INFORMED CONSENT FORM (ICF) TEMPLATE – Implied Consent (Survey)

INSTRUCTIONS: A well presented Information Letter that is in accordance with this template and the instructions below will facilitate the approval process.

1. The Information Letter template herein is merely a template and it should be adapted to accurately reflect your research project. This template provides sample language for implied consent by an overt action, which is commonly used for minimal-risk anonymous survey research. Depending on the context of your research, other overt actions may be used to imply consent. The Information Letter should clearly communicate to the study participant which action is used to imply their consent (i.e. submission of survey).

2. Information letters should be written at a Grade 6-9 level of understanding. In some contexts (i.e., participants are academics or professionals, etc.), an argument for a higher readability can be made. Please use a readability index, such as hemingwayapp.com, to confirm the level.

3. Formatting:
   - Use headings, small paragraphs and spaces between the paragraphs.
   - Font size should be no smaller than the font on this page (e.g., Arial 12 point).
   - The footer should contain the 1) a version date 2) page number, and 3) Ethics ID (Pro000XXXXX).
   - The header should contain the institutional letterhead or institutional logo.

4. Grammar:
   - Use plain, non-scientific language. Explain technical terms and jargon.
   - Write out all acronyms the first time they appear in the information letter.
   - Avoid language that may express negative or disrespectful connotation or other emotive terms.
   - Use second person pronouns for the information letter part of the consent form (you/your) so that you are addressing the potential participant directly.
   - If applicable, use ‘participant’ rather than ‘patient’ or ‘subject’.

5. Explain the whole research process in a way that participants can understand. Put yourself in the place of the participant when composing your information letter.

6. Prior to submission, please ensure the following:
   - This instructional box is deleted.
   - The header and footers are updated.
   - The font colour of the finished consent should be black.
   - Spelling, grammar and formatting have been corrected.
   - Note: Microsoft Word is preferred format when uploading documents for REB review.

Blue font: *Instructions*

[Insert Institutional Logo/Letterhead]

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LETTER

Title of study: *Should match the title on the ethics application.*

Principal Investigator: Dr. XXX
Assistant Professor
School of **XXX**
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB
(780) 492-0000 ext. XXXX
XXXX@ualberta.ca

Supervisor(s): *(If applicable)*

Research Coordinator(s): *(If applicable)*

Co-investigator(s) *(If applicable)*

1) *Supervisor contact information must be included if the Principal Investigator is a student.*
2) *Students should refrain from putting their personal telephone numbers and personal email addresses. Only institutional contact information should be provided.*

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in this research study because you are *[insert eligibility criteria. i.e., you have experience working with immigrant populations].*

- *Consider if your study has other mechanisms for screening for eligibility or if this information letter serves as the main mechanism for screening, as the level of detail to describe your criteria may depend on this.*
- *If applicable and if it has not been addressed in a separate cover letter, indicate how you got their contact information.*

Purpose of the Study: From this research we wish to learn *[clearly indicate why the research is being done. Explain what hypothesis is being tested and what the research is supposed to demonstrate].*

Participation: If you wish to participate in this study, please complete the attached survey. The survey should take you approximately *[indicate the estimated length of time for completion of the survey, this can be a range. i.e., 15-20 minutes]* to complete. Once you have completed the survey, please return it *[provide instructions. i.e., in the*

stamped self-addressed envelope provided. In the case of electronic submission, state that they should choose the "submit" button].
We would appreciate receiving it before *[date].* If we do not receive it by said date, we will send you a notice of reminder. *This is true only for studies where anonymity is not guaranteed and the participant is aware that there is no opportunity for anonymity. These statements can be removed in the case of an anonymous survey. However, if reminders will be sent to everyone, regardless if they've already participated, then this should be stated. If more than one reminder will be sent, state how many along with the time interval between notices. NOTE: The REB will approve a maximum of three reminder notices.*

Risks: *Include information on any known risks or discomforts that may result from participation in the study. These should match the risks described in Section 3.1 of the application.*

- *Where risks are identified, outline the process for mitigating those risks i.e., if emotional upset is possible, provide a list of resources or instruct the participant to contact the researcher.*
- *If there are no known risks associated with the research, this should be stated.*

Benefits: *Describe any direct benefits to the participant first, followed by potential general benefits (e.g., to the group of persons to which the individual belongs, or to scientific and/or scholarly knowledge). These should match the benefits described in Section 3.2 of the application. If there is no anticipated direct benefit to the participant from the study, state this at the beginning of the section.*

NOTE: Incentives such as cash, gift cards, and other material rewards are not considered benefits of participation, and should be included in the compensation paragraph.

Example: *While there may not be any direct benefit to you, results from this study may help us learn about [XXX] and may benefit others in the future.*

Voluntary Participation: You are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer questions that you do not want to answer.

*Describe **participation withdrawal** practices. This should be consistent with Section 4.5 Question 5.0 in the application.* ***Example:*** Should you choose to withdraw midway through the electronic survey simply close the link and no responses will be included.

*Describe **data withdrawal** practices. This should be consistent with Section 4.5 Question 6.0 in the application. Outline the timeline and conditions for data withdrawal.*
Given the anonymous nature of the survey, once you have submitted your responses it

will no longer be possible to withdraw them from the study. *(Revise as applicable to your situation).*

Some survey programs record the data as the participant responds. The information letter should explicitly state what happens to the data. If the researchers want to retain the data as a default, this should be stated explicitly and participants need to be informed about how they can withdraw their data. In the case of anonymous surveys where data withdrawal is not possible, partially completed responses should not be used for analysis unless a compelling justification is provided to the REB.

For survey studies that provide compensation/incentives: If a participant withdraws from the study, they should still be entitled to receive the compensation/incentive. Explain your practices. ***Example:*** Should you wish to withdraw midway through the electronic survey, simply cease answering questions and proceed to the end of the survey and click submit to receive the study incentive.

For studies that use student participant pools: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate in today's session, you may complete an alternate educational activity [*describe the alternate task and instructions for its completion, where applicable*]. Should you choose to participate in the research activity, you may decide at any time after you have begun, to withdraw and still receive credit without having to complete the alternate activity. Discontinuation will not affect your academic status. If you complete the study and wish to have your data withdrawn for any reason, please contact *[the study team, research coordinator, etc.].*

Compensation (or Incentives): *This section can be removed if no compensation, incentives or reimbursements offered.*

Mention if there is compensation or opportunity to participate in a prize draw (see the University of Alberta Compensation Guidelines for rules surrounding the use of prize draws and reimbursement). Studies employing the use of a prize draw must include the odds of winning the prize and apply a skill-testing question to the winner. i.e., You will have approximately a 1 in XX chance of winning a XX$ gift card.

If the survey is otherwise anonymous, describe how the participant provides their contact information in a confidential way in order to receive their compensation or entry into the prize draw. This should be separate from their survey responses. Most online software systems have a mechanism whereby identifiers can be collected on a separate page.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: The information that you will share will remain strictly confidential.

Consider the potential for future uses of study data, and data sharing requirements, and advise participants of this possibility. Please indicate whether the data will be held in an identifiable or de-identified state.

Where data collection is done via email / Internet, and particularly where the topic is personal or involves risk, please include the following sentence or a similar one, as it applies to your project: In order to minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality we recommend that you use standard safety measures such as signing out of your account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you are no longer using them / when you have completed the study.
If the platform's servers are located outside of Canada, include the following phrase: Because your information is stored outside of Canada it may be subject to the privacy legislation of those territories which may include access by governmental agents.

Results will be published in pooled (aggregate) format *(if true)*. Anonymity is guaranteed since you are not being asked to provide your name or any personal information *(if true. If not, indicate status of anonymity)*. *State whether name, email or IP addresses will be available to the research team and if so, how confidentiality will be protected.*

Data Storage: *Describe your data storage plans including the length of time of data storage, location of storage and any physical and/or technical (i.e. i.e., encrypted, password protected and behind secure firewalls) safeguards in place.*

Example: Paper surveys will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the supervisor *[or researcher]* at the University of Alberta for a minimum period of *5* years. Electronic copies of the survey will be encrypted and stored on a password protected computer in the department of [*home department of researcher/supervisor]* at the University of Alberta.

Information about the Study Results: *Indicate whether or not the research findings will be available to the participants, and if so, how the findings will be made available for them.*

For studies wishing to deposit data in a repository: After the study is done, study data will be stored in a secure data repository, *[name repository here]*, to facilitate re-use of the data by approved researchers. Any personal information (i.e., your name, address, telephone number *(revise list as applicable to your research)*) that could identify you will be removed or changed prior to sharing study data with other researchers. Provided they adhere to the policies of the repository and protect confidentiality, this anonymized data may be used by other researchers without further ethics board review. Your data may be linked with other data for research purposes only to increase the usefulness of the data, as subject to scientific and ethical oversight as mentioned above.

Contact Information: If you have any questions about the research now or later, please contact *[insert Principal Investigator and/or study coordinator contact here]*

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office at ethics@ualberta.ca or +1(780)492-2615 and quote Ethics ID Pro00XXXXXX *(update Ethics ID)*. This office is independent of the researchers.

Disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest related to payment or funding received for conducting the study. This includes any institutional funding, personal remuneration or potential for commercialization of the research. If the study is funded either by a grant or a commercial sponsor, name the funder and/or the sponsor and indicate that the researchers or their institution are receiving funding to conduct the study. *" The study is being funded/sponsored by the [name of funder/granting agency or commercial sponsor]. The Institution and Principal Investigator are receiving funds to cover the costs of doing this study. You are entitled to request any details concerning this compensation from the Principal Investigator."*

Please keep this form for your records. *When electronic, indicate how the participant can save/print a copy for their records. If possible, insert a link to a pdf version that can be downloaded.*

Completion and submission of the survey means your consent to participate.

NOTE: For research that is recruiting from crowdsourcing platforms (i.e. MTurk, Prolific, etc.), there is additional guidance from the Panel of Research Ethics on implementing principals of the TCPS2 conduct when using these platforms: https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/crowdsourcing_platform-plateformes_recrutement.html