

## **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 Site Visitor Interview Pretest

### **PURPOSE:**

NSF would like to gather feedback through telephone interviews with individuals that have participated in a key oversight activity—site visits—of center-based research program grants to further explore and understand their perspectives of the center-based research concept and one- and two-phased funding mechanisms for centers. Site visitors are distinguished members of the scientific research community that, at the time of the site visit, have no affiliation constituting a conflict of interest with the center for which they are reviewing. Site visitors provide important external perspectives to NSF about the progress made by and areas for improvement in relation to specific goals outlined in a given center’s funded grant proposal. We posit that site visitors may also offer valuable general perspectives on the center-based research and center structures, operations, and outcomes that were not necessarily captured in their site-specific site visitor reporting. Thus, NSF would like to conduct telephone interviews to gather this more general information about site visitors’ perspectives on center-based research grant activities funded by NSF. This will help NSF to understand the perceived role of the center in research, collaboration, and broader impacts activities and outcomes; promising center structures and operations; advantages and disadvantages of one- or two-phase funding models; and challenges encountered by centers from individuals of the research community who are external to the center(s) themselves but have unique knowledge of centers from their experiencing reviewing one or more centers as a site visitor. This will inform NSF more broadly on issues relevant to the design and implementation of center-based research program.

The interview protocol intended to be used for this information collection has been used previously with federal agency program directors that conduct annual oversight activities of center grants. However, we cannot know whether, under what conditions, or for which information site visitors that have participated in these oversight activities will have sufficient recollections of their site visitor experiences to respond to the questions of interest to NSF. One center-based program—the Centers for Chemical Innovation—has a variety of mechanisms for engaging site visitors, ranging from “low touch” multi-hour cyber site visits to “high touch” multi-day onsite visits to one or more centers over a period of several years. We posit that site visitors that engaged previously in high touch site visit activities are likely to have the most informed perspectives on centers.

*The interview protocol pre-tests requested under this Fast Track Clearance will allow NSF to test the feasibility of collecting informed external perspectives of Center(s) from site visitors that engaged in high touch site visit activities, will suggest possible refinements of the interview protocol, and can more accurately determine burden estimates based on participant feedback. The interview protocol is written to be flexibly applied across several NSF center programs and the pre-testing could yield a refined interview protocol that could be used in the data collection for NSF Center program evaluations or assessments. Ultimately, we will submit the final refined instrument for OMB PRA clearance for data collection with any other center-based research programs, should we determine it is feasible to collect informed external perspectives from site visitors.*

**DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:**

Interview respondents include one group: individual Site Visitors of NSF-funded Center grant projects of the CCI program.

**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: 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	18	.5	9
<b>Totals Burden Hours</b>			<b>9</b>

**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

The CCI program identified 119 unique site visitors that do not currently have conflicts of interest with any center (e.g., are not a Principal, Co-investigator, or external evaluator on a current CCI grant). To ensure that respondents have sufficient experience with oversight activities related to research and broader impact activities of CCI program grants and to minimize possible recall bias, the sample was further limited to site visitors that had completed at least two onsite site visits, with one of those site visits occurring in the last five years (fiscal year 2014 or later). Thirty-five site visitors satisfy these conditions. The final set of respondents will be a stratified random sample of up to nine of the 35 site visitors, stratified by the nine centers reviewed by the site visitors.

### **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.**