

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 3145-0215)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: NSF Centers for Chemical Innovation Survey Pre-tests

PURPOSE:

The core mission of the Division of Chemistry in the Directorate of Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS) at the National Science Foundation (NSF) is to support innovative research, integrated with education, in the chemical sciences. In fiscal year 2004, the Division of Chemistry introduced the Centers for Chemical Innovation (CCI) Program (initially called Chemical Bonding Centers) to support research centers focused on major, long-term, fundamental chemical research challenges. The Division of Chemistry has initiated a comprehensive assessment to evaluate the extent to which and in what ways the CCI program is achieving its goals.

To evaluate the activities and outcomes of the CCI program, Abt Associates plans to gather participant feedback from two online surveys. The first survey will ask Principal Investigators/Co-investigators about their experience participating in research grant activities funded through the CCI program. The purpose of this survey is to understand the role of the center in research, collaboration, and broader impacts; to assess grantee satisfaction with the center structure and the two-phase funding model; to document outcomes; and to describe the challenges they encountered. The second survey will collect data from graduate and postdoctoral students participating in CCI-funded activities to understand the role of CCI in training and career development. Survey items that are used or adapted from existing instruments are indicated by footnotes in the Appendix.

The survey pilot tests requested under this Fast Track Clearance will allow the evaluators to refine these instruments and more accurately determine burden estimates based on participant feedback (survey instruments appear in Appendix A). Ultimately, we will submit the final refined instruments for OMB PRA clearance for full-scale data collection.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Survey respondents fall into two groups, both of which participated in CCI-funded grant projects: 1) Principal Investigators/ Co-Investigators and 2) graduate and postdoctoral students. The evaluator will administer both surveys to current and former participants on all Phase I and Phase II grants awarded between 2010 and 2016. Although this study focuses primarily on Phase II activities and outcomes, we also include PIs/co-investigators from Phase I awards that did not receive Phase II funding. PIs/co-investigators from Phase I awards provide important information on what is achievable in a three-year timeframe, the challenges they experienced, and whether the work began during this phase continued after the end of the grant.

To minimize possible recall bias and to ensure that respondents have had sufficient experience with CCI, the sample was limited to the individuals included in annual reports between the years of 2012–13 and 2016–17. In total, approximately 300 PIs/co-investigators affiliated with 14 CCIs (5 Phase I-only and 9 Phase I/II) and 1,400 students/postdocs affiliated with 9 Phase II CCIs met this selection criterion.

For the survey pilot tests requested under this Fast Track Clearance, the evaluators will randomly select 15 Principal investigators/Co-Investigators and 30 graduate and postdoctoral students.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form
- Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software)
- Focus Group
- Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Small Discussion Group
- Other: Web-based Survey

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: Suzanne H. Plimpton, NSF Reports Clearance Officer

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

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? Yes 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 No

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time (hours)	Burden (hours)
NSF CCI-funded Grant PIs/Co-Investigators	15	0.5	7.5
NSF CCI-funded Grant Graduate/Postdoc Students	30	0.5	15
Totals Burden Hours			23

FEDERAL COST:

The estimated cost to the Federal Government for the full survey data collection activities described in this request for approval is \$281,836. This cost estimate includes instrument development and piloting, data collection, and data processing and analysis for administering surveys with study participants, and will be included in the standalone collection planned after this pilot is conducted.

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

For the total number of participants from the NSF CCI-funded grant project participants (300 researchers and 1400 graduate/postdoc students), respondents for the survey pre-test will represent a stratified random selection of all CCI program participants from the 2012 through 2016 cohorts. *Fifteen PI/PDs and co-PI/PDs across six centers will participate in the survey pilot test.* Ten of the 15 PI/PDs are former PIs and five are current. Six PI/PDs are from Phase I centers and nine are from Phase II centers. *Thirty graduate students (n=19) and post-doctoral students (n=11) across 11 centers will participate in the survey pilot test.* Nineteen of the 30 graduate and postdoctoral students are former students and 11 are current.

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.