

FFTA



Benchmark TFC! Project **Statement regarding Institutional Review Board**

In recognizing the importance of protecting youth rights, FFTA submitted an Institutional Review Board (IRB) review of the *Benchmark TFC!* project with the New England Institutional Review Board. The purpose of an IRB review is to have an oversight committee, governed by Federal Regulations, review the project with the purpose of protecting and managing risk to human participants involved in research. Following is a short list of specific aims of the IRB:

- To promote the safety and wellbeing of human participants
- To ensure adherence to the ethical values and principles underlying research
- To ensure that only ethical and scientifically valid research is implemented
- To allay concerns by the general public about the responsible conduct of research

After reviewing our submitted materials, the review board determined that this project fits under the category of "exempt research." A copy of the exemption letter is on the FFTA website and can be viewed at: <http://ffta.org/benchmark/irbdeterminationltr.pdf>

To qualify for exempt status the research must have little, if any, associated risk and fall into one or more of the six exempt categories permitted by the federal regulations. An example of exempt research activities includes:

- If the information is recorded so that subjects cannot be linked directly or through identifiers, surveys, observations of public behavior, taste and food quality evaluations.

The *Benchmark TFC!* Project involves minimal risk to participants because:

- No variables will be manipulated;
- Services will be delivered as usual by each participating Member Agency;
- Data is unidentifiable;
- Data reports will only include data in the aggregate and in such a way that individual agencies cannot be identified;
- Data gathering is non-invasive, using surveys and record reviews.

FFTA does not require individual agencies to submit this project to an IRB. Most agencies will see no need for further review; however, only your agency can make that determination. At a minimum, FFTA does require that each agency include a statement in their intake material, which states that they will be using data for evaluation purposes.

If you have any questions about this issue we are happy to answer them. Please contact either Lynn Castrianno, *Benchmark TFC!* Project Director (lcastrianno@cox.net or (402) 572-0575) OR Melissa Cole, FFTA Administrator (mcole@ffta.org or (800) 414-3382, ext. 113).