

ACF update to OMB regarding the terms of Clearance for 0970-0036 (ORR-6)

1. Consult with States to determine how to improve the ORR-6

Since the approval of the revised ORR-6, in the past six months ORR has engaged States on the current improvements, their effects to State systems and how to best capture reporting elements.

ORR hosted a training webinar with all States on ORR-6 and performance outcomes, data collection and provided clarification on various data collection elements and answered questions.

In addition, ORR discussed ORR-6 data collection and performance outcomes with nine States through separate phone conversations or email exchanges, acquiring important input from States, but also providing guidance and clarification on efforts how to improve the current system.

ORR asked States to provide additional feedback to ORR on ORR-6 and received responses from 22 States who provided substantial feedback on their challenges to collect additional data, efforts to improve their systems and ideas how to improve data collection in the future.

In an effort to improve their systems, States are:

- Redesigning and modifying data systems to align reporting requirements with existing data systems
- Improving communication and streamlining reporting mechanisms to ensure correct reporting
- Increasing collaboration with and among service providers to share and better capture data on refugee services, especially in sensitive, but important health services
- Strengthening existing and establishing new benchmarks for performance
- Conducting State-wide training with refugee service providers to ensure consistency and accuracy of reporting

Despite their efforts to improve data collection, States experience certain challenges:

- Some States are in the process of building client databases and implementation of some ORR-6 changes may be gradual or delayed
- State data collection systems are part of other major programs and data collection changes require lengthy and costly effort in order to be implemented

2. *Improve State databases to eliminate duplicative collections of information*

In many States comprehensive data systems already exist to collect and report refugee services data. ORR is working with States to ensure the development and data sharing that will result in actual numbers without any duplication. Duplications usually occur at the level of individual service provider or at entry of information into database for tracking purposes. Additional complication is that entry data is usually received from a number of databases with different formats and identification elements.

Aside from meeting reporting requirements, States also need to balance their efforts with needs for enhanced program management tools and time-saving features to benefit every database user. Most States are confident that their current systems, policies and control mechanisms limit the potential duplication of data and others are in the process of developing or redesigning their current systems to eliminate potential duplication.

Increased collaboration with larger programs where integrated major databases are housed is enabling State refugee agencies to be more involved in the development, utilization, modification and access to large databases that can eliminate duplicative data.

3. *Better capture the well-being and economic outcomes of the refugee population*

There are significant challenges to long-term or more holistic measures. Defining refugee “well-being” as a measure is challenging for States due to variances between program models and data systems used in providing services funded by different Federal or State sources. Additionally, in order to capture refugee well-being, additional services, assistance and resources may be needed to improve refugee population economic outlook. This may involve extensive and improved collaboration with other non-ORR funded entities that provide services to refugees in various areas of assistance, such as TANF, health care, education, etc. Determination of refugee well-being may require long-term evaluation that would define indicators and measures of refugee well-being.

ORR guiding principles provide strategy for planning and programming to better identify and meet refugee population priorities. This is achieved through increased communication with States and other stakeholders, through various meeting formats as well as in refining various information gathering tools and reporting mechanisms. The goal of these efforts is to develop improved data collection and analysis systems to better inform future policy and program decisions. ORR has encouraged States and other service providers to engage in dialogue that would identify any gaps and recommend solutions to improve data systems to support better analysis of program outcomes.

Improved data collection tools will capture additional data and provide a better picture of self-sufficiency and economic outcomes for newly arriving refugee populations. Even though data collection is driven by the relatively short-term requirements of Federal reporting based on service or funded program timeline, ORR will continue to explore opportunities to refine and improve current data collection tools.