

# Does Your Project Require an Application to the Cornell IRB Office?

## Decision Tree #1

**Will you, a member of your research team or a collaborator observe, interact with, or intervene with individuals to gather information that will be used for research?** Examples:

- Surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, interviews
- Games, experiments in physical or in electronic environments
- Physical or biomedical procedures – imaging, scanning, blood collection, anthropomorphic procedures
- Diet, nutrition studies, taste tests
- Studies examining effectiveness of educational tools or curricula
- Use of instruments or devices, including phones, to collect data or monitor or influence behavior
- Passive observation of public behavior (in physical or online environments, including social media)
- Studies examining individuals' responses to manipulation of their physical or online environment
- Another activity that involves observation of, or interaction with, individuals to gather information for research

**NO,  
research will use  
only existing data**

**Refer to IRB Decision  
Tree #2 on Existing/  
Secondary data**

**YES**

Is the information being collected 'about' individuals?

**NO**

The focus of the project is only on products, methods, policies, procedures, organizations: e.g., interviewing transportation staff and officials about parking or transportation policies and procedures.

**Not human participant research. No application to the IRB office is needed.**

**YES**

The focus of the project is on people or their opinions, perceptions, choices, decisions regarding themselves or how methods, policies, procedures, organizations etc. affect them or their environment.

Is this a **class project**?

**YES**

Is the sole intent of the project to meet course requirements, with **no intention to use the results for something other than the course assignment**?

**NO**

The project may lead to use of the results outside of the course (e.g., for a publication, presentation, thesis, or dissertation).

**NO**

Is the project an **oral history, ethnographic, or journalistic piece**?

**YES**

Does the project involve stories that will or may draw broad conclusions about the population, cultures, norms and practices; even if no research hypothesis is being tested or validated?

**NO**

Published materials will be limited to only documenting or reporting on events, situations, policies, institutions or systems without the intent to form hypotheses, draw conclusions, or generalize findings.

**Not human participant research. No application to the IRB office is needed.**

**NO**

Is this a **quality assurance/quality improvement/organizational effectiveness study**? I.e. to assess, improve, or develop programs or services for an organization?

**YES**

Will outcomes be generalized for other organizations, programs or services?

**NO**

Outcomes will remain specific to the organization, programs or services, although other organizations may use the results for their own programs.

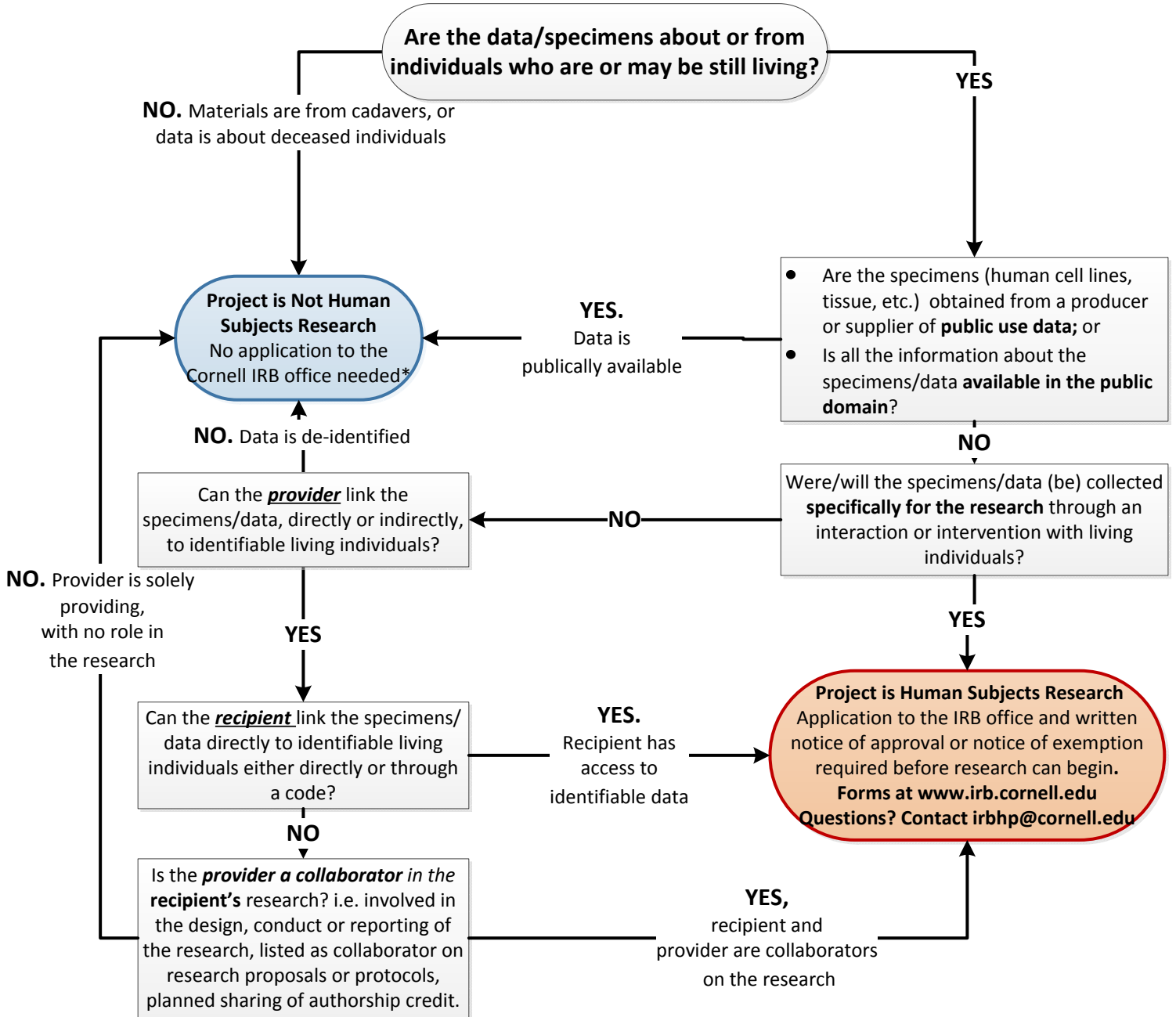
**YES**

**NO**

**YES**

**Project is research with human subjects.  
An application to the IRB office and written notice of approval required before the study can begin.  
Forms available at [www.irb.cornell.edu](http://www.irb.cornell.edu). Questions? Contact [irbhp@cornell.edu](mailto:irbhp@cornell.edu)**

**Does Your Research Involving Secondary or Existing Data, Documents or Biological Specimens Require Review by the Cornell IRB Office?**  
**Decision Tree #2**



\*Contact the Cornell Office of Sponsored Programs ([www.ovpr.cornell.edu/osp](http://www.ovpr.cornell.edu/osp)) if acquiring the data requires a Data Use Agreement or a Materials Transfer Agreement between the provider and recipient.

**Reference:**

“Research Involving Private Information or Biological Specimens Flowchart”, National Institute of Health (NIH), January 2006, <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/hs/PrivateInfoOrBioSpecimensDecisionChart.pdf>