your organization performed in FY 2015 (e.g., federal government, universities, foundations, other nonprofits). How easy or difficult was the process of allocating the total funds you reported in Q7 by source?

❑ Very easy

❑ Somewhat easy

❑ Neutral

❑ Somewhat difficult

❑ Very difficult

Interviewer, if respondent says somewhat or very difficult, ask: Why was this difficult?

_____

_____

[If applicable] You indicated on your survey that you received funding from entities other than the federal government. Were any of these other amounts you reported actually subcontract awards on federal projects?

❑ No

❑ Yes, please describe.

_____

_____

19. (Q9) How easy or difficult was it for you to allocate the total FY 2015 research performed by your staff or consultants in the fields we provided?

    ❑ Very easy

    ❑ Somewhat easy

    ❑ Neutral

    ❑ Somewhat difficult

    ❑ Very difficult

Interviewer, if respondent says somewhat or very difficult, ask: Why was this difficult?

    _____

    _____

How easy or difficult was it to match the sum total of all fields in Question 9 to the total you reported in Question 7? (In FY 2015, how much did your organization spend on research performed by your employees or consultants?)

    ❑ Very easy

    ❑ Somewhat easy

    ❑ Neutral

    ❑ Somewhat difficult

    ❑ Very difficult

How helpful were the drop-down menus of fields in each of the major categories?

- ❑ Very helpful

- ❑ Somewhat helpful

- ❑ Not at all helpful

Please explain.

_____

_____

20. (Q10) The survey included a question asking for the approximate number of paid full-time equivalents (FTEs) who worked on research activities in FY 2015. We asked you to include the number of FTE Researchers, and FTE Technicians and other support personnel. How did your organization decide which category to put your paid full-time FTEs?

_____

_____

How confident are you that you provided the correct number of FTE researchers and FTE technicians and other support personnel?

- ❑ Very confident

- ❑ Somewhat confident

- ❑ Not at all confident

Interviewer, if there's confusion, ask: What suggestions can you offer for making this question or the categories easier to understand?

_____

_____

[Enumerate the ones skipped]:

We noticed that you did not respond to Questions 7…11. Can you please explain why you did not respond?

Survey Q7

_____

_____

Survey Q8

_____

_____

Survey Q9

_____

_____

Survey Q10

_____

_____

Survey Q11

_____

_____

Interviewer, ask questions 20–24 only if the organization funded research (i.e., responded yes to Q6). If the organization is a performer and funder, ask questions if time permits.

The next section of the survey asked several questions about funding research activities of other organizations—either through contracts, grants, subcontracts, or other sub-awards. For the next few minutes, we will focus on this part of the survey.

21. Let's begin by looking at Q6, considering the guidance above, did your organization fund research performed outside your organization in FY 2015? How easy or difficult was it for you to answer this question?

      ❑ Very easy

      ❑ Somewhat easy

      ❑ Neutral

      ❑ Somewhat difficult

      ❑ Very difficult

22. (Q12) We asked you how much funding your organization provided to others in FY 2015 to perform research activities. In addition to providing a total amount, we asked for subtotals for the amount funded via (a) research grants or contracts, and (b) subcontracts and sub-awards. How did you go about answering this question?

_____

_____

How easy or difficult was it for your organization to answer this question?

- ❑ Very easy

- ❑ Somewhat easy

- ❑ Neutral

- ❑ Somewhat difficult

- ❑ Very difficult

Interviewer, if respondent says somewhat or very difficult, ask: Why was this difficult?

_____

_____

23. (Q13) In Question 13 we asked you to tell us how much your organization provided to (a) universities or other educational entities, (b) other nonprofit organizations, (c) businesses, and/or (d) other entities. How easy or difficult was it to separate the amounts you awarded to these types of organizations?

- ❑ Very easy

- ❑ Somewhat easy

- ❑ Neutral

- ❑ Somewhat difficult

- ❑ Very difficult

Interviewer, if respondent says somewhat or very difficult, ask: Why was this difficult?

_____

_____

24. (Q14) How easy or difficult was it for you to indicate how much research funding your organization provided to others in FY 2015 using the fields listed?

- ❑ Very easy
- ❑ Somewhat easy
- ❑ Neutral
- ❑ Somewhat difficult
- ❑ Very difficult

Interviewer, if respondent says somewhat or very difficult, ask: Why was this difficult?

_____

_____

How easy or difficult was it to match the sum total of all fields in question 14 to the total you reported in questions 12? (In FY 2015, how much funding did your organization provide to others to perform research activities?)

- ❑ Very easy
- ❑ Somewhat easy
- ❑ Neutral
- ❑ Somewhat difficult
- ❑ Very difficult

How helpful were the drop-down menus of fields in each of the major categories?

- ❑ Very helpful
- ❑ Somewhat helpful
- ❑ Not helpful

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25. (Q15) Question 15 asked you to identify the different sources of funding for the total reported in question 12. How easy or difficult was this question?

    ❑ Very easy

    ❑ Somewhat easy

    ❑ Neutral

    ❑ Somewhat difficult

    ❑ Very difficult

Interviewer, if respondent says somewhat or very difficult, ask: Why was this difficult?

_____

_____

[If applicable] You indicated on your survey that you received funding from entities other than the federal government. Were any of these other amounts you reported actually subcontract awards on federal projects?

    ❑ No

    ❑ Yes, please describe.

_____

_____

Next, I'd like to give you a hypothetical example. Please tell me how you would have reported your organization's funding in this situation.

Your organization received $25 million from the federal government. Of this amount, your organization awarded a university $5 million to be paid out evenly over the next 5 years starting in FY 2015. How would your organization have reported this?

Interviewer, if the organization only reported internal funds as its source, ask: Let me give you a hypothetical example. If your organization provided a $5 million dollar grant to another organization in FY 2015 to be paid out equally over 5 years, starting in FY 2015, what amount would you report in this question?

_____

_____

[Enumerate the ones skipped]:

We noticed that you did not respond to Questions 11…15, can you please explain why you did not respond?

Survey Q13

_____

_____

Survey Q14

_____

_____

Survey Q15

_____

_____

26. Before we conclude this interview, I'd like to ask you if there is anything else you would like to share regarding your experience completing the survey. Is there anything else we haven't discussed that you'd like to see improved or changed before the next survey?

_____

_____

_____

_____

On behalf of the National Science Foundation thank you for your time and assistance.