

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

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Center-based Research Program Interviews

PURPOSE:

NSF would like to gather feedback through telephone interviews with Principal Investigators of center-based research awards to further explore and understand grantee perspectives of the center-based research concept and one- and two-phased funding mechanisms for centers. These interviews will provide NSF with information about grantee experiences with and perspectives on participating in center-based research grant activities funded by NSF. This will help NSF to understand the role of the center in research, collaboration, and broader impacts activities and outcomes; grantee satisfaction with the center structure and with one or two-phase funding models; and challenges encountered. This will inform NSF more broadly on issues relevant to the design and implementation of center-based research program. In addition, the information collection will help NSF to consider opportunities for common questions or indicators that may be useful for future monitoring and evaluation across center-based research programs.

Center-based research programs to be included in this information collection are the following:

- The Science and Technology Center (STC) program, which supports innovative, potentially transformative, complex research and education projects that require large-scale, long-term awards.
- The Physics Frontiers Centers (PFC) program, which supports university-based centers and institutes where the collective efforts of a larger group of individuals can enable transformational advances in the most promising research areas.
- The Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers (MRSEC) program, which supports materials research of a scope and complexity that would not be feasible under traditional funding of individual research projects.
- The Engineering Research Center (ERC) program, which supports the integration of engineering research and education with technological innovation to transform national prosperity, health, and security.

The interview protocol, email interview request, and interview consent script were all field tested previously under OMB control Number 3145-0215 for the purpose of the Centers for Chemical Innovation (CCI) Evaluation. They were submitted as part of a larger full information collection request for the CCI Evaluation that is currently in review. Since field test, the email interview request and interview consent script have been minimally revised here to accommodate the more general focus of center-based research programs rather than CCI program. During the field test, the first three items were designated as being delivered to either CCI PIs or to CCI Co-PIs; however, we intend to deliver all items to the PIs in this study.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Interview respondents include one group: individual Principal Investigators of NSF-funded Center grant projects of the STC, PFC, MRSEC, and ERC programs.

At present NSF has a full information collection request (ICR) under review for the CCI Program that intends to collect similar information from 27 CCI PIs and Co-PIs. If/when the ICR CCI Evaluation is approved, the information gathered from that collection could also be added to these data.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

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

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 Center Grant PIs/Co-Investigators	24	30 minutes	12
Totals Burden Hours			12

FEDERAL COST:

This will be incorporated into the plans of running the program.

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

To minimize possible recall bias and ensure that respondents have had sufficient experience with research and broader impact activities under their STC, ERC, MSERC, and PFC grants, the sample was limited to PIs of awards funded in fiscal years 2010-2017 and awards that will still be active at the time the interview takes place (i.e., expiration date after 12/31/2018). Thirty-six awards satisfy these conditions.

The final set of respondents will be a stratified random sample of up to 12 of the 36 grant PIs, reflecting up to three awards from each of the STC, ERC, MSERC, and PFC program portfolios.

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.