

Appendix B.3: Initial survey invitation (control)

Dear <Name>:

I am writing to invite you to participate in a survey conducted on behalf of the National Science Foundation (NSF) about your experiences in the merit review process. Earlier this week, you should have received an email from Suzanne Iacono, Office Head of NSF's Office of Integrative Activities, regarding this important effort.

Conducted biennially since 2015, data from this survey are used to inform continuous improvement of the NSF merit review process with particular attention to understanding applicant and reviewer satisfaction with the process and the views of the quality of proposals and reviews. Previous survey data identified review quality as being of critical importance to applicants, which led to the development of a reviewer orientation video aimed at reinforcing best practices in the review process. The most recent survey conducted in 2019 had over 26,000 respondents and found that:

- Seventy-three percent of reviewers and 62 percent of applicants reported being satisfied with NSF's merit review process overall.
- Eighty-seven percent of reviewers indicated the proposals they reviewed were of high quality, and 62 percent of applicants indicated the reviews they received were of high quality.
- Reviewers spent an average of seven hours preparing each review, while most applicants (54 percent) spent up to 120 hours preparing each proposal.

This survey is completely voluntary and choosing not to participate will in no way adversely affect you. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

To complete the survey, please click on the secure, unique link provided below. If you exit the survey for any reason, your responses will be saved and you may click on the survey URL and enter your password again to resume your progress.

Unique survey link: [URL]

All your responses will be kept strictly confidential and respondents are subject to safeguards as provided by the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a). Additionally, survey responses will only be shared in the aggregate and will not allow for identification of individual respondents.

We know how busy you are and appreciate your time to assist NSF in this important project. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the survey helpdesk at MeritReviewSurvey@insightpolicyresearch.com, which is operated by NSF's survey contractor.

Sincerely,

Marietta Bowman, MSW
Senior Survey Researcher

