



- ☞ Recruitment refers to any activity that solicits research participation from potential subjects.
- ☞ The recruitment process and the materials used carry out the recruitment process are considered the beginning of the consent process.
- ☞ Federal regulations (45 CFR 46.111) require that the IRB review all research documents and activities that have a direct impact on the rights and welfare of the human subjects in the proposed research and must ensure that subject selection is fair and equitable.
- ☞ The content of recruitment materials and the recruitment process must be clear, not be coercive or demonstrate undue influence (especially in the case of vulnerable populations) and should not compromise the privacy of the individual or the confidentiality of information about the individual.
- ☞ Subjects should not be approached or recruited for research until the IRB has approved the research overall, the methods of recruitment, and the recruitment materials.
- ☞ The IRB submission should describe how the researchers will initially contact the target population for the purpose of recruiting them in the research (i.e. the mode of communication) or, if direct contact is not in the recruitment plan, how the target population will initially learn about the research opportunity.
- ☞ Common recruitment strategies include emails, recruitment letters, recruitment flyers, posters, brochures, media advertisements (advertisements in newspapers, magazines, or radio advertisements), informational sheets, verbal scripts for word-of mouth or in-person recruiting, on-line postings, and verbal announcements made by others on behalf of the researcher (e.g. teacher of a specific class, minister in a church, managing official in an organization).

Recruitment materials should include:

- ✓ The word “research”
- ✓ A brief description of the research purpose and procedures
- ✓ Any eligibility criteria
- ✓ The time commitments required
- ✓ The location of the research
- ✓ A person to contact for further information and their affiliated institution

Recruitment materials should **not** include:

- ✘ Materials should not claim, explicitly or implicitly, that the research is safe and effective treatment or therapy when the safety and efficacy of a treatment or therapy is what is being tested, or that a research intervention is equivalent or superior to other standard interventions or is superior to any current practice when it is not proven.
- ✘ Statements like “new treatment” or “new therapy” should not be used, as this implies to the subject that the intervention is a tested and approved standard of care intervention.
- ✘ Materials should not promise “free treatment” when what is meant is that subjects will not be charged for study-related procedures and tests.
- ✘ Materials should not include catchy words, like “exciting opportunity” or “Here’s your chance to help,”
- ✘ Materials should not include any statement or implication that the KSU IRB endorses the research study.
- ✘ Anything that would draw undue attention to incentive payment, such as Bold Type, Larger Font that the rest of the text, circled with stars, etc.

### **Notes on Recruitment Types**

- The method used to obtain contact information and to make initial contact with the research subjects should be sensitive to the privacy of the individuals. For example, if the recruitment plan includes the researchers contacting the potential subjects directly, the source of the contact information should not be one that would be considered private by the subjects. If the potential subjects are public figures or contact information is readily available through public sources such as the internet, then it is not likely that the subjects would consider this private information or an invasion of privacy to contact them directly. However, if the researcher plans to use organizational list serves or other private sources containing contact information, it is best to have an organizational member send an email on behalf of the researcher. Direct contact by the researcher may be considered an invasion of privacy by the potential subject, because they have the expectation that their contact information and/or association with the organization or group are private.
- When obtaining names and direct contact information from third party individuals, the researcher should consider whether doing so would constitute a breach in confidentiality, or be inconsistent with privacy laws, or organizational policies.
- If research involves sensitive topics, such as mental health therapy or treatment, HIV/AIDS status, drug or alcohol abuse, or sexual orientation, the researcher should consider whether the recruitment process could result in a breach in confidentiality related to the subject being identified as having the targeted condition or being a member of a specific target group. For example, the researcher may plan to send mass emails to potential subjects or make direct phone calls to subjects. In this case the email should be blinded so others receiving the email do not see the

contact information for the other potential subjects receiving the email. When conducting phone recruitment, the phone script should be careful to not “out” the potential subject when they are not the one answering the phone or when leaving a message for the targeted person.

- Snowball recruitment where the researcher obtains names and contact information from one individual for another one, for research involving sensitive topics, is generally not considered appropriate. Using such a method could result in the researcher obtaining information about an individual that is sensitive and private without their permission. Alternatively, the researcher should ask other subjects to pass along flyers, emails, information sheets, etc. that contain contact information for the researcher to prevent a breach in confidentiality or an invasion of privacy. In instances where the research subject is not sensitive (i.e. opinions on politics, consumer opinions), a snowball recruitment method where one person provides the name and contact information may be acceptable.
- Organizations, website, newsletters, etc. may have internal policy that governs the posting of materials. An investigator should ensure they ask for and follow the rules. In some instances, it may be required to obtain a letter of support from the head of an agency or organization that is specific to the recruitment method being used within that group.
- When using email recruitment methods where messages are sent on the behalf of the researcher by organizational members, the researcher should ensure that there is no coercive language included in the message to members. The materials should simply provide general information about the research and contact information for the researcher.
- You must follow KSU’s policy regarding both Email Usage and Mass Email Usage Policy
- When using social media, researchers should disable comments to prevent potential privacy issues of individuals identifying themselves as research participants or leaving their contact information for others to see.