Interview Request Email

Dear Dr. [LAST NAME OF SITE VISITOR],

I'm writing on behalf of the National Science Foundation (NSF) to schedule a phone call with you. During that phone call, I would like to interview you about your perspectives as a previous site visitor for one or more centers of the NSF [PROGRAM NAME] Program.

This will help NSF to understand, from the perspective of its site visitors, 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. Your feedback will inform NSF on issues relevant to the design, implementation, and evaluation of center-based research programs.

The call should take 30 minutes.

To schedule the phone call, please respond to this email with your availability on any of the following date and times:

[To be updated by NSF Representative or Contractor sending: available dates and times]

I look forward to connecting with you soon and learning more about your work.

Sincerely,
[To be updated by NSF Representative or Contractor sending with Name, Title, Organization]

Interview Consent and OMB Notification

Thank you so much for making time today to talk with me about centers funded through the [PROGRAM NAME] *program. We are interviewing a sample of individuals that previously served as site visitors for the* [PROGRAM NAME] *program. Your feedback will inform NSF on issues relevant to the design, implementation, and evaluation of center-based research programs, such as* [PROGRAM NAME].

Your answers will be aggregated with those of other respondents and the information you provide will not be attributed to you personally. Your participation is voluntary. Please feel free to skip any question you do not want to answer.

We would like to audio-record this interview to make sure we accurately capture everything you say. These recordings will not be shared outside of our team and will be destroyed in the end of the study.

Do you agree to be audio-recorded? Do you have any questions before we start?

The OMB control number for this project is 3145-0215. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 minutes per respondent, including the time for consenting. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspects of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Suzanne H. Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 2415 Eisenhower Ave, Alexandria, VA 22314 or send e-mail to splimpto@nsf.gov.

1. What was your role in site visits or other oversight activities for centers funded by [PROGRAM NAME]?

2. Do you have experience directing or participating if a large Center like [PROGRAM NAME]? If yes, what are the most important components which lead to success? What makes such Centers less effective?

3. In your opinion, are there certain types of problems that are better suited to or that require Center funding? If so, what are the characteristics that define such problems?

4. What do you see as the most important scientific contributions of the [PROGRAM NAME] Center(s) that you reviewed? How were these accomplishments enabled by the Center? Could they have been achieved under a single investigator grant? Why or why not?

5. What do you see as the most important non-scientific contributions of the Center(s) you reviewed (e.g. in workforce development, knowledge transfer, economic benefits, or educating the public)? Would they have been possible without the Center(s)? If not, how were these accomplishments enabled by the Center(s)?

6. In what ways have the Center(s) you reviewed demonstrated leadership in the field and responsiveness to developments in the field?

7. How effective is the management structure of the Center(s), and how well do they manage collaboration, communications, and data sharing across partners?

8. What aspects of the Center evolved in unexpected ways and/or deviated from the original goals? Did these changes lead to positive outcomes?

9. Do you think the research community has benefited from the Center(s)? Can you give some examples of these benefits?

10. Do you expect the programs, partnerships, and processes created by the Center(s) to remain in place after the funding ends? Can you give some examples of the lasting changes you anticipate?

11. Some Center-based research programs have a two-phase funding model. Phase I provides resources to develop the science, management, and broader impacts of a major center before requesting Phase II funding.

    What is your view of this model? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

12. Would you be interested in participating in this type of program? Why or why not?