

**To:** Jennifer Nou, OMB

**From:** Molly Irwin and Hilary Forster, Federal Project Officers

**Through:** Molly Buck, OPRE

**Re:** Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program (ICR Ref # 201106-0970-008)

**Date:** September 27, 2011

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Thank you for your feedback on Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program ICR (Ref # 201106-0970-008) and for the very helpful phone call on 9/23/2011.

We have revised the HPOG Supporting Statements based on your feedback. The answers to a general clarification questions are below.

#### **Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG)**

**2. Please clarify whether and how ACF will be able to access the National Directory of New Hires for this evaluation.**

We are currently working with the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) to develop a data request and put in place an MOU to obtain these data.

**4. Are participants allowed to decline to give consent to be in the evaluation but still participate in the program? If so, what percent of program participants does ACF estimate will be covered by the dataset? On what basis is that estimate derived? And how will ACF assess bias if participants can participate in the program but decline to allow their data to be used in the evaluation?**

The informed consent is for the research and evaluation studies. Individuals who decline to provide their consent can participate in the HPOG program; their information will be included in the PRS for program management purposes but they will not be included in any research or evaluation studies. The rate of consents depends on the content of the script explaining the research, the available options if one does not consent, and the reputation of the programs. Based on past Abt Associates and Urban Institute studies, 90% or more of persons asked to provide consent do so. For example, in a recent Urban Institute study of Drug Courts, 92.3% gave consent, and in a study of low income young parents 95% gave consent. For HPOG, we use the more conservative estimate that 90% will consent. Because all HPOG participants will be in the data system, analysts will be able to estimate any bias in the two groups (those who give their consent and those who do not), allowing statistical adjustments to be made if necessary.

**7. Questionnaire comments:**

**a. How is the information in this instrument populated? Is the grantee literally using this material as a questionnaire that program participants complete or is the grantee extracting this information from its program files? If the latter, how has ACF instructed its grantees to collect such data from program participants?**

The data collection instrument for HPOG is a list of data items compiled into an online management information system. Nearly all grantees are Workforce Investment Act (WIA) agencies, One-Stop Career Centers, or community colleges, all of which have regular client reporting systems, case files, or records. Grantees will populate the information into the HPOG data system in various ways, depending on their programs and their current information systems. Some may use the HPOG system for case management and enter data while doing intake interviews and other interactions with participants, others may upload data from case files or existing MIS. The system is being developed to allow programs flexibility in how they populate information. The clearance submission included a spreadsheet of the data items and formatting, but it is not a questionnaire. Grantees will be provided guidelines and instructions for data entry into the online system through webinar training sessions before the system becomes operational.

**b. "Instrument A.1" lists topics in the left most column and response fields in the second column. However, the topics are not formatted as a complete question. And in many cases there are no definitions (eg, of household in the construct labeled household income). Is this presentation literally all that a grantee is provided (eg, "race" or "refugee status" or is there a more complete document we should review?)**

As indicated above, the data system is not a questionnaire, but some grantees may choose to use the system for case management in which case staff may ask participants for some information on some data items. The clearance submission included a spreadsheet of data items and formatting, but it is not intended to be a questionnaire, as discussed above under Q7.a.