
**SUPPORTING STATEMENT A FOR INFORMATION
COLLECTION FOR THE
JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE
STRATEGIES (JSA) EVALUATION**

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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A. JUSTIFICATION

In this document, the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) requests OMB clearance for data collection activities for the Job Search Assistance Strategies Evaluation (hereafter, JSA Evaluation). This request is for a new collection. This submission seeks OMB approval for three data collection instruments that will be used as part of the field assessment and site selection process:

- Discussion Guide for Researchers and Policy Experts
- Discussion Guide for State and Local TANF Administrators
- Discussion Guide for Program Staff

These discussion guides are designed to collect baseline information as the JSA Evaluation study design is finalized. OPRE will submit additional information collection requests as part of this evaluation. This section provides supporting statements for each of the eighteen points outlined in Part A of the OMB guidelines for the collection of baseline information in study sites in the JSA Evaluation.

1. Necessity for the Data Collection

Study Overview

The Job Search Assistance (JSA) Strategies evaluation is a study designed to rigorously test components of job search assistance programs aimed at moving TANF recipients into employment. Despite the widespread prevalence of services to support the search for employment in TANF, known as job search assistance (JSA) services, little is known about the relative effectiveness of different JSA approaches and their components. JSA components that could be studied include self-directed job search, group job search (e.g., job clubs or peer groups), one-on-one search (e.g., individual counseling), and job development (i.e., program staff identify opportunities for clients). With this project, we aim to measure the relative impact of specific job search services offered by TANF programs on short-term labor market outcomes (e.g., earnings and time to employment).

The project will begin with an intensive and comprehensive field assessment to understand the landscape of TANF JSA services and identify potential sites for the evaluation. This field assessment will include semi-structured interviews with State and local TANF administrators, program staff who provide JSA services, and key stakeholders, such as researchers and policy experts. ACF is interested in executing a rigorous test of various job search assistance components, which necessitates that the study includes sites that are offering a range of JSA services and have the ability to fully participate in the study. The project also aims to ensure that its findings are relevant to the field, so program level feedback on what should be tested is also important. This inquiry is a critical step for program recruitment into the study. To accomplish this objective, ACF seeks approval of the proposed discussion guides to be used in telephone and in-person informal discussions with a range of experts and stakeholders such as researchers, policy experts, coordinators (e.g. state-level coordinators), subsidized and transitional employment program directors and staffs.

The JSA evaluation will use a random assignment experimental design and will include an impact and implementation evaluation carried out across the selected sites. Consistent with the policy framework of TANF, ACF expects that the job search assistance approaches studied will be relatively short-term in nature. Similarly, ACF anticipates that these services will most likely impact short-term labor market outcomes (e.g., earnings, time to employment) and that these outcomes can be measured using administrative data sources.

The JSA Evaluation aims to address the following research questions:

- What are the differential impacts of TANF JSA program approaches and components on participant short-term, employment and earnings outcomes?
- How do specific JSA program design features affect primary impacts?

Legal or Administrative Requirements that Necessitate the Collection

There are no legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. ACF is undertaking the collection at the discretion of the agency.

Insufficient Data Available

These information collection protocols will be used to collect information from key respondents about the JSA strategies that they provide to TANF clients, how they provide those services, and which strategies they believe are worth studying, in terms of their effectiveness and impact on helping TANF recipients get employment. The information will be used to identify the JSA strategies that should be tested within the context of current TANF policies and requirements, as well as select sites for eventual participation in the JSA Evaluation. In addition, the information will be used to determine the breadth and quality of JSA services provided to TANF clients.

A subsequent submission may seek clearance for information collection activities related to the impact of the job search assistance strategies studied.

2. Purpose of Survey and Data Collection Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this information collection is to help ACF identify and select State and local TANF programs, specifically the job search assistance services provided by those agencies, for evaluation. The field assessment will also provide valuable information to ACF about the range and depth of JSA services provided to TANF clients.

This information collection request includes discussion guides that will be used in telephone and/or on-site interviews with experts and stakeholders such as researchers, policy experts, State and local TANF administrators, and program staff (i.e., individuals who provide JSA services).

Site Selection Procedures

The purpose of this data collection will be to gather information on the JSA services that various State and local TANF offices provide in order to identify and select sites for the JSA evaluation. ACF intends to use an experimental design that tests the relative impacts of various JSA strategies. Implementing this kind of test will likely require relatively large sample sizes ($\approx 20,000$ to $25,000$). Achieving sample sizes of that size will likely require implementing the study in 10 to 25 sites. The purpose of the field assessment and site selection task will be to determine which sites are the strongest candidates to participate in the evaluation both in terms of the JSA services that they provide and their ability to include large samples. Large areas like Los Angeles County, for instance, are likely to be candidates for inclusion in the study, although ACF won't know this information until the contractor undertakes this work. In order to recruit 10 to 25 sites, ACF estimates that the contractor may need to have discussions with up to 35 sites, which is reflected in the burden estimates included later Supporting Statement A.

Sample Selection

The individuals selected to participate in the field assessment will be selected purposely because their specific expertise or the site is of interest to the overall goals of the study. In some cases, for example, a State TANF administrator, the person interviewed will be the entire universe. In other cases, such as JSA program providers, the participants may be a handful of providers in a specific county. Since the

principal purpose of the field assessment is to inform site selection, this approach will ensure that ACF receives the information needed to make those decisions.

Information to be Gathered

During the site selection and field assessment process, the contractor will collect information from three distinct groups of people: (1) State and local TANF administrators; (2) researchers and policy experts; and (3) program staff who implement JSA services. The information will be collected through semi-structured interviews that will cover a range of topics, including: the TANF population in the site, the job search process for the particular TANF program, specific JSA services to be provided, data collection activities that the site already takes, understanding which JSA services they perceive to be most effective, and their interest/ability to participate in the larger evaluation. The discussions guides for these three groups of respondents will vary slightly, but will all focus on these topics.

3. Improved Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden

The information will be collected through semi-structured discussions that are not conducive to information technology, such as computerized interviewing. The research team will not record the discussions, but will take written notes.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The information collection will not duplicate information that is already available. The specific, in-depth knowledge of State and local JSA practices is not currently available.

5. Involvement of Small Business Organizations

Not applicable. No small businesses are expected to be involved.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

During this initial step of the evaluation, information will be collected only once, thus no repetition of effort is planned. Not collecting this information at all would substantially limit the value of the investment that ACF will make in the JSA Evaluation. Identifying JSA services of most interest to the field is crucial to ensuring that findings from the study are relevant to federal, state and local policymakers and program administrators. Moreover, an assessment of current JSA strategies that States and localities use is required to select sites for the study.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances for the proposed data collection efforts.

8. Federal Register Notice and Consultation

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published a notice in the *Federal Register* on May 31, 2013, pages 32666 to 32667. The document number is FR Doc. 2013-12904. The notice provided a 60-day period for public comments, and comments were due by July 31, 2013. A copy of the notice is shown in Attachment A. ACF published the Federal Register Notice and received two request(s) for copies of the instruments, but did not receive any substantive comments on the instruments or the proposed data collection.

9. Tokens of Appreciation for Respondents

No tokens of appreciation for respondents are proposed for this information collection.

10. Privacy of Respondents

For informal discussions, no personal identifying information beyond name and professional affiliation (e.g., name of the academic/research institution, name of the State, etc.) will be sought.

Discussants will be told that their conversations will be kept private to the fullest extent of the law and that it is expected that their name and affiliation will only be included in summary information provided to ACF. ACF staff may participate in telephone or on-site discussions. Discussants will be told that, to the extent allowable by law, individual identifying information will not be disseminated publicly.

11. Sensitive Questions

There are no sensitive questions in the proposed information collection.

12. Estimates of Information Collection Burden

As part of the field assessment and site selection process, a total of 100 policy experts/researchers, State and local TANF administrators, and program staff will participate in semi-structured interviews of varying lengths. The time per response is estimated at 60 minutes (1 hour) for the researchers/policy experts, 150 minutes (2.5 hours) for State and local TANF administrators, and 120 minutes (2.0 hours) for program staff

The estimated annual burden (based on a two-year study duration) is 103 hours. See the table below for estimated annual burden for each type of instrument.

The annualized cost burden to respondents is based on the estimated burden hours and the assumed hourly wage rate for respondents. The assumed wage rate is based on the May 2012 employment and wages from Occupational Employment Statistics survey from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_stru.htm). The rate used for Researchers, Policy Experts, and State Level Coordinators, \$49.77, is equivalent to management, scientific, and technical consulting services under SOC code 19-3011. The rate used for Program Directors, \$44.50, is equivalent to the local government managers under SOC code 11-1021. The rate used for Program Staff \$23.11 is equivalent to local government workers under SOC code 21-1023. The estimated annualized cost (based on a two-year study duration) is \$3,512. See the exhibit A12 below for estimated annual cost burden for each type of instrument.

Exhibit A12: Annualized Burden Estimates

Instrument	Total Number of Respondents	Annual Number of Respondents	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Estimated Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate	Annualized Cost
Discussion Guide for Use with Researchers and Policy Experts	15	8	1	1	8	\$49.77	\$398
Discussion Guide for use with State and Local TANF Administrators	35	18	1	2.5	45	\$44.50	\$1,958
Discussion Guide for Use with Program Staff	50	25	1	2	50	\$23.11	\$1,156
Total					103		\$3,512

13. Additional Cost Burden to Respondents and Record Keepers

Not applicable. These information collection activities do not place any capital cost or cost of maintaining capital requirements on respondents.

14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government

Data collection will be carried out by the contractor selected through a competitive procurement process to conduct the JSA Evaluation. Based on our experience with other similar information collection activities carried out by contractors, costs associated with the information collection, compilation, analysis and reporting to ACF are estimated to be approximately \$950,000. Since information collection will occur over two years, annualized costs are estimated to be \$475,000.

15. Change in Burden

This is a new collection.

16. Plan and Time Schedule for Information Collection, Tabulation, and Publication

This phase of the JSA Evaluation involves collection of information that will be used for selecting sites, specifically identifying the relevant JSA services to be evaluated and potential sites where an evaluation can be implemented. As discussed above, the JSA Evaluation is designed to rigorously test the relative effectiveness of JSA services in moving TANF clients to employment. The test will focus on short-term, employment-related outcomes. The informal discussions that will be conducted as part of this data collection will be used for to help inform the types of JSA services that the study should examine and to assist in the identification and selection of study sites.

Individual summaries of all discussions and overarching summaries of information obtained from each source/type of stakeholder (e.g., researchers, policymakers, program administrators and staff) shall be prepared by the contractor. The information will be analyzed to identify common themes and specific recommendations of types of JSA approaches to be evaluated and specific programs to be considered. The information obtained in the interviews will be combined with information obtained from the reviews of program documents (and, as appropriate, from attendance at relevant conferences and meetings) to produce initial recommendations regarding JSA services to be studied and study site recommendations.

This study is expected to be conducted over a five-year period beginning in September 2013. This OMB submission seeks approval for information collection as part of initial activities of the study, which will occur in the first two years of the project. Additional information collection requests will be submitted as necessary. No formal publications are planned from this initial information collection.

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

All instruments will display the expiration date for OMB approval.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.