THE SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Specific Instructions

A. Justification

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is charged with seeing that refugees become effectively resettled in the U.S., with the primary goal of rapid self-sufficiency and adjustment. Since 1975, when Southeast Asian refugees first began arriving in the United States, ORR (and its predecessors) has commissioned periodic surveys of the refugee population.

A primary purpose of these surveys has been to enable ORR to fulfill its reporting requirement to Congress. The Refugee Act of 1980 (Section 413(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act) requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services submit an Annual Report to Congress that "shall contain an updated profile of the employment and labor force statistics for refugees who have entered the United States within the five fiscal-year period immediately preceding the fiscal year within which the report is to be made…as well as a description of the extent to which refugees received the forms of assistance or services under this chapter during that period." ORR also makes aggregated findings of the survey available to the general public and uses the findings to make an overall evaluation of the program's success in effectively resettling refugees, for purposes of program planning, policy-making, and future budgeting processes.

ORR plans to conduct the next survey for the purpose of obtaining information on the economic adjustment of refugees and other persons eligible for refugee programs when entering the United States. Emphasis will be placed on income, employment and labor force data, English language ability, and the utilization of Government services.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

A primary purpose of these surveys has been to enable ORR to fulfill its reporting requirement to Congress. The Refugee Act of 1980 (Section 413(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act) requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services submit an Annual Report to Congress. ORR also makes aggregated findings of the survey available to the general public and uses the findings to make an overall evaluation of the program's success in effectively resettling refugees, for purposes of program planning, policy-making, and future budgeting processes.

3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

The use of Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) will be employed to:

- Reduce the use of paper and lower printing costs
- Centrally manage every aspect of the telephone interviewing process
- Standardize responses and increase accuracy
- Allow rapid collation of specific information

- Increase number of interviews that are conducted per day
- Allow rapid collation and statistical analysis of data
- Enhance quality control

The use of CATI reduces the burden estimate for the survey instrument by 2.4 minutes per response. The overall burden estimate for this information collection does not change, due to the addition of a Request for Participation letter (which includes an information collection from potential survey respondents) – see section 12 below.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

No similar data are available from other sources. Though ORR receives data from many sources on refugee populations present in the U.S., there are no available data on refugees' economic adjustment after arrival in the U.S over the five-year period after arrival. Per statute, ORR is specifically charged with collecting such data.

5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

Not applicable.

6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

The survey must be conducted on a continuous basis because The Refugee Act of 1980 (Section 413(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act) requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to submit an Annual Report to Congress on the Refugee Resettlement Program. If ORR cannot complete the survey on an annual basis, we will be out of compliance with statute.

7. Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

The Refugee Arrivals Data System, from which data are extracted for the purposes of developing a survey sample, is a Privacy Act System of Records.

8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside the Agency

The 60-day Federal Register Notice was published on 3/11/2009, Volume 74, page 76. ORR received one comment on this notice from an individual stating that refugee admissions should be suspended, and arguing that the U.S. should focus on improving the well-being of citizens in the current economic climate. This comment is not relevant to the specific purpose of this information collection, which is to gather data on the economic adjustment of refugee populations post-arrival in the United States, in response to the statutory requirements of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The collection does not have any relationship to the acceptance or processing of refugee populations' applications for admission into the U.S.

9. Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents

To increase the response rate, we propose (with OMB permission) that respondents be offered a low-denomination (maximum $25) gift card or voucher to local establishments for food (similar to the WIC program) or education and training services. Because the card will be for a specific service, this incentive should not be considered additional income and would therefore not adversely affect benefits eligibility (e.g. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) or Medicaid) for survey respondents. We have included the cost of this incentive in estimate of the annualized cost to the Federal Government.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

In the Introductory Statement of the survey, the following assurance of confidentiality is stated, "*…any information that you give is will be held in confidence and will be used for statistical purposes only.*"

To ensure confidentiality:

- Project staff are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement
- Each respondent is assigned a unique identifier to use in place of a name. Names are never included in the Annual Report to Congress, only the cumulative data.
- The electronic data are stored on a secure server.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The information collected in the survey is a critical factor in understanding what resources are necessary to increase refugee populations' ability to become acclimated to U.S. society. It is also important to ask certain potentially sensitive questions as means of gathering the necessary information so that data-driven recommendations can be made to properly allocate funds to assist these populations. Every possible step is taken to fully inform respondents about the nature of the study (as well as any potentially sensitive questions), the voluntary aspect of their participation, benefits to them or to others from participation (in particular, that the information will be used to improve ORR's ability to provide benefits and services in an effective way), and the extent to which confidentiality can be assured (no individual identifiers are retained in the data that is sent forward to ORR). This information is provided in the Request for Participation letter (included in clearance package).

12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs

Annual Burden Estimates				
Instrument	# of Respondents	# of responses per Respondent	Average burden hours per Response	Total burden hours
ORR-9 (Annual Survey of Refugees)	2000	1	0.6266	1253.33
Request for Participation	2000	1	0.04	80

Letter				

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 1,333.33

13. Estimates of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents and Record Keepers

There are no direct monetary costs to respondents other than their time to participate in the study. See section 14 for other costs.

14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

Estimated Annual Cost for FY 2009 Survey

Annual Survey of Refugees			
LABOR	RATE	HOURS	ESTIMATED
Project Director	$69.96	500	$34,980.00
Analytical Specialist	$33.75	1400	$47,250.00
Lead Operation Specialist	$34.12	1400	$47,768.00
Survey Manager	$27.88	1400	$39,032.00
Research Specialist (2)	$19.12	3600	$68,832.00
Research Assistant	$16.95	1800	$30,510.00
Interviewers (20)	$19.00	8200	$155,800.00
TOTAL LABOR		18300	$424,172.00
Fringe 30%			$127,251.60
Overhead 40%			$169,668.80
G&A 11%			$46,658.92
TOTAL LOADED LABOR			$767,751.32
OTHER DIRECT COSTS			
	Rate	Quantity	
Translation of survey instrument into commonly spoken languages	$1,500.00	1	$1,500.00
Copying			$3,300.00
Technical Support (Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing)	$15,000.00	1	$15,000.00
Contractor Travel			$2,000.00
Supplies			$5,000.00
Tracing Cost			$5,000.00
Provision of respondent incentives (proposed)	$25 per	1,300	$32,500.00
OTHER DIRECT COSTS			$64,300.00
G&A on ODCs only 14%			$9,002.00
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS			$73,302.00
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (ODCS & LABOR)			$841,053.32
Fee 7%			$58,946.68

TOTAL	$900,000.00

15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments

Some minor changes were made to the information collection from the currently approved collection. First, we have now explicitly listed the two information collection instruments that comprise this collection – a Request for Participation letter and the Annual Survey of Refugees survey instrument. Both instruments are currently approved as part of this collection, but they were not listed separately.

Second, a change was made to annual burden hour estimate, from 1,022 total hours to 1,333 total hours. This is the result of a change in the estimated response rate, a subsequent change in the estimated number of respondents, and a change in the average burden hours per response. The estimated number of respondents for each collection instrument has been revised to 2,000 from 1,363, because we expect that the response rate for the survey will increase due to the proposed provision of an incentive (see section 9). The change in the average burden hours per response has changed from 45 minutes to 40 minutes (37.5 minutes for the survey instrument and 2.5 minutes for the Request for Participation letter) due to the recent adoption of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), which allows for more efficient interviewing.

There is no change in the content of the survey instrument, or the purposes, sampling procedures, and general conduct of the survey.

16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule

ORR objectives are to locate the sampled respondents, conduct telephone interviews in the native language of the respondent, produce both cross-sectional and longitudinal data files with documentation, and provide several levels of analysis, including tabulations of the survey findings and patterns of non-response.

The contractor will tabulate the answers to the telephone interviews and the data will be analyzed. The findings will be presented as an electronic data file to include values for all variables as well as variable names and labels and submit a corresponding codebook. Upon completion of the field data collection activities, we will process all survey and administrative data, create both the cross-sectional and longitudinal data files, furnish associated documentation, conduct requested data analyses, and produce the analysis results in the tabular forms specified by ORR.

Timeline

Major Task	Timeline
Tracing	Ongoing
Receipt of New Sample	End of May
Conduct Interviews	June or July through January
Complete Data File	January
Complete Requested Tabulations	January - March

Submit Longitudinal linked File	February - March
Publication (Annual Report to Congress)	As determined by Administration for Children and Families

17. Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date is Inappropriate

Not applicable; expiration date will be displayed.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

B. Statistical Methods (used for collection of information employing statistical methods)

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

The Annual Survey of Refugees is a longitudinal panel study, tracking participant characteristics and outcomes over a five year period. Each year, a sample of refugees and Cuban/Haitian entrants (as well as certain other eligible populations of interest) is drawn from ORR's Refugee Arrivals Data System (RADS). The methodology for drawing the sample is as follows:

- The RADS contractor creates a table of arrivals (refugees and Cuban/Haitian entrants, as well as certain other eligible populations of interest) with date of arrival in the U.S. between May 1st of the prior fiscal year and April 30th of the current fiscal year. Each population being sampled is extracted into a separate table.
    - This date range is chosen in order to meet the required due dates for the Annual Report to Congress.
    - The sampling frame, and therefore the sample, consists of all persons who have entered the United States as refugees, Amerasian immigrants (including their immediate family members), Cuban and Haitian entrants, and possibly certain other eligible populations of interest, during the specified time period.
    - If ORR wishes to obtain information on a certain group within this population (such as refugees arriving from a particular country) or another eligible population of interest (e.g., a newly eligible population such as Iraqi or Afghan Special Immigrants), ORR may request that the RADS contractor sample individuals with these characteristics at a higher rate than the general sample (i.e., oversample them). This allows the Annual Survey contractor to gather more information on the outcomes of this particular group of arrivals.

- Each individual in the table is given an individual identifier (e.g., between 1 and 70,000).

- ORR provides the RADS contractor with a desired sampling ratio, based on the number of arrivals in the table and the required size of the sample (e.g., 1:250 ratio).

- The RADS contractor generates a random sample of the individuals in the table, using the random number generator feature in Microsoft Excel. Once this is complete, the RADS contractor generates a second random sample of the individuals in the table using the same methodology. Duplicates (individuals who appear in both files) are removed.

- The sample cohort files are provided to the Annual Survey contractor so that they can begin tracing and interviewing respondents.

Each sample cohort of refugees is interviewed annually for five years. A longitudinal panel of refugees and entrants who arrived in past fiscal years already exists. In the 2009 survey, for example, the total sample will consist of (1) refugees and entrants in the existing longitudinal sample who entered the United States between 05/1/2004 and 04/30/2008, and (2) a new sample of individuals who entered the United States between 05/01/2008 and 04/30/2009. In each year after 2009, the sample cohort of individuals who entered the United States in the earliest year will be dropped, and a new sample from the current year representative of all refugees and entrants will be added. Each year's cohort of refugees will remain in the sample for five years, participating in up to five interviews. Therefore, the refugees who arrived between May 1, 2008 and April 30, 2009 are scheduled to be interviewed for the fifth and final time in the fall of 2013.

There were 2,600 persons in the 2008 sample (including individuals from all five sampled cohorts as described above). In the past several years, the response rate has ranged between 25 and 35 percent. In the 2008 survey, as a result of improved tracking and use of technology, the response rate rose to 50.3 percent. We expect a similar response rate in the 2009 survey. Though a response rate of 50 percent may seem low compared to surveys of the broader population, we believe that it should be considered a very good response rate for the hard-to-reach, often mobile refugee populations surveyed. Many refugees are wary of responding to these kinds of sensitive surveys, and often change their addresses as they become settled in the U.S. Many also lack phone numbers or easy ways to contact them.

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

The information collection procedure is as follows:

- <u>Tracing of Respondents</u>
    - The contractor shall rely on existing sample files for re-contacting the prior cohorts of persons interviewed or approached for earlier survey interviews. Newly sampled respondents are traced and contacted by letter, by telephone, or both. Extensive tracing activity may be required for some respondents. The contractor is expected to work with local and national voluntary agencies to locate respondents when necessary.

- <u>Advance Mail-out</u>
    - The contractor prepares and sends a Request for Participation letter (included in clearance package) to each of the potential respondents. The letter introduces the survey and requests a prompt return of a pre-addressed, postage-paid letter. The letter will provide the potential respondent the opportunity to indicate his/her

willingness to participate in the survey and to furnish the contractor with his/her current telephone number. If a potential respondent does not return the letter, the contractor attempts to obtain the telephone number and obtain the individual's participation using other available means, such as contacts in the local community. Extensive efforts are taken in order to achieve the highest response rate possible.

- Translation of Survey Instrument
  - The contractor obtains translations of the survey instrument described in this information collection into various foreign language versions spoken by refugee populations.

- Interviewing
  - The contractor contacts each respondent who has indicated his/her willingness to participate in the survey. Refugees are not interviewed if they have been in the United States for less than five months. For example, the refugees who first arrived between May 1, 2007 and April 30, 2007 were interviewed for the first time in the fall of 2008. Meanwhile, refugees who arrive from May 1, 2008 onward will be contacted to establish a base for their initial interview in the fall of 2009. Each year's cohort of refugees will remain in the sample for five years, participating in potentially five interviews, and will then be dropped from the sample. Therefore, the refugees who arrived between May 1, 2008 and April 30, 2009 are scheduled to be interviewed for the fifth and final time in the fall of 2013.
  - The sampling frame, and therefore the sample, consists of individuals who have entered the United States during the specified time period. A large proportion of the refugee population consists of children, so many of those sampled are children. For both practical and cultural reasons, if the sampled person is a child or young person, the contractor will interview the head of the household or other responsible adult who agrees to serve as the respondent. The relevant household is defined as the household in which the sampled person is living at the same time of the interview; the interview schedule pertains to the household as an entity and to all adults living in the household. This has two implications: (1) the household may change composition over the five years that the selected person is in the sample; (2) the household may contain members who arrived in the United States more than five years previously; the interview is to cover them as well.
  - Generally, interviews are conducted over the telephone. In cases where telephone interviewing is not feasible or desired, and in locations (as determined by the contractor in consultation with the project officer) where the survey population is large enough to make it cost-effective, the interviewer *may* interview participants in-person at a location of the participant's choice (we do not expect this to occur frequently). The contractor shall attempt to conduct the survey in the appropriate native language of the respondent. In addition to the languages translated in the survey instrument, the contractor may hire a translator to accommodate additional languages for some interviews. As each oral interview progresses, the interviewer

completes the hard copy or electronic survey instrument which shall be the prime data gathering instrument.

- Quality Control
  The contractor:
  - Prepares a questionnaire reference book, in consultation with the project officer, for use by the interviewers. The contractor provides training to the interviewers in the conduct of these interviews in order to minimize interviewer error and variability. Prior to interviewing, an intensive three-part training session is developed to prepare the interviewer for the survey season and to minimize error and variability. Interviewers will receive a thorough explanation of each survey question and identify logical and acceptable responses to questions;
  - Ensures that interviewers employ the most up-to-date interviewing techniques to minimize the length of the interview, including use of computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) methods, if applicable;
  - Downloads and reviews data tables from CATI system
  - Runs a series of frequency tests to identify any erroneous anomalies;
  - Deletes incomplete records, if required;
  - Identifies and corrects missing data (missing data are not likely as the interviewing is automated. Questions and answer choices follow logical skips patterns);
  - Determines the measurement level for each data field (i.e. string or numeric);
  - Checks and deletes unexpected symbols in the data fields (e.g. “,” “+”);
  - Identifies and deletes duplicate records;
  - Checks the response categories of each categorical variable against the original questionnaire;
  - Attaches correct variables and value labels to each data field;
  - Conducts logic checks to identify correct outliers (i.e. out of range values);
  - Checks skip patterns and assign appropriate value labels to not-applicables;
  - Determines the difference between the missing values and ‘0’ values, which is particularly important for calculating means; and
  - Edits the verbatim responses to ensure that the recorded answers are meaningful.

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Non-response

The contractor relies on sample data provided in earlier survey years to contact persons previously interviewed. All sampled persons are traced and contacted by letter, and telephone, or both. Should these methods yield minimal results, we attempt additional tracing activities including, but not limited to:

- The usage of internet people search sites;
- Working with reliable Database Warehouses;
- Seeking information from non-profit Voluntary Agencies (VOLAG) that are involved in the resettlement of refugee populations;
- Sending certified mail;

- Translation of Survey Instrument into respondent's native language; and
- Comprehensive training of the research interviewers. Prior to interviewing, an intensive three-part training session will be developed to prepare the interviewer for the survey season and to minimize error and variability. Interviewers will receive a thorough explanation of each survey question and identify logical and acceptable responses to questions.

Non-response procedure: Sampled persons who are not interviewed by the end of the survey period are compiled into a separate database. This non-response database is maintained by HHS.

4. Test of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

The data collection procedures and instruments are virtually identical to ones used previously with satisfactory results.

5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

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