**TIP SHEET:** **Creating an effective research recruitment email using the Research Email Service**

The campus Research Email Service is a useful and free tool for recruiting research participants, available to all UW campus-affiliated researchers and applicable to most research topics. This document provides tips for crafting an effective email. Please reach out to the Recruitment and Retention Resource Center (RRRC) if you would like us to review your email message, or if we can assist with recruitment planning and troubleshooting for clinical trials or translational research. Note: examples in this document were taken from actual UW research recruitment emails.

***Regulatory considerations***

- Recruitment email text must be IRB approved and follow email recruitment guidelines
- Per the IRB Investigator Manual, "The following disclosure language should be included at the end of all email communications with subjects for studies that may collect sensitive or health related information":
    - Email is generally not a secure way to communicate sensitive or health related information as there are many ways for unauthorized users to access email. You should avoid sending sensitive, detailed personal information by email. Email should also not be used to convey information of an urgent nature. If you need to talk to someone immediately or would prefer not to receive study communication by email, please contact [Name, Title, Phone Number].

***Email subject line for your Research Email Service message***

- Write a compelling subject line that mentions who you are looking for and/or why someone might wish to join the study. Examples:
    - Help Shape the Design of Emerging Household Technologies
    - Does your 2-year old regularly hear English and Spanish? ¿Escucha español e inglés regularmente su niño de 2 años?
    - Participants with Disabilities Needed for a Social VR Safety Study
    - Ever Wonder if Vaping Affects You?
    - Exciting and Fun Learning Opportunity for Children Born Extremely Premature or With HIE

***Headline at top of email body***

- Consider including a bolded headline at the top of the email to grab attention. Examples:
    - **Is your child a musical expert or an aspiring musician? We want YOU!**
    - **Interact with a robot, have fun, and get paid for it!**
    - **Would your child like to learn more about emotions, sleep and the brain?**
    - **Explore the Meaning of Localness with Us!**

***Why should someone join your study? Explain this in the email!***

- Why should this study matter to someone reading the email? Why would someone want to sign up for your study? Include a couple brief sentences on this. Examples:
    - Do you want to improve hair hygiene for hospital patients? We are looking for individuals who care about their hair and want to share their experience.
    - Your participation could provide valuable insights to help design better tools and techniques for voice training.
    - This study will help us learn more about how changes in an infant's brain after an early brain injury relate to sensory and motor development. Our goal is to promote early diagnosis and improve treatment options for infants with brain injuries.
    - We believe this study, and the lessons we can learn from it, would provide value not only to you and your child, but also a lasting impact on the broader communities of families and schools.

***Describe in simple terms what participants will do in this study, including:***

- What the study activities are
- How much time study activities will take
- If there is more than one study visit, how long participant will be in the study in total
- Location(s) study activities will take place
- How participants will be compensated
- Example: The study involves driving a remotely operated vehicle in a driving simulator and answering a series of questions about your feelings while operating the vehicle and your driving history. It is a single-session, in-person study and the study will last around two hours. The study location is [address]. You will receive $40 Amazon gift cards as compensation for participating

**Tip:** Imagine reading the email as someone who knows nothing about your study: what might confuse them or what questions might they have? Consider having a family

member or friend review the email draft for you, to see whether it makes sense to people outside your study team.

***End with a clear action step - what should they do? Examples:***

- **INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING?** If interested in participating, complete our REDCap survey to see if you are eligible and be contacted by the study team: [link]
- **How do I sign up? What if I want to know more information?** If you are interested in participating, please fill out this survey: [link] Please contact the study coordinator, [name], [email address] if you have any questions.
- **Interested?** Please fill out our Recruitment Survey (**link**) to join the study. We're excited to hear your thoughts on [study topic]!
- **Next step:** If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact our research team at [email address]. Alternatively, you can sign up for the study by completing the survey using the link code below.

***Overall notes on content***

- Keep it brief! Use short sentences and avoid long paragraphs
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Write in plain language
    - There are several medical dictionaries that explain terms in simple language to make medical content easier to understand: University of Michigan dictionary and University of Iowa.
    - This brief guide covers how to write in plain language.
    - UW also offers a wonderful free Plain Language Training series.
- Formatting:
    - Lead with a bold headline at the top and end with a bold action step
    - Use bullet points for describing study activities or anything else that can be listed
    - Consider using bold section headers like "**What's the study about?**" "**Who can join?**" "**Participation details**" "**What will happen if you join?**" "**Compensation**"
    - All text should be left aligned (not centered)
    - Use timeframes that make sense to your participants (e.g. this study will last 4 months vs. this study will last 16 weeks)
- Test links and confirm your email address is correct

***Pre-screening forms***

- Recruitment emails often include a link to a pre-screening form. A separate tip sheet on pre-screening forms is in development. Please reach out if you have any questions on making a pre-screening form.

***Other considerations***

- After sending out a recruitment email, you may receive a lot of inquiries. Have a plan for responding to these prospective participants in a timely fashion. Online screening forms can help with this and if you will be screening for eligibility by phone, staff accordingly.
- Mass email can be an effective part of your recruitment strategy, allowing you to reach a large number of people associated with UW-Madison. However, it's important to consider whether this method will effectively recruit your target population and to supplement it with additional recruitment methods.
- A multifaceted approach is key to engaging a broad and diverse pool of individuals. If you'd like more support with recruitment planning, feel free to contact the ICTR Recruitment & Retention Resource Center at **recruitmenthelp@ictr.wisc.edu** or fill out our **consult request form**.