

Recruitment of Study Participants

If there is a plan to collect data from people, the IRB application *must* include one or more recruitment material(s) regardless of how informal the recruitment document may be.

What are Recruitment Materials?

Basically, recruitment materials present the research to potential participants for the first time. Recruitment is how potential participants learn of the research project.

Recruitment materials might come in the form of an invitation email/letter, in-person or in-class verbal script, flyers/posters, telephone recruitment script, or webpage announcement (e.g., SONA).

Guidelines to Developing Recruitment Materials

Advertisements and recruitment materials should incorporate the following basic guidelines:

1. The approach is straightforward and honest
2. "Research" is specified
3. Eligibility criteria included
4. The purpose is clearly stated
5. The benefits are included
6. The contact person's name is included, and
7. The institution is identified.

Advertisements must not over-emphasize compensation or use catchy words such as "fast", "exciting", "cutting-edge", and "free". Advertisements should not claim, explicitly or implicitly, that the research is treatment or is superior to any current practice. Extravagant attention-getting devices such as extremely large, bold typefaces and dollar signs are prohibited. Advertisements should not pressure readers into participating.

Flyers, Posters, Brochures

It may be necessary for an investigator to obtain approval from the various sites where these materials are posted or distributed.

Media Advertisements

Media Advertisements may include newspaper ads and TV or radio announcements. These ads must be approved by the IRB before they are used. If you are using radio or TV ads, the IRB must view the recording. One key issue with the use of media advertisements is ensuring that the ads are free from even subtle coercion. Subtle coercion may include the tone of the voice used or the speed of speech.

Recruitment Letters

Depending on the research, the recruitment letter may or may not need to include all of the elements normally required within a consent document. The researcher must explain how the researcher obtained the potential subject's contact information.

Word of Mouth

If using this method, submit any written materials that may be discussed or given out to potential participants.

In-Person Recruitment

The time and location of recruitment needs to be considered. The timing needs to be convenient to the subject and should not increase the individual's anxiety level. The location needs to be taken into consideration, especially when the research topic is of a sensitive nature. For research of this nature, study procedures (including consenting) may need to be completed in a private room. Instances where the recruiter has a position of authority, power or influence over the subject (e.g., doctor-patient, employer-employee, teacher-student relationships, etc.) need special attention and consideration. The recruitment method needs