

ATTACHMENT I – PROJECT TOPIC

Measuring Sexual Harassment in the Science Technology Education and Mathematics (STEM) Enterprise

Background

In 2016, the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) asked the National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NAEM), to convene a panel to evaluate how NCSES can best meet the needs of measuring the science and engineering workforce. The [evaluation and subsequent report](#) addressed the workplace environment and its connection to harassment and discrimination in STEM. Currently, there is no existing high-quality national data set that would allow for us to learn about and understand the prevalence of harassment and how it affects the STEM pipeline. NAEM¹ left NCSES with the following specific recommendation to develop and field questions and a longer module to measure harassment:

RECOMMENDATION 3-6: The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics should develop for the surveys core questions and a more in-depth module on harassment and discrimination.

Systematically measuring the incidence of these behaviors is a crucial first step to not only understanding the persistence of the problem, but also identifying key risk and protective factors associated with these experiences. Ultimately, gathering this information will inform policymakers' efforts to create and adapt programs to prevent harassment (and similar problematic workplace behaviors), appropriately respond to these behaviors to create a welcoming environment for all, enhance the talent attracted to STEM careers, and retain that talent.

Key Objective

In October 2023, NCSES completed the first phase of this project focusing specifically on the feasibility of understanding and measuring the construct of sexual harassment. The result was a set of recommendations to guide NCSES through the process of developing these questions to collect the data on sexual harassment in STEM on NCSES surveys (see Attachments 3 and 4 to the RFS for reference). The objective of this study is to implement some of what was learned in Phase 1 to develop and test the core questions and a module to be added to existing NCSES surveys to measure sexual harassment in the STEM enterprise. The implementation plan and recommendations informed the continuation of this research and should not be seen as a specification or requirements. The offerors should propose an efficient and effective approach that

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. Measuring the 21st Century Science and Engineering Workforce Population: Evolving Needs. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24968>.

meets to goals of the project listed below and should not attempt to address the all elements within the Phase 1 implementation plan and recommendations.

The goals of this project are:

1. To conduct stakeholder engagement that will 1) identify organizations and entities that would yield meaningful partnerships in the survey question development, 2) identify strategic points through survey development at which to engage them, and 3) gather their feedback to proactively address potential concerns or criticisms of the survey development approach.
2. To explore the role of intersectionality to understand how overlapping social identities (e.g. race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity) interact and shape experiences with sexual harassment. Activities can include, but not limited to, focus groups and in-depth interviews.
3. To draft and test core survey questions and a module with the target populations across multiple rounds and revised based on the testing. Offerors are encouraged to propose appropriate testing options including, but not limited to, cognitive testing.
4. To develop a communication plan for stakeholders and potential respondents in order to understand and mitigate any potential concerns on collecting sexual harassment data.

Key Deliverables

At a minimum, offerors will provide the following if selected for an award. Additional deliverables may be required.

- Stakeholder engagement plan
- Interim memos on the findings and recommendations after each round of testing
- Thematic analysis and synthesis report on the findings from the focus groups and/or in-depth interviews.
- Draft questionnaire for the core questions and the module.
- Final testing report and recommendations
- Final core questions and a module
- OMB Generic Clearance materials that NCSES will submit to OMB to obtain approval for the proposed activities.
- Communication plan for survey rollout and on-going messaging