Nutrition Incentive Hub

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Sample E-mail to a Local Institutional Review Board for Nutrition Incentive Projects

Purpose

This document provides a sample e-mail inquiry to a local institutional review board (IRB) for Nutrition Incentive (e.g., SNAP Incentive) grantees collecting any kind of data from individuals (e.g., participant surveys, intercept surveys, focus groups, etc.) as part of their GusNIP grant. It is important to determine the level of review (exempt, expedited, full) required for a research study with human subjects, which includes program evaluation. Some local IRB websites make the type of IRB application clear on their website. In this case, you can skip writing a letter and submit the appropriate application type. If it is not clear, use the sample e-mail below to find out which type of IRB application is appropriate for your grant work. The grantee should complete the appropriate application based upon the IRB's response. IMPORTANT: Save all communication with the IRB to document your due diligence in undergoing IRB approval.

Sample E-mail

Dear Institutional Review Board at [fill in institution name],

I am writing to request the IRB's brief review of my project for help determining which level of review (exempt, expedited, full) is required before submitting a human subjects research application. The following text provides information about key components of the project that will assist you in the determination.

- **Title of project**: [fill in title]
- **Funder of project**: United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Grant Program (GusNIP)
- **Aim of project**: [fill in aim; e.g., This study aims to determine if study participants increase fruit and vegetable consumption after participation in a nutrition incentive program.]
- **Will participants undergo consent?** Yes, through a [separate Consent Form or Consent Statement at the top of the survey]
- **Recruitment procedures**: Beginning in [month], potential participants ages 18 and above who access [name of site or sites] will be asked to participate in [project title] through [name of recruitment tool; e.g., flyers and word of mouth].

Participants will be included in the study if the individual receives a nutrition incentive and are willing to complete study materials. Exclusion criteria will include [fill in any exclusion criteria; e.g., under 18, unable to complete study measures].

- **Number of participants expected for enrollment in the study**: [fill in number]
- **Intervention procedures**: Participants that enroll or participate in the study will be provided with a nutrition incentive. A nutrition incentive is [explain nutrition incentive program at your site(s)]. Participants are able to receive the incentive [describe maximum incentive amount and frequency] at [describe firm types]. Participants will [describe how nutrition incentive is expected to be used].
- **Data collected**: After consent, participants will undergo research measures at [fill in timepoint; e.g., pre at baseline and post at 6 months]. The following measures will be collected at [site where measures will be collected]: [fill in instruments; e.g., survey]. The survey will be collected by a researcher listed on this protocol and will ask questions about socio-demographics, health, and eating behaviors. [Describe other instruments and the process for collection, if applicable].
- **Risks to the participant**: The risks to the participant are minimal and not beyond what is encountered in daily life.
- **Confidentiality**: All efforts to ensure participant confidentiality will be maintained. [Explain data security procedures and how participants' confidentiality will be protected. E.g., The participant's data will be coded and the master code will be kept separate from the data in a locked file, only accessible by researchers on this protocol.

Please let me know if you need any other information about our project to determine the level of IRB application. We look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible if we should apply for exempt, expedited, full review. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
[name]

Questions?

Please e-mail Carmen Byker Shanks at cbshanks@centerfornutrition.org for questions about contacting a local IRB.

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