

Attachment B • Data collection communications

See below for email drafts for communications with focus group participants. These email drafts include recruitment emails, scheduling emails, and thank you emails. Referenced attachments are presented at the end of this document.

Initial recruitment email

For principal investigators:

Subject: [Response requested] Invitation to Participate in a Focus Group for an NSF Study on the Broader Impacts review criterion

Attachments: Study Abstract (in pdf form)

Dear [Title] [Last name],

We are excited to invite you to participate in a focus group as a part of an evaluation of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Broader Impacts review criterion. NSF has contracted with Mathematica to understand evidence-based policies and practices for merit review and provide NSF with recommendations on ways to improve the effectiveness of the Broader Impacts criterion. We believe that your expertise and experience as a [Principal Investigator] who has recently submitted a proposal to NSF will provide a vital perspective to the focus group and study, which will ultimately strengthen NSF's merit review process.

Please let us know if this opportunity interests you by replying to this email by [date]. The opportunity involves participating in a 90-minute virtual focus group hosted on Zoom during the spring of 2024. We are happy to answer any questions you have and/or you can send questions to eac@nsf.gov if you would like to direct questions to NSF. You can find an abstract of the project attached to this email. This focus group has been cleared under the Paperwork Reduction Act by the Office of Management and Budget and the clearance number is 3145-XXXX.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Warmly,

[Mathematica staff name]

[Signature]

For reviewers:

Subject: [Response requested] Invitation to Participate in a Focus Group for an NSF Study on Broader Impacts

Attachments: Study Abstract (in pdf form)

Dear [Title] [Last name],

We are excited to invite you to participate in a focus group as a part of an evaluation of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Broader Impacts review criterion. NSF has contracted with Mathematica to understand evidence-based policies and practices for merit review and provide NSF with recommendations on ways to improve the effectiveness of the Broader Impacts criterion. We believe that your expertise and experience as a recent reviewer of NSF proposals will provide a vital perspective to the focus group and study, which will ultimately strengthen NSF's merit review process.

Please let us know if this opportunity interests you by replying to this email by [date]. The opportunity involves participating in a 90-minute virtual focus group hosted on Zoom in the spring of 2024. We are happy to answer any questions you have and/or you can send questions to eac@nsf.gov if you would like to direct questions to NSF. You can find an abstract of the project attached to this email. This focus group has been cleared under the Paperwork Reduction Act by the Office of Management and Budget and the clearance number is 3145-XXXX.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Warmly,

[Mathematica staff name]

[Signature]

Reminder recruitment email

For principal investigators:

Subject: [Reminder] Invitation to Participate in a Focus Group for an NSF Study on Broader Impacts

Attachments: Study Abstract (in pdf form)

Dear [Title] [Last name],

I hope this email finds you well. **I am following up on our invitation to participate in a focus group as a part of an evaluation of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Broader Impacts review criterion.** We believe that your experience as a Principal Investigator who has recently submitted a proposal to NSF will provide a critical perspective to our study. This focus group has been cleared under the Paperwork Reduction Act by the Office of Management and Budget and the clearance number is 3145-XXXX.

Please let us know if you are interested in being a part of our focus group by replying to this email by [date]. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have.

We are excited to hear from you!

Best regards,

[Mathematica staff name]

[Signature]

For reviewers:

Subject: [Response requested] Invitation to Participate in a Focus Group for an NSF Study on Broader Impacts

Attachments: Study Abstract (in pdf form)

Dear [Title] [Last name],

I hope this email finds you well. **I am following up on our invitation to participate in a focus group as a part of the National Science Foundation (NSF) evaluation of the Foundation's Broader Impacts review criterion.** We believe that your experience as recent reviewer of NSF proposals will provide a critical perspective to our study. This focus group has been cleared under the Paperwork Reduction Act by the Office of Management and Budget and the clearance number is 3145-XXXX.

Please let us know if you are interested in being a part of our focus group by replying to this email by [date]. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Warmly,

[Mathematica staff name]

[Signature]

Follow up recruitment email

Subject: Thank You for Accepting Invitation to Participate in Focus Group for NSF Study on Broader Impacts

Attachments: Focus group discussion topics (in PDF form)

Dear [Title] [Last name],

Thank you for accepting our invitation to participate in a focus group as a part of an evaluation of the National Science Foundation (NSF's) Broader Impacts review criterion.

By participating in the focus group, you will have a chance to share your experiences and help contribute to strengthen NSF's merit review process. This focus group has been cleared under the Paperwork Reduction Act by the Office of Management and Budget and the clearance number is 3145-XXXX.

We would like to note that we are planning to record the session for note taking, but these videos will be kept entirely confidential. If this affects your ability or willingness to participate, please let us know.

We will send out scheduling information [insert timeline]. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have. We are looking forward to working with you soon!

Kind regards,

[Mathematica staff name]

[Signature]

Initial scheduling email

Subject: [Response Requested] Scheduling Focus Group for NSF Study on Broader Impacts

Attachments: None

Dear [Title] [Last name],

Thank you again for accepting our invitation to participate in a focus group as a part of an evaluation of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Broader Impacts review criterion.

We are excited to have you participate and share your experience with NSF's merit review process. We are in the process of scheduling the virtual focus group and have narrowed down the date and time to three potential time slots and have included a survey linked in the "other" category if your availability does not align with the three proposed times. The three time slots and the "other" category are listed below.

- 1) [Day of week, date, time]
- 2) [Day of week, date, time]
- 3) [Day of week, date, time]
- 4) Other [Insert survey asking for general availability]

We are convening participants across multiple time zones, **so we ask that you respond to this email confirming your availability for each of the three time slots (or fill out the survey linked in the "other" category if your availability does not align) by [date].** Once we determine the date and time with the most availability from the group, we will send a calendar invitation and Zoom link for the date selected.

We would like to reiterate that we are planning to record the session for note taking, but these videos will be kept entirely confidential. If this affects your ability or willingness to participate, please let us know. This focus group has been cleared under the Paperwork Reduction Act by the Office of Management and Budget and the clearance number is 3145-XXXX.

As always, please do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have about this process. We greatly appreciate your time and participation.

Kind regards,

[Mathematica staff name]

[Signature]

Reminder scheduling email

Subject: [Reminder] Scheduling Focus Group for NSF Study on Broader Impacts

Attachments: None

Dear [Title] [Last name],

I hope this email finds you well. We are excited to have you participate in a focus group as a part of an evaluation of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Broader Impacts review criterion.

This is a reminder to please confirm your availability for each of the three time slots (or fill out the survey linked in the "other" category) below by [date]. Once we determine the date and time with the most availability from the group, we will send a calendar invitation and Zoom link for the date selected. This focus group has been cleared under the Paperwork Reduction Act by the Office of Management and Budget and the clearance number is 3145-XXXX.

- 1) [Day of week, date, time]
- 2) [Day of week, date, time]
- 3) [Day of week, date, time]
- 4) Other [Insert survey asking for general availability]

We greatly appreciate your time and participation.

Kind regards,

[Mathematica staff name]

[Signature]

Follow up scheduling email

Subject: Focus Group for NSF study on Broader Impacts Scheduled

Attachments: Focus group discussion topics (in PDF form)

Dear [Title] [Last name],

Thank you again for accepting our invitation to participate in a focus group as a part of the National Science Foundation (NSF) evaluation of the Foundation's Broader Impacts review criterion.

The focus group has been scheduled for:

[Day of week, date, time]

We would like to reiterate that we are planning to record the session for note taking, but that these videos will be kept entirely confidential. If this affects your ability or willingness to participate, please let us know. This focus group has been cleared under the Paperwork Reduction Act by the Office of Management and Budget and the clearance number is 3145-XXXX.

Shortly, you will receive a calendar invitation for the date of the focus group with a Zoom link. **Please accept the invitation.** When it is time to join the meeting, please click the Zoom link attached to the invitation. We ask that everyone aim to join on time so that we have ample time to conduct the focus group. We are excited to have you join us and contribute to this very important study!

Kind regards,

[Mathematica staff name]

[Signature]

Thank you email

Subject: Thank You for your Participation in our [Interview/Focus Group] for NSF Study on Broader Impacts

Attachments: None

Dear [Title] [Last name],

Thank you so much for participating in a [focus group/interview] as a part of an evaluation of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Broader Impacts review criterion. We are very appreciative of your time and willingness to share your perspective on Broader Impacts. Findings from the [interviews/focus groups] will help to inform recommendations to NSF regarding the Broader Impacts criterion. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or additional input you may have.

Warm regards,

[Mathematica staff name]

[Signature]

Email attachments (as specified above and to be attached as a PDF)

Study Abstract

This work, mandated by Congress, is designed to understand evidence-based policies and practices for merit review and assess the alignment of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) merit review process with these policies and practices. NSF has contracted with Mathematica to conduct a literature review to summarize evidence-based merit review policies and practices (including, but not limited to, Broader Impacts) and a process evaluation to understand how the Foundation interprets and applies the Broader Impacts review criterion across its work. Based on findings from these activities, Mathematica will provide NSF with recommendations on ways the Foundation could improve the effectiveness of the Broader Impacts review criterion. The process evaluation will comprise three main components: (1) interviews and focus groups with NSF staff, National Science Board members, principal investigators, reviewers, and early-career scholars; (2) a document review; and (3) analyses of extant data. Mathematica will also convene a technical working group of external experts to provide guidance and feedback on the evaluation. This project will produce useful insights to inform ongoing NSF strategies to meet the goals established in Section 526 of the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Reauthorization Act of 2010.

Focus Group Discussion Topics

Planned discussion topics include:

- 1) How you understand and interpret NSF's Broader Impacts review criterion.
- 2) How you applied or assessed the Broader Impacts review criterion in your most recent proposals or reviews.
- 3) What guidance, training, or feedback related to the Broader Impacts review criterion (a) you have received from NSF and (b) would be helpful to have.