

Exploring the Relationship between the CA Paid Family Leave Program and the Well-Being of Low-Income Families

ASPE Generic Information Collection Request
OMB No. 0990-0421

Supporting Statement – Section B

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Program Official/Project Officer

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Section B – Data Collection Procedures

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

This is an exploratory study in which we seek to learn about the knowledge, perspectives, and experiences of low-income mothers who are eligible for the California Paid Family Leave (PFL) program. The participants in the four focus group discussions we propose constitute a sample of convenience. Recruitment, sampling, and data collection will be conducted under contract with ASPE by Mission Analytics Group, Inc.

The Contractor will work with four community organizations that serve low-income women with young children in two major urban areas, in the vicinity of San Francisco and Los Angeles, to recruit interested and appropriate participants. One focus group will be conducted in Spanish. Staff with the four community organizations serving low-income families will work with the Contractor on recruitment and will assist with the logistics related to the groups. Contractor staff will develop recruitment flyers and posters to be disseminated at the community organizations. Staff from the community organization will mention the opportunity to participate in the groups to program participants, stressing that it is entirely voluntary and entirely unrelated to the program's services or activities. People interested in participating in the focus groups will sign up on sign-up sheets. Many potential participants will meet the broad criteria for inclusion in the focus groups by virtue of their engagement in the partner community organizations' programs (being low-income and parents of young children).

The main criteria for inclusion in the focus groups are:

- Mothers of children under one year of age
- Low income (defined approximately as 80% of the area family median income)¹
- Eligible for the PFL program: legal immigration status, worked in the year prior to birth with wages of at least \$300 in a job that entailed paying into the state disability insurance system (typically not a job with a public employer).

In addition, we will seek a mix of participants that did and did not receive PFL payments in order to compare perspectives and experiences across the two groups. Research indicates that receipt among lower income parents is lower than that for parents with higher earnings (Milkman and Appelbaum 2013).

¹ Income levels are defined in "2015 State Income Limits Briefing Materials," California Department of Housing and Community Development, April 15, 2015. Available from: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/housing-policy-development/housing-resource-center/reports/state/incnote.html>.

We will also seek a general mix of races and ethnicities across the focus groups (with one group in Spanish). This will be supported by the recruitment partnerships with community organizations since they tend to serve specific communities and race/ethnic groups.

We anticipate that each organization will provide a list of about 20 names of potential participants; from this list we expect that 12-15 will confirm with the Contractor (by means of a screener (Attachment A)) their willingness and appropriateness to participate, and about 10 will in fact participate in each of the groups. We expect about 40 participants (10 in each focus group).

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

We have developed a focus group discussion guide for conversations of no more than 75 minutes (Attachment B). It focuses on the following topics:

- Lower income mothers' knowledge about, perspectives on, and experiences with the California PFL program related to birth and bonding with a new child,
- Their perspectives on and decisions about child care
- Their perspective on and decisions about working in the labor market, and
- Their perspectives on how paid family leave is or is not related to family health and wellbeing.

In addition, we will invite participants to complete a brief anonymous demographic questionnaire (Attachment C) at the beginning of the focus groups (the estimated 15 minutes to complete it is in addition to the 75 minutes for the focus group discussions).

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

We plan to invite potential participants, and remind them of the focus groups after they make a commitment to participate, but at the same time to respect their right to decline to participate or to change their minds about participation.

The methods we will use to encourage participation and maximize participation are:

- Fliers, posters, and a sign-up sheet will be located at the front desk of the partner organization, so women can sign up when they drop in for services.
- Partner organization staff will email potentially eligible women and invite them to sign up via an email response or when they drop in for services.
- At the end of a two-week recruitment period, partner organization staff will securely email, fax, or mail the completed sign-up sheet to Contractor staff. This information will be used to contact participants to ensure that they are appropriate to participate (fit the sample criteria), as well as to confirm their participation leading up to the focus group.

- Contractor staff may contact potential participants 2-3 times to encourage participation by those who have expressed their interest and willingness.
- \$50 gift cards from a local popular store, such as Target, will be provided to remunerate focus group participants for their time and effort in participating.

Because this is a convenience sample, we will not follow up on no-shows. Non-response in a convenience sample will not introduce bias since it is not considered representative of a population.

4. Test of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

We plan to conduct the first focus group in San Francisco in January, providing time for the Contractor and federal project officer to discuss what worked more or less effectively, and to make revisions prior to the next three focus groups.

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

ASPE subject matter experts with technical and statistical expertise were consulted on the development of this exploratory data collection. This includes: (1) Pamela Winston, Social Science Analyst at HHS/ASPE, email: pamela.winston@hhs.gov, phone: 202-401-6615; (2) Robin Ghertner, Director of the Data and Technical Analysis Division at HHS/ASPE, email: Robin.Ghertner@hhs.gov, phone: 202-690-6939; and Colin Campbell, National Poverty Postdoctoral Fellow, colin.campbell@hhs.gov.